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Canada won't 'bribe' Afghans: officer; Angry Afghans mistakenly blame international troops for civilian deaths in raid on village

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A military official says Canada will continue to build ties with Afghans but won't rush in with "bribes" because of a false belief that Canadian soldiers were involved in the deaths of two Afghan civilians.

Angry Afghans closed the main highway out of Kandahar city on Wednesday, blaming international troops, including Canada, for the deaths of a religious scholar and his brother during a raid on a suspected insurgent's home the night before.

Some of the approximately 500 protesters chanted "Death to Canada," along with other nations involved in the war against the Taliban. Most of the anger was directed toward the United States.

Military officials say no Canadian soldiers were involved, but the family of the dead men demanded amends yesterday.

"My cousins are killed illogically," said Abdul Hai, 25. "They must be given compensation."

Qudratullah, an area elder at age 39, said the family should receive land or money for the deaths.

"There are 18 family members left at the same house, including children and women," said Qudratullah.

"Only one man remains at the family to feed the family, so that makes no sense that one man can feed the 18 family members."

But Lt. Derrick Farnham, spokesman for the Provincial Reconstruction Team that works closely with Afghans on development and rebuilding projects in Kandahar province, said that his team will not react by offering "treats."

"That's something that's been done in the past and it's been termed 'the great game' in Afghanistan, where locals play one side off the other in terms of getting treats and gifts," Farnham said yesterday.

"That's something we want to avoid."

"We don't want to be in a situation where we're seen as just bribing people who have a grudge against us because that puts us up against insurgents who can likewise bribe."

Canada won't 'bribe' Afghans: officer; Angry Afghans mistakenly blame international troops for civilian death

International forces have come under scathing criticism for the mounting toll of civilian casualties in Afghanistan. President Hamid Karzai has said these incidents undermine efforts to win the trust of the people.

Although verification is difficult as fighting continues, independent counts of civilian deaths by the United Nations and The Associated Press suggest about 600 civilians have been killed so far this year by both sides.

The international coalition says the Taliban has falsely reported civilian deaths in order to discredit foreign troops and undermine their efforts with the public.

Already, Farnham said there are areas where Canadians are just not welcome, particularly in the Zhari district, the birthplace of the Taliban movement and a stronghold of the insurgency.

"Zhari is peculiar because there's almost a straight line that separates one side from the other and we don't have good access to the side that doesn't want us there," Farnham said.

There are areas where Canadians are just not wanted, he said, not because the residents themselves are insurgents but because of fear. "They're unwilling to take our assistance because of the fear," Farnham said.

Your view: Letters to the editor | Yellow Ribbons have purpose

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I was quite shocked when I learned the Fredericton Peace Coalition was mounting an opposition to tying yellow ribbons around Fredericton and area.

The coalition claims the yellow ribbons support the government's aggressive war measures in Afghanistan. That is hardly the case. The tying of yellow ribbons was created in the United States. It is a symbol with various meanings, mostly associated with waiting for the return of a loved one or military troops.

Canadians tie yellow ribbons to show support for our troops serving in dangerous and far-away countries. I have lost friends in Afghanistan. If tying yellow ribbons helps other families hope for the safe return of their loved ones, I will continue to tie them.

Protests about what is happening in Afghanistan should be directed at the government.

I recall when Afghanistan was run by the Taliban. During their evil reign of power, there's been ethnic cleansing, religious persecution, denial of women's rights, public beheadings — sometimes for such transgressions as allowing a daughter to go to school — and the support of terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda.

The only thing the Taliban seems to understand is violence and destruction. They have no concept of basic human rights and freedoms.

Canada is involved in Afghanistan to help the Afghani people achieve peace. Our military is conducting combat operations in Afghanistan to ensure security and stability in the region.

Humanitarian aid to Afghanistan will not work without stability.

I do not know what Canada would be like if groups such as the Fredericton Peace Coalition existed during the Second World War. Would they have oppose Canada's involvement in the war as the Nazis exterminated the Jews and repressed rights and freedoms in European countries?

Groups such as the peace coalition have lost focus on what is really important, supporting our troops who are trying to complete their mission and come back in one piece.

Michael Bellemare

Oromocto, N.B.

Student loans not money maker

I write to correct the record. The article, in the Sept. 24 Daily Gleaner, Recent grads losing millions in post secondary tax credits, is wrong.

It is incorrect to say the federal government makes money from student loans.

The federal government recognizes the old student loan program didn't do what was best for students and needs improvement. That's why we launched a review of the Canada Student Loans Program.

The government has put in place a comprehensive, long-term plan for post-secondary education. In the 2007 budget, we announced a 40-per-cent increase in transfers to the provinces for post secondary education.

We're proud of our record of making sure Canadians have access to the post-secondary education they want and deserve.

Monte Solberg

Minister of Human Resources and Social Development Canada

Widow will speak for soldiers

I found Minister of Veteran Affairs Greg Thompson's announcement of Sept. 12 disappointing.

I refer specifically to the date, Feb. 6, 2006, as one of the criterion for the ex gratia payment to those affected by the spraying of Agent Orange at CFB Gagetown. I am extremely hurt that those who died before this date are being so dishonoured by the government.

As the widow of Sgt. Ralph Donald Hudson, who served his country diligently from 1957 to 1977, I am saddened for all our soldiers who suffered as the result of the flagrant use of an unregistered herbicide.

My husband, along with his family, was posted to CFB Gagetown from 1964 to 1967. He was sent to the field every June for a six-week exercise and was in "the area" when Agent Orange was sprayed. His health was compromised as a result.

In June 2003, he was diagnosed with cancer of the lung which metastasized to his bones and major organs. He died Jan. 4, 2004.

Who will speak for these soldiers?

I will. I will speak to anyone who will listen, because it is so important they be used honourably and respectfully by our government.

My hope is that all those who lost a loved one, before Feb. 6, 2006 will petition for a just conclusion to this situation. My family and my husband deserve the courtesy of compensation.

Bette J. Hudson

Colleague fondly remembered

On September 11, friends, neighbours, and former colleagues were saddened to learn of the sudden death of Richard (Dick) McFadgen.

A well-known educator, he touched the lives of thousands of students during a teaching career which spanned 35 years, most of which were spent in the English department of Fredericton High School.

Dick was a congenial and co-operative professional whose scholarly approach to teaching earned him the respect of students and colleagues.

His sense of humour and warm personality endeared him to his students who could often be seen chatting with him after class.

A true scholar, Dick, who valued the classics, especially Shakespeare, was a voracious reader whose knowledge of literature was remarkable.

An outstanding athlete in his youth, Dick enjoyed playing rugby at Horton Academy. Throughout the years, Dick could be found at the curling rink or at the Fredericton Golf Club.

He was a familiar figure at Mazzuca's Variety Store in the company of other sports' enthusiasts.

His professional travels included conferences in Massachusetts and San Diego. His friend, Peter Keenan, recalls many wonderful trips they had together to Florida, Bahamas, Las Vegas and Great Britain.

Perhaps, however, Dick will be remembered most for his love of animals. He could often be found strolling the green, tossing a soccer ball to Sheba, his beloved dog. His final request was that the SPCA be remembered in his will.

A life-long Frederictonian, Dick loved this beautiful city and his home on Charlotte Street where he spent his entire life. He was determined the history of our city be preserved; he rejoiced when Charlotte Street School was restored.

A scholar, sportsman and outstanding citizen, he will long be remembered in his native city.

Diane Flynn and Betty Harvey

And other friends and colleagues

Fredericton, N.B.

Canada says it won't be bribed by relatives of the deceased

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A military official says Canada will continue to build ties with Afghans but won't rush in with "bribes" because of a false belief that Canadian soldiers were involved in the deaths of two Afghan civilians.

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Some of the approximately 500 protesters chanted "Death to Canada," along with other nations involved in the war against the Taliban.

Most of the anger was directed toward the United States.

Military officials say no Canadian soldiers were involved, but the family of the dead men demanded amends Thursday.

"My cousins are killed illogically," said Abdul Hai, 25. "They must be given compensation."

Qudratullah, an area elder at age 39, said the family should receive land or money for the deaths.

"There are 18 family members left at the same house, including children and women," said Qudratullah.

"Only one man remains at the family to feed the family, so that makes no sense that one man can feed the 18 family members."

But Lt. Derrick Farnham, spokesman for the Provincial Reconstruction Team that works closely with Afghans on development and rebuilding projects in Kandahar province, said that his team will not react by offering "treats."

"That's something that's been done in the past and it's been termed 'the great game' in Afghanistan, where locals play one side off the other in terms of getting treats and gifts," Farnham said Thursday.

"That's something we want to avoid."

"We don't want to be in a situation where we're seen as just bribing people who have a grudge against us because that puts us up against insurgents who can likewise bribe."

International forces have come under scathing criticism for the mounting toll of civilian casualties in Afghanistan.

President Hamid Karzai has said these incidents undermine efforts to win the trust of the people.

It's estimated 600 civilians have been killed so far this year by both sides.

Anti-ribbon campaign runs into a fight

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Mayor Brad Woodside plans to keep his yellow support-the-troops ribbon in his front window.

"My ribbon is up, it's going to stay up and the yellow ribbon on my lapel is going to stay on, too," Woodside said Thursday afternoon.

Fredericton Peace Coalition members say they will press local businesses to take down any signs of support for soldiers serving overseas.

But Woodside stood by the troops in words and actions Thursday. He spent the early part of the day greeting members of HMCS Fredericton.

Woodside said the coalition is misguided.

"Don't come knocking on my door, go knock on the door of your federal politicians," he said.

The ribbons recognize the willingness of troops to step in harm's way to make a difference somewhere else, the mayor said.

"I support our men and women who have been tasked with representing our country and flag around the world," said Woodside, whose father served as a peacekeeper in Egypt and the Middle East.

No one wants war, he said.

"I'd love to have our troops at home living in peace, but that's not the world we live in," he said.

"If people have an issue, then they should really take it up with their federal politicians."

The mayor hopes news of the campaign aimed at getting signs of support taken down will only serve to renew support for our soldiers.

"I would encourage people not to take the ribbons down but to put them up, seek out the establishments that are making these ribbons available, as I have in my home, and show the military that you support them."

Anti-ribbon campaign organizer Tracy Glynn said the effort will attempt to raise awareness around the Afghanistan issue.

"We just see it as part of selling the war," Glynn said with regard to the ribbons. "We hope to put together a package to bring to local businesses, churches asking that they reconsider and take down their yellow ribbons."

Glynn said the package will also state the organization's position and will provide people with information from other sources.

"We see it as (being) all connected to a mission in Afghanistan that we oppose," Glynn said.

"We support the troops but we want them brought home. The army in its current state right now, we don't support that. We have a hard time saying that we support the troops, too, because we don't support what they are doing."

There are approximately 2,500 Canadian troops in Afghanistan as part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force.

Earlier Thursday, Woodside met with crew members from the Canadian Forces patrol frigate HMCS Fredericton and observed members of the ship's boarding party stage a demonstration of a landing at the Regent Street Wharf.

Woodside said he was pleased to meet the people who travel the city's good name around the globe.

"We're very proud to have our name on that ship," Woodside said, highlighting the work the ship's crew does.

"They do good work," he said, noting the rescue missions and vessel inspections crew members carry out under Canadian, NATO and UN mandates.

The ship's officers and some crew members were in Fredericton as part of a recruitment drive by the Canadian Forces.

With assault rifles in hand, members of the boarding party escorted the mayor down King Street to city hall.

With files from The Daily Gleaner reporter Michael Staples.

RMC to honour its fallen; Ceremonial swords to be engraved with names of Dawe, Goddard

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BYLINE: Ian Elliot

PHOTO: Michael Lea/The Whig–Standard

ILLUSTRATION: Peter Dawe holds the ceremonial sword carried by his son, Matthew, who was killed earlier this year in Afghanistan.

WORD COUNT: 567

Two fallen former Royal Military College students will be honoured at this weekend's college reunion and badging ceremonies.

Capt. Matthew Dawe, 27, who was killed along with five other Canadian soldiers by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan in July, and Capt. Nichola Goddard, an artillery officer with the 1st Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, who died in a Taliban ambush in May 2006, will have ceremonial swords engraved with their names presented to the top fourth–year infantry and artillery students at the school, respectively.

"It's something special," said college public affairs officer Capt. Paule Poulin.

"It is something quite significant for the cadets who are to be honoured."

The officers would then be entitled to wear the swords with their top level of dress uniforms, known as Scarlets or Number One Order of dress, which, for the military, includes white belts, gloves and medals.

"You do not see an officer carrying a sword very often, so anyone would be able to look at them and realize they have been recognized for something special," she said.

The swords were purchased by the RMC Foundation and will be presented annually to the top cadets in the two fields of military studies.

According to Dr. Steve Harris, the Forces' chief historian at National Defence headquarters in Ottawa, the sword is actually the official sidearm of the Canadian Forces and was traditionally carried by officers not for combat but, in case they needed to defend themselves while supervising their troops in battle.

It has been replaced on the uniform by the pistol in modern forces, but swords are still held in base stores and are issued by quartermasters for ceremonial events. Many members of the military also purchase their own swords, inscribed with their unit names, as mementoes.

The two fallen cadets will also have their names on the memorial arch at the northwest entrance to the school. Goddard's name is already engraved on the arch while Dawe's will be added.

The annual memorial service honouring former cadets who died in the service takes place Sunday at 11 a.m. at the arch. Current and former cadets will march to the arch from the parade square and then back.

Today, the first-year cadets also take part in the annual obstacle course competition, signifying the end of their orientation period at the college and their acceptance into the Cadet Wing at RMC.

Thirteen squadrons are participating in the obstacle course and they will start the competition simultaneously from 13 different obstacles starting at 2:30 p.m. The event is open to the public and is usually well-attended.

Following the obstacle course, each first-year cadet will be presented with a specially minted coin by a former cadet as a way of welcoming them to the school. They will get the coins from the "Old Brigade," a group of cadets who graduated from RMC 50 years ago.

Tomorrow, the 265 first-years will receive their RMC insignia which will be worn on their caps, at a special ceremony on the parade square starting at 10:30 a.m.

The SkyHawks, the Canadian Forces' parachute team, will also make an appearance this weekend, jumping from a plane and on to the school's sports field during halftime of the scheduled RMC men's rugby and women's soccer games at 3:50 p.m. tomorrow.

They will land just after the sod-turning for the new Birchall Pavillion, named after former RMC cadet, Air Commodore Leonard Birchall, who died recently.

The Birchall Pavillion, which will be home to the RMC rugby and soccer teams, as well as first aid and physiotherapy rooms, was funded entirely from donations from members of the RMC Club Foundation and friends of RMC. Construction of the new pavilion will start this fall.

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Protesters targeting military recruiters

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BYLINE: Chris Lambie Staff Reporter
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Defence Minister Peter MacKay will welcome more than 100 new soldiers, sailors and airmen in Halifax on Saturday, but a handful of protesters are making plans to foil Canadian Forces recruiters at local university and high school campuses.

On the other side of the country, students at the University of Victoria will vote next month on whether recruiters should be allowed to attend campus job fairs. But organizers here seem to be taking a more low–key approach.

"We are at the beginning stages of setting up a counter–recruitment campaign," said Stu Neatby, of the Student Coalition Against War.

"The campaign will be twofold, one focused on, obviously, university campuses, particularly Dalhousie, where there's a visible recruiter presence. We'll also go into high schools a little bit and talk to youth about the other aspect of joining up for the Canadian Forces that's not really talked about in the sleek recruitment packages."

Recruiters who target campuses "are taking advantage of the most underemployed sector of the population, which is largely youth," Mr. Neatby said.

"I personally think it's a form of parasitism," he said. "They pick vulnerable populations. That's pretty clear."

Mr. Neatby, who graduated last year from Saint Mary's University with a degree in international development and economics, objects to Canada's involvement with NATO's military efforts in Afghanistan. Seventy–one Canadian soldiers have died in Afghanistan over the past five years.

"Young people who are joining the Canadian Forces are facing more of a dangerous situation operating in southern Afghanistan than U.S. forces who are going into Iraq," he said.

"And this is the aspect that's not really told by recruiters. What's the likelihood of a life–threatening injury? What's the likelihood of being disabled as a result of combat operations in southern Afghanistan?"

Nearly a quarter of the people recruited into the military's regular force come from Atlantic Canada, a disproportionate number compared to the country's overall population.

"The military is really taking advantage of the slower economy in Atlantic Canada," Mr. Neatby said.

"It's really taking advantage of the joblessness situation for youth in Nova Scotia and basically using that as kind of coercive force to send them off to an extremely dangerous war."

When recruiters show up on campus, he wants to make sure protesters are there as a counter–presence.

"All you really need is a couple of people who stand by the booth and provide some leaflets about the other aspects of recruitment," Mr. Neatby said.

Potential recruits should know "this is a very high-risk profession and there are aspects of the Afghan mission that are deeply, deeply immoral," he said, pointing to civilian casualties.

The military doesn't have a beef with people who want to protest recruiting on campus.

"That's their right and, hey, that's why you have the Forces, to make sure people have that right," said Capt. Holly Brown of Canadian Forces Recruiting Group. "We respect that totally."

She stressed, though, that potential recruits are told joining the military could put them in harm's way. "That's really important for us, to make sure that we're a good fit for them, they're a good fit for us and everyone understands what joining the Forces is all about," Capt. Brown said.

The Halifax regional school board has no plans to ban military recruiters from high school career fairs.

"It's an honourable career and if people want to learn more about it, then we believe students are free to do so and they can make their own decisions," said Doug Hadley, a spokesman for the board.

Dalhousie also has no plans to stop military recruiters from attending career fairs on campus.

"Whether it's a military recruiter or a corporate recruiter, Dalhousie students are going to look at the information and make their own decisions," university spokesman Charles Crosby said.

"I don't think that they need protection, per se. We've got more faith in our students than that."

Canadian Forces recruiters have a busy schedule in Nova Scotia.

"We try to visit all of the high schools at least once and the universities as well," said Capt. Colette Brake, of the military's recruiting office in Halifax.

They offer subsidized education programs for civilian universities and the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ont. In return, students must promise to serve time in the military once they've graduated. The stint in uniform varies, depending on how long students have accepted the military's financial assistance.

"We guarantee them a job when they graduate," Capt. Brake said. "It's actually a little bit more than a guarantee. It's called obligatory service."

All recruits are fully briefed on the potential for being sent to a war zone, she said.

"What we tell them is, 'Having to participate in an operational deployment is a reality and we can't say you will go to Afghanistan because, by the time you finish your training, we don't know if we'll be in Afghanistan . . . so it's difficult to say.' "

Canada's commitment to keep troops in Afghanistan expires in February 2009.()

Welcome–home reception for soldiers set for Saturday

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COLUMN: Island digest

WORD COUNT: 175

Yellow ribbons are starting to dot the city landscape in Charlottetown as the Prince Edward Island capital prepares to welcome home more Canadian troops from Afghanistan.

"I would like to extend our warmest and heartiest welcome home to all our troops returning home from Afghanistan," said Charlene McInnis of the P.E.I. Military Family Services Centre. "In particular, we welcome those tasked from our local units, P.E.I. (Regiment) and 721 Communications Regiment."

The Military Family Services Centre is organizing a family–based welcome reception Saturday, Sept. 29, from 1:30 p.m. until 4 p.m. The reception will be held at the Shipyard Warehouse, formerly the old potato warehouse, on the Charlottetown waterfront.

The P.E.I. Regiment Band will perform at 1 p.m. to usher guests, including Charlottetown Mayor Clifford Lee, into the welcome home event.

Yellow ribbons will line the drive from the Hillsborough Bridge to the wharf. Entertainment will include Richard Wood, who has performed for troops in Afghanistan, and the Judy MacLean Dancers.

"We would like to invite all Island organizations, businesses and individuals who would like to take part," she said. "Just follow the yellow ribbons."

Canada won't bribe Afghans after protest : officer

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BYLINE: Dene Moore

DATELINE: Kandahar

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A military official says Canada will continue to build ties with Afghans but won't rush in with "bribes" because of a false belief that Canadian soldiers were involved in the deaths of two Afghan civilians.

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Some of the roughly 500 protesters chanted "Death to Canada," along with other nations involved in the war against the Taliban. Most of the anger was directed toward the United States.

Military officials say no Canadian soldiers were involved, but the family of the dead men demanded amends Thursday.

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Qudratullah, an area elder at age 39, said the family should receive land or money for the deaths.

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"Only one man remains at the family to feed the family, so that makes no sense that one man can feed the 18 family members."

But Lt. Derrick Farnham, spokesman for the Provincial Reconstruction Team that works closely with Afghans on development and rebuilding projects in Kandahar province, said his team will not react by offering "treats."

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"We don't want to be in a situation where we're seen as just bribing people who have a grudge against us because that puts us up against insurgents who can likewise bribe."

My cousins are killed illogically.

Abdul Hai, Afghan

Fallen soldier's return delayed

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CALGARY -- One day later than planned, fallen Calgary soldier, Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, is expected to land on Canadian soil today and begin the journey to his final resting place in southern Alberta.

A mechanical problem with the airbus being used to transport Hornburg out of Afghanistan to Canadian Forces Base Trenton in Ontario prompted the 24-hour delay.

The 24-year-old's remains are now expected to arrive in Ontario this afternoon, around 3 p.m. local time.

For friends preparing to lay Hornburg to rest, the delay has prolonged the inevitable.

"Time has stood still since Nathan died," said 22-year-old Michael Pederson, a friend of Hornburg's and a fellow reservist at the King's Own Regiment in Calgary.

"This just means we all have one more day to try and understand all of this. There's no rush," Pederson said.

Hornburg, who was driving an armoured recovery vehicle, was killed just before sunset Monday during a prolonged battle with the Taliban.

He was struck by fragments from a mortar fired by insurgents near the village of Zangabad in the Panjwai district. He had dismounted from his Leopard tank during the firefight to fix a tread that had come off the vehicle.

Hornburg was the 71st Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan since 2002.

Hornburg's mother Linda, father Michael and older sister Rachel are already in Trenton for the repatriation ceremony.

Calgary Herald

Repatriation of Canadian Cpl. Nathan Hornburg delayed until Friday

DATE: 2007.09.27
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 104

TORONTO _ The body of a Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan on Monday is now scheduled to return home on Friday, not today as initially planned.

Capt. Nicole Meszaros of CFB Trenton says a mechanical problem has developed in the Airbus aircraft that will carry the body of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg to the base in eastern Ontario.

Meszaros says the flight will leave Friday, but could not give an estimated time of arrival at CFB Trenton.

Hornburg, 24, died in Afghanistan on Monday while he tried to put a track back on a tank while under fire.

He is the 71st Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan since the mission began in 2002.

After arriving at CFB Trenton, a convoy will transport Hornburg's body to Toronto where an autopsy will be performed.

Canada won't ``bribe" Afghans after protest over civilian deaths: officer

DATE: 2007.09.27
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 429

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan _ A military official says Canada will continue to build ties with Afghans but won't rush in with ``bribes" because of a false belief that Canadian soldiers were involved in the deaths of two Afghan civilians.

Angry Afghans closed the main highway out of Kandahar city on Wednesday, blaming international troops, including Canada, for the deaths of a religious scholar and his brother during a raid on a suspected insurgent's home the night before.

Some of the approximately 500 protesters chanted ``Death to Canada," along with other nations involved in the war against the Taliban. Most of the anger was directed toward the United States.

Military officials say no Canadian soldiers were involved, but the family of the dead men demanded amends on Thursday.

``My cousins are killed illogically," said Abdul Hai, 25. ``They must be given compensation."

Qudratullah, an area elder at age 39, said the family should receive land or money for the deaths.

``There are 18 family members left at the same house, including children and women," said Qudratullah.

``Only one man remains at the family to feed the family, so that makes no sense that one man can feed the 18 family members."

But Lt. Derrick Farnham, spokesman for the Provincial Reconstruction Team that works closely with Afghans on development and rebuilding projects in Kandahar province, said that his team will not react by offering ``treats."

``That's something that's been done in the past and it's been termed `the great game' in Afghanistan, where locals play one side off the other in terms of getting treats and gifts," Farnham said Thursday.

``That's something we want to avoid."

``We don't want to be in a situation where we're seen as just bribing people who have a grudge against us because that puts us up against insurgents who can likewise bribe."

International forces have come under scathing criticism for the mounting toll of civilian casualties in Afghanistan. President Hamid Karzai has said these incidents undermine efforts to win the trust of the people.

Although verification is difficult as fighting continues, independent counts of civilian deaths by the United Nations and The Associated Press suggest about 600 civilians have been killed so far this year by both sides.

The international coalition says the Taliban has falsely reported civilian deaths in order to discredit foreign troops and undermine their efforts with the public.

Already, Farnham said there are areas where Canadians are just not welcome, particularly in the Zhari district, the birthplace of the Taliban movement and a stronghold of the insurgency.

“Zhari is peculiar because there's almost a straight line that separates one side from the other and we don't have good access to the side that doesn't want us there,” Farnham said.

There are areas where Canadians are just not wanted, he said, not because the residents themselves are insurgents but because of fear. “They're unwilling to take our assistance because of the fear,” Farnham said.

Getting ragtag Afghan National Police into shape – Canada's exit strategy

DATE: 2007.09.27

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 1009

PULCHAKAN, Afghanistan _ Mohammad Haq pulls up the sleeve of his black shalwar kameez to show the scar from a Taliban bullet. He has another on his right temple, one on his abdomen and another on his back.

Haq, 26, is an Afghan National policeman and he's one of the lucky ones.

He's alive.

He also appears to be stoned on a hot afternoon at the Pulchakan police substation.

Drug use is a known problem among the Afghan police, a ragtag bunch with many other shortcomings. Yet they are a cornerstone of Canada's exit strategy from this war-torn land.

In military talk, the Afghan National Police have a problem with ``survivability." It means they're dying and in great numbers.

The Pulchakan police substation is in the Zhari district of Kandahar, heartland of the Taliban and a place where 33 Afghan police were killed by insurgents this summer.

In July alone, 71 Afghan police were killed by insurgents in NATO's Regional Command South, which covers the provinces of Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul, Uruzgan and Nimruz of Afghanistan.

According to the International Crisis Group, approximately 630 Afghan policemen were killed in the year ending March 2007. The Afghan Interior Ministry says 500 have died since then.

``That's one of the reasons we've been put together," says Maj. Louis Lapointe, commander of the Police Operational Mentoring Liaison Team, a new program involving 50 Canadian military police and infantry who have just started training the Afghan police.

``The enemy they're facing is not a normal burglar or a normal thief," Lapointe says.

``They're facing insurgents who are well-equipped and they've got some kind of military training, which the police don't have."

The Afghan police also lack other important things.

Some of them have boots; others don't. Many seem to share a single uniform, while others don't even try to work in uniform, leaving them indistinguishable from farmers in a field or Taliban fighters.

They are notoriously corrupt, ill-equipped and poorly-trained _ if they're trained at all. A glaring example came earlier this month when Afghan police opened fire on Canadians as they approached a substation en route to a mission.

The youngest of the police are 12 to 14 years old, and few of them can read or write.

Yet an effective, functioning local police force is what's required before Canada and other foreign governments can scale back their presence without giving up the progress they've made.

Canadian military and political officials have ruled out negotiation with the Taliban to end the war. In theory, Afghan security forces should be ready to take on the burden of fighting the bloody insurgency themselves when international forces leave this sunbaked country.

But even now, NATO's International Security Assistance Force simply doesn't have the numbers to guard the ground they've gained from from the Taliban.

Referring to the nine Afghan police officers he and his colleagues have been training, Sgt. Jean-Pierre Dion said: "This is the future."

"This is how we're going to eventually leave Afghanistan," Dion said as he prepared for the night watch at the recently retaken Pashmul police substation in Zhari district.

Pashmul is one of four substations where Canadians are on site mentoring police.

The Pashmul station _ the term "checkpoint" has been abandoned due in part to the negative connotation of "taxes" collected unofficially by Afghan police _ was abandoned to the Taliban by police during the changeover of Canadian troops this summer.

Canadian troops recently took back control.

When the mentoring teams arrived, the police here were not working in shifts. The six to 10 national police who manned Pashmul woke when they woke, and kept an eye on the surrounding hills and fields when they kept an eye on the surrounding hills and fields.

As Canadians kept watch in tandem with Afghan police one night, a soldier confides that "if we weren't here, I don't think they'd be out here."

At the nearby Pulchakan substation, police slept in the fields outside the compound so that if the Taliban attacked, they wouldn't be killed.

They earn an average of about \$77 a month. Afghan officials have promised to raise that to about \$150 a month but it has yet to happen.

Ultimately, there are plans for upward of 80,000 Afghan policemen. But with such a staggering death rate, recruitment has fallen short _ far short.

Haji Murtaza runs a bakery in Kandahar city and he's seen first-hand the handiwork of corrupt police officers.

"Once a policeman came to my bakery and did some shopping, but in the end he was not going to pay me," says Murtaza, 55.

"He pulled his gun out on me, so I let him go."

Although he likes the idea of an independent Afghan force, Murtaza says they're not there yet.

"At the moment, Afghan forces can't defend themselves from the enemy, so it makes no sense that they will

be able to save civilians," he says.

Before he was ousted as chief of the provincial police in Kandahar, Sayed Aka Sakeeb acknowledged the problems, including poor education among recruits.

Sakeeb said his force was understaffed, the equipment was old and there was not enough of it.

“Sometimes, our guns don't fire,” he told an interpreter.

What he didn't mention is that police also sell their ammunition and equipment _ and they're not selling it back to international forces.

The uncertain status of Sakeeb himself, a warlord with his own militia, reflects the problems faced by the police. Rumours had circulated for a while that he was no longer police chief but he continued to act as one.

On Thursday, there were reports that Sakeeb had finally left his post, taking his militia and their weapons with him.

It has been a year since Canadians began a similar mentoring program with the Afghan army and results have been positive.

A police telephone line has been put in place in Kandahar _ a sort of Afghan 911 _ but so far only Taliban have called, to threaten police.

In the coming months, Afghan police will learn basic military skills from the Canadians, like weapons training and how to respond to an enemy ambush.

Two weeks into the program, the police mentoring team are all too aware of the obstacles ahead of them, yet they are determined.

“I've got a good group here,” says Sgt. Marc Langelier, whose team has been at the substation in Lakokwel for 12 days.

“Most of them are older and they've been fighters for many, many years.”

“They want to learn.”

But in this crumbling country, corruption and survival are deeply entwined and difficult to discourage.

“There is corruption,” admits Lapointe.

“Our soldiers are professional soldiers so they will lead by example.”

In the light of the moon at the substation in Pashmul, Afghan commander Mohammad Khan says he welcomes the Canadians.

“I like to work with them,” he tells visitors. “If they can stay two weeks or three weeks, that's good.”

Just 28, Khan is a veteran fighter and his eight policemen, all in uniform, are among the more promising in the new program.

Khan says they don't have body armour, enough ammunition or helmets. There aren't enough of them to

conduct proper patrols, and they don't have a vehicle or enough weapons.

But he is determined they will hold off insurgents once Canadians leave.

“We can do it,” he says through an interpreter.

Unlike most of the policemen in the district, Khan is from another province and has no tribal ties that affect his work.

“If you're good with the people, they're good with you,” he tells his visitors.

The next day, however, Canadian soldiers said they discovered that Khan had accepted money from a passing vehicle.

Earlier this week, one of the Canadian soldiers training Afghan police at Pashmul was shot in an ambush while on patrol. He remains in serious but stable condition in hospital.

2 Red Cross workers who helped free South Koreans abducted in Afghanistan

DATE: 2007.09.27

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE JUSTICE

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 293

KABUL _ Two foreigners from the International Red Cross who helped free South Korean captives last month have been kidnapped in Afghanistan after talking with militants about the release of a German hostage, officials said Thursday.

An official with reliable information said the two foreigners from the International Committee of the Red Cross had gone with their two Afghan drivers to Wardak province in central Afghanistan to discuss the release of a German man kidnapped in July.

All four ICRC staff were taken captive Wednesday afternoon, the official said on condition of anonymity.

The two foreigners had helped co-ordinate negotiations and the release of 19 South Korean captives late last month, the official said.

Ewaz Muslimyar, the police chief of Wardak province, confirmed the two foreigners were abducted in Salar district.

The number of kidnappings has spiked this year after the Taliban secured the release of five insurgent prisoners in exchange for a captive Italian journalist in March _ a heavily criticized swap many feared would encourage abductions.

The South Korean hostage crisis was another windfall for the Taliban, winning them face-to-face talks with South Korean government delegates.

Militants kidnapped 23 South Koreans July 19 in Ghazni province as they travelled by bus on a dangerous road from Kabul to volatile Kandahar in the south. Two hostages were killed; the rest were released after weeks of negotiations between the Taliban and the Korean delegation.

The talks were held at the ICRC office in Ghazni and ICRC officials drove to pick up the South Koreans after they were released.

The German engineer, Rudolf Blechschmidt, was abducted one day before the Koreans. It is believed he was initially taken by criminals in Wardak, then later handed over to the Taliban.

Blechschmidt is one of two German engineers and five Afghans who were snatched together. The other German was found dead of gunshot wounds July 21, while one of the Afghans managed to escape.

Body of latest Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan returns home today

DATE: 2007.09.27
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 149

TORONTO _ The body of the 71st Canadian soldier to die on the Afghan battlefield will return home today.

A military aircraft carrying the remains of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, a reservist with the King's Own Calgary Regiment, is due to arrive at CFB Trenton in Eastern Ontario at 5 p.m. ET.

Hornburg, 24, died in Afghanistan Monday while he tried to put a track back on a tank while under fire. He is the 71st Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan since the mission began in 2002.

After arriving at CFB Trenton, a convoy will transport Hornburg's body to Toronto where an autopsy will be performed.

Hornburg will be the first Afghan casualty to officially travel the Highway of Heroes since the stretch of Highway 401 from Trenton to Toronto was renamed by the Ontario government.

In a statement issued Wednesday, Hornburg's family said he was a leader of men, a true friend, a rock people could depend on and a man who represented "what all Canadians should strive to be."

Two Canadians wounded in Taliban ambush in southern Afghanistan

DATE: 2007.09.27
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 91

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan _ Two Canadian soldiers are recovering in hospital following a Taliban ambush.

The soldiers were part of an operation in the Panjwaii district where Canadians are re-establishing a police substation in an area known to be a stronghold for Taliban insurgents.

One of the wounded soldiers was shot in the leg. The other received shrapnel wounds from a rocket-propelled grenade at around 8:45 a.m. local time today.

Both are in stable condition in hospital at Kandahar Airfield.

As is customary, the names of the wounded soldiers were not released.

They were taking part in Operation Sadiz Sarbaaz, or Honest Soldier, the same operation that claimed the life of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg earlier in the week.

Taliban spokesman denies Afghan govt claim of arrest in southern Afghanistan

DATE: 2007.09.27
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 463

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan _ A man claiming to be the Taliban spokesman that Afghan authorities said they have captured called The Associated Press on Thursday to deny it.

"I've not been arrested," the spokesman Qari Yousef Ahmadi told the AP, disputing an Interior Ministry statement that he had been captured in southern Helmand province on Wednesday.

"I don't know if they arrested some innocent villager with the same name," he said, adding the government often claims to have killed or arrested Taliban leaders in reports later found to be false.

Ahmadi, who is one of the most public voices for the fundamentalist insurgency, called an AP reporter with whom he has frequent phone contact. The reporter recognized the voice as Ahmadi's.

The Interior Ministry said Ahmadi was taken into custody with his brother during a police operation Wednesday in the village of Sufiyan in Helmand _ a province wracked by some of the fiercest fighting in Afghanistan that has claimed more than 4,400 lives this year.

The Helmand provincial police chief confirmed that someone with Ahmadi's name had been arrested, but admitted it was possible that the captive just shared the Taliban spokesman's name.

"We have arrested Qari Yousef and his brother from a house yesterday, but I don't know which Qari Yousef it was or how many there are," said Helmand provincial police chief Mohammad Hussein Andiwai.

Another Taliban spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, had also contacted another AP reporter to dispute the Interior Ministry report, saying Ahmadi was free.

The Interior Ministry spokesman could not immediately be reached for further comment.

Ahmadi is the first person many journalists contact for Taliban comment on violence and kidnappings in Afghanistan.

As the Taliban has stepped up its insurgency against foreign troops and the Western-backed government of President Hamid Karzai in the past several years, it has made increasingly sophisticated efforts to communicate with the media.

But it remains virtually impossible to confirm the identity of Taliban spokesmen because they do not appear in public and communicate only by phone or text message. Nor is it possible to establish their location and exact ties to the militia's leadership.

Journalists say there are at least four Taliban militants claiming to be Ahmadi. Two AP reporters who have interviewed him several times said they have spoken with different men with different voices who have claimed to be Ahmadi. The AP did not use those comments.

Recently there have been two Taliban spokesmen _ Ahmadi, who covers southern Afghanistan, and Mujahid, who speaks on the militia's activities in the north and east.

Two other spokesmen have been arrested in the past two years and were swiftly replaced.

On Jan. 15, Afghan agents arrested Taliban spokesman Mohammad Hanif in eastern Nangarhar province near the border with Pakistan.

Afghanistan's intelligence service later distributed a video of what it said was Hanif, 26, being questioned and claiming that Pakistani intelligence was helping to hide Taliban leader Mullah Omar inside Pakistan _ a charge denied by Pakistan.

A predecessor of Hanif, Mullah Hakim Latifi, was arrested in 2005 by Pakistani police in southwestern Baluchistan province.

BC–Calendar–Afghan–Cda–Soldier, Advisory

DATE: 2007.09.27

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 49

Eds: Please delete the following from today's (Thursday's) calendar of news events. Repatriation is instead scheduled for Friday, Sept. 28.

CFB TRENTON, Ont. _ Repatriation ceremony for Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, who was killed in Afghanistan on Sept. 24. (5 p.m. at 8 Wing Trenton).

The Canadian Press Toronto

CP News Agenda for Friday, Sept. 28

DATE: 2007.09.27
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 771

p.m. ET: x–denotes wire, y–denotes picture, z–denotes graphics coverage. Copy from other events based on merit and availability. All times local unless otherwise noted. Queries about these events and stories in The Canadian Press report should be directed to the departments listed below (all phone numbers 416 area code): Main Desk (National News) 507–2150 World Desk 507–2165 Sports Desk 507–2154 Ontario Desk 507–2159 Photo Desk 507–2169 Specials Desk (Syndicated Copy) 507–2152 IT Desk (Technical Trouble) 507–2099 or 800–268–8149 WORLD

x–WASHINGTON _ Environment Minister John Baird attends U.S. Major Economies Meeting on Energy Security and Climate Change Agenda. (9 a.m.)

ATLANTIC

FREDERICTON _ New Brunswick Premier Shawn Graham speaks at the official opening of the Union of Municipalities of New Brunswick conference. (6 p.m. at Crowne Plaza Hotel, 659 Queen St.)

HALIFAX _ MP Gerald Keddy makes announcement on behalf of ACOA regarding Aboriginal economic development research. (12 p.m. at University Hall, MacDonald Bldg., Dalhousie University)

WOLFVILLE, N.S. _ Acadia University's student union holds a general meeting of the student body to discuss ongoing faculty negotiations (5 p.m. at University Hall, Acadia University)

QUEBEC

MONTREAL _ A conference on privacy and data protection ends. (9 a.m. at Sheraton Hotel, 1201 Rene–Levesque Blvd. W.)

OTTAWA

xy–OTTAWA _ Public hearings into the bombing of Air India Flight 182. (9:30 a.m. at Victoria Hall, Bytown Pavilion, 111 Sussex Drive OTTAWA _ Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy releases August bankruptcy statistics. (8:30 a.m. at [www.osb–bsf.gc.ca](http://www.osb-bsf.gc.ca))

ONTARIO

HAMILTON _ Chair of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority Rob MacIsaac will convene a meeting. Media welcome. (1:30 p.m. at Hamilton Convention Centre)

OTTAWA _ Ontario Green party Leader Frank de Jong attends town hall meeting with other party candidates. (Rideau Park United Church, 2203 Alta Vista Dr.)

SPRINGWATER, Ont. _ Jason Kenney, federal secretary of state or multiculturalism and Canadian identity, speaks at Barrie Multicultural Association meet and greet. (6:30 p.m. at Polish Alliance of Canada, 4782 County Road 90)

TORONTO _ Toronto EMS hosts provincial pre-hospital care conference. Through Sept. 28. (8:30 a.m. at Metro Toronto Convention Centre, South Tower, 255 Front St. W.)

TORONTO _ Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation holds ride for diabetes research. (9 a.m. at Nathan Phillips Square)

TORONTO _ Lt.-Gov. David Onley address annual general meeting of Ontario March of Dimes. (4 p.m. at York Reception Centre, 1100 Millwood Rd.)

TRENTON, Ont. _ Repatriation ceremony for Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, who was killed in Afghanistan on Sept. 24. (3 p.m. at CFB Trenton, 8 Wing)

PRAIRIES

CALGARY _ Trial for Robert Deer, charged with first-degree murder for allegedly hiring another man to kill Calgary financier Jack Beauchamp over a failed business deal. Through Oct. 5. (Court of Queen's Bench)

CALGARY _ Nicholas Chan, who had his conviction for dealing heroin overturned and a new trial ordered, appears in court for possible new trial date. (Court of Queens' Bench)

EDMONTON _ Dallas-based Affiliated Computer Services preliminary hearing into charges it offered bribes to Edmonton police officers to get its photo radar contract with the city renewed. Through Oct. 14.

EDMONTON _ Alberta Federation of Labour hosts a conference looking at the state of wages in Alberta. Keynote address by Sam Gindin of York University will be held Friday at 7 p.m. On Saturday at 9 a.m., the AFL and the Parkland Institute will release new research on the state of wages in Alberta. (Grant MacEwan College, downtown campus)

EDMONTON _ Edmonton Accordion Society holds various accordion-related concerts and competitions. Through Sept. 30.

WINNIPEG _ Trial for respite worker charged with sexually assaulting her 27-year-old mentally disabled client and letting a 70-year-old man impregnate the disabled woman. The accused then allegedly tried to extort money from him. Through Sept. 28. (Court of Queen's Bench)

WINNIPEG _ The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada holds its annual conference. To Saturday. (Winnipeg Convention Centre)

WINNIPEG _ Academics from many countries attend the biennial conference of the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association. To Sept. 29. (Fort Gary Hotel, 222 Broadway)

PRINCE ALBERT, Sask. _ Two youths charged with aggravated assault in the death of 18-year-old Dean Josie to have bail hearing.

SASKATOON _ Saskatoon cardiologist Dr. Carlos Huerto on trial for defrauding federal and provincial governments. Through Oct. 12.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

VANCOUVER _ Grant Fralic, Robert Juker, Ramoncito Veijon, James Mader stand trial for first-degree murder in death of Jody Elliott. Through Oct. 8. (10 a.m. at B.C. Supreme Court)

VANCOUVER _ Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day, Premier Gordon Campbell, UBCM president elect Susan Gimse and Mayor Malcolm Brodie, chair of the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority make an important infrastructure announcement. (9:30 a.m. at Meeting Rm 8, Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre, 300 – 999 Canada Place)

x-VANCOUVER _ IRB hearing for alleged Basque terrorist. (10 a.m. at 300 W. Georgia St., 16th Floor)

VANCOUVER _ Union of B.C. Municipalities annual convention concludes. Premier Gordon Campbell speaks at 11 a.m. (Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre)

Repatriation of Canadian Cpl. Nathan Hornburg delayed until Friday

DATE: 2007.09.27
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 106

TORONTO – The body of a Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan on Monday is now scheduled to return home on Friday, not today as initially planned.

Capt. Nicole Meszaros of CFB Trenton says a mechanical problem has developed in the Airbus aircraft that will carry the body of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg to the base in eastern Ontario.

Meszaros says the flight will leave Friday, but could not give an estimated time of arrival at CFB Trenton.

Hornburg, 24, died in Afghanistan on Monday while he tried to put a track back on a tank while under fire.

He is the 71st Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan since the mission began in 2002.

After arriving at CFB Trenton, a convoy will transport Hornburg's body to Toronto where an autopsy will be performed.

(The Canadian Press)

Two Canadians wounded in Taliban ambush in southern Afghanistan

DATE: 2007.09.27
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 93

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Two Canadian soldiers are recovering in hospital following a Taliban ambush.

The soldiers were part of an operation in the Panjwaii district where Canadians are re-establishing a police substation in an area known to be a stronghold for Taliban insurgents.

One of the wounded soldiers was shot in the leg. The other received shrapnel wounds from a rocket-propelled grenade at around 8:45 a.m. local time today.

Both are in stable condition in hospital at Kandahar Airfield.

As is customary, the names of the wounded soldiers were not released.

They were taking part in Operation Sadiz Sarbaaz, or Honest Soldier, the same operation that claimed the life of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg earlier in the week.

(The Canadian Press)

Afghan-Cda-Soldier

DATE: 2007.09.27
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 143

TORONTO – The body of the 71st Canadian soldier to die on the Afghan battlefield will return home today.

A military aircraft carrying the remains of Corporal Nathan Hornburg, a reservist with the King's Own Calgary Regiment, is due to arrive at C-F-B Trenton in Eastern Ontario at 5 p-m Eastern.

Hornburg, 24, died in Afghanistan Monday while he tried to put a track back on a tank while under fire.

He's the 71st Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan since the mission began in 2002.

After arriving at C-F-B Trenton, a convoy will transport Hornburg's body to Toronto where an autopsy will be performed.

Hornburg will be the first Afghan casualty to officially travel the Highway of Heroes since the stretch of Highway 401 from Trenton to Toronto was renamed by the Ontario government.

In a statement issued yesterday, Hornburg's family said he was a leader of men, a true friend, a rock people could depend on and a man who represented 'what all Canadians should strive to be.'

(The Canadian Press)

ADVISORY–Central–Canada–Calendar

DATE: 2007.09.27
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PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 1032

Here is the Central Canada calendar for Thursday, September 27, 2007

Good Morning from the Ontario Desk of Broadcast News in Toronto.

The Ontario Editor is Alan Black

The phone number is (416) 507–2185.

Stations wishing to file by fax can dial (416) 364–1325 or 1–800–561–0297.

The email address is newsbroadcastnews.ca

The Quebec Editor is Peter Ray

The phone number is (514) 985–7235.

Stations wishing to file by fax can dial (514) 849–7693.

QUEBEC

QUEBEC — Quebec Premier Jean Charest addresses Quebec federation of municipalities. (10 a.m. at Centre des congres de Quebec, 900 Rene–Levesque Blvd. E., Room 200)

QUEBEC — Transport Minister Lawrence Cannon makes announcement concerning rural municipal infrastructure funding. (11:30 a.m. at Centre des congres de Quebec, Room 302–A, 1000 boul. Rene–Levesque Est)

ST–LAMBERT, Que. — GRIS–Montreal (a gay and lesbian social intervention and research group) holds news conference for launch of report on homophobia in schools. (9:45 a.m. at College Durocher St–Lambert, pavilion Durocher, 857, rue Riverside)

MONT TREMBLANT, Que. — CIBC Sixth Annual Eastern Institutional Investor conference. Biovail presents at 8 ET, BMO at 8:35, Gildan Activewear at 9:10, TD at 10:35, Royal Bank, Rogers Communications and Labopharm at around 11:10 ET and CGI at 16:05. Through Sept. 28.

MONTREAL — Conference on privacy continues. (9 a.m. at Sheraton Hotel, 1201 Rene–Levesque Blvd. W.)

MONTREAL — Nick Rizzuto's bail hearing continues at the Montreal courthouse. (9:30 a.m. at Montreal Courthouse)

MONTREAL — Parti Quebecois Leader Pauline Marois addresses students sovereigntist group at Universite de Montreal. (12 p.m. at Universite de Montreal, 3200 Jean–Brillant, salle 2245, 2nd floor)

MONTREAL — Eric Siegel, president of Export Development Canada, speaks about a Canadian approach to increasing business growth. (12 p.m. at Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel, Rene Levesque Blvd. W., Grand Salon)

MONTREAL — Gaz Metro CEO speaks about the dilemma of energy producers. (12:15 p.m. at Ritz Carlton Hotel, 1228 Sherbrooke St. W., Oval Room)

MONTREAL — Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe and Henri Masse, head of the Quebec Federation of Labour, hold news conference to discuss the crisis in the forestry sector. (2 p.m. at Hotel Intercontinental, Salon Saint-Alexandre, 4th floor)

OTTAWA

GATINEAU, Que. --- Media preview of Glenn Gould The Sounds of Genius. Special performance by Marika Bournaki on Gould's Steinway. Exhibit opening (5:30 p.m. Grand Hall). (10:30 a.m. at Canadian Museum of Civilization, 100 Laurier St., Special Exhibitions Corridor)

OTTAWA --- National Child Exploitation Co-ordination Centre hosts, in collaboration the Ontario Provincial Police, workshop on investigative techniques for Internet child sexual exploitation. (Delta Hotel, 361 Queen St.)

OTTAWA --- Statistics Canada releases second-quarter national tourism indicators. (8:30 a.m. at www.statcan.ca)

OTTAWA --- Statistics Canada releases population estimates as of July 1, 2007. (8:30 a.m. at www.statcan.ca)

OTTAWA --- Institute of Marriage and Family Canada hosts a family policy conference. (9 a.m. at Sheraton Ottawa, 150 Albert St.)

OTTAWA --- City of Ottawa hosts local forum on poverty. (9 a.m. at Nepean Sportsplex, 1701 Woodroffe Ave.)

OTTAWA --- Public hearings into the bombing of Air India Flight 182. (9:30 a.m. at Victoria Hall, Bytown Pavilion, 111 Sussex Drive OTTAWA --- Supreme Court renders judgments in various leave applications. (9:45 a.m. at Supreme Court, 301 Wellington St.)

OTTAWA --- Affordable housing groups hold a news conference on a report entitled Where's the Money Gone: An Analysis of Declining Government Housing Expenditures. (10 a.m. at Room 130-S, Centre Block, Parliament Hill)

OTTAWA --- Provincial and national student groups hold news conference on Canada Student Loan Program. (10:30 a.m. at Room 130-S, Centre Block, Parliament Hill)

OTTAWA --- News conference on new autism research. (11 a.m. at Room 130-S, Centre Block, Parliament Hill)

OTTAWA --- The Canadian Newspaper Association holds news conference on complaint regarding media requests under the Access to Information Act. (1 p.m. at National Press Theatre, 150 Wellington St.)

OTTAWA --- Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation holds its Annual General Meeting. (2 p.m. at Marriott Hotel, 100 Kent St., Cartier Salon III)

OTTAWA --- Retired U.S. Supreme Court justice Sandra Day O'Connor delivers lecture on terrorism and the courts. (2:30 p.m. at University of Ottawa, Gowlings Moot Court room)

OTTAWA --- Business software provider Cognos hold second-quarter earnings conference call at 416-640-1907. Webcast at www.cognos.com (5:15 p.m.)

ONTARIO

CFB TRENTON, Ont. --- Repatriation ceremony for Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, who was killed in Afghanistan on Sept. 24. (5 p.m. at 8 Wing Trenton)

PETERBOROUGH, Ont. --- Canadian Auto Association news conference at CAA-approved repair shop to discuss cost of bad roads to motorists, safety and environment. (10 a.m. at Peterborough Transmission, 400 McDonnell St.)

TORONTO --- Toronto EMS hosts provincial pre-hospital care conference. Through Sept. 28. (8:30 a.m. at Metro Toronto Convention Centre, South Tower, 255 Front St. W.)

TORONTO --- Genum holds third-quarter earnings conference call. Dial 1-800-733-7560. (9 a.m.)

TORONTO --- Conference Board of Canada releases report on shortage of skilled workers in Ontario. (10 a.m. at George Brown College, Casa Loma Campus, room C305, 160 Kendal Ave.)

TORONTO --- Humber River Regional Hospital holds mock chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear exercise to test response capabilities. (10 a.m. at Humber River Regional Hospital, Finch Avenue Site, Finch Avenue and Highway 400)

TORONTO --- Conference Board of Canada releases report forecasting serious shortage of skilled workers in Ontario. (10 a.m. at George Brown College, Casa Loma campus, 160 Kendal Ave., room C305)

TORONTO --- Hollinger Inc. annual meeting. (10 a.m. at Ramada Hotel, 300 Jarvis St.)

TORONTO --- Coalition of community groups holds news conference to discuss alleged hate crimes against Asians in Lake Simcoe-area fishing spots. (10 a.m. at City Hall, Committee Room C)

TORONTO --- Prime Minister Stephen Harper makes unspecified announcement. Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty also to attend. (11 a.m. at Canada Revenue Agency Building, library, 1 Front St. W.)

TORONTO --- York University hosts panel on electoral reform (1 p.m. at York University, Recital Hall, Accolade East, Keele Campus)

TORONTO --- Sylvie Boucher, MP for Beauport-Limoilou and parliamentary secretary for La Francophonie and Official Languages, speaks at opening ceremonies of annual conference of l'Association canadienne d'education de langue francaise to honour organization's 60th anniversary. (7 p.m. at Doubletree International Plaza Hotel, Pearson International Airport, 655 Dixon Rd.)

TORONTO --- Ontario Superior Court of Justice holds a hearing to consider the inclusion of Pet Valu in a class action lawsuit against Menu Foods Income Fund.

TORONTO --- AltaGas Income Trust holds Investor Day. Call 1-877-691-7199 to register. (ING Leadership Centre, The Exchange Tower)

TORONTO --- Ontario provincial Conservative leader John Tory speaks on upcoming election. (Sheraton Centre Hotel, Osgoode Ballroom)

UNDATED --- The Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association releases study examining drinking water. To obtain study and arrange interviews contact Dena Fehir at 416-777-0368 or denaprpost.ca

WINONA, Ont. --- E.D. Smith Income Fund holds special meeting.

COLLINGWOOD, Ont. --- Ontario Home Builders' Association conference holds annual general meeting and conference. Through Sept. 27. (Blue Mountain Resort)

BRAMPTON, Ont. --- Rally in support of nurses at William Osler Health Centre, who say they are losing experienced health-care workers to other facilities. (12 p.m. at William Osler Health Centre, 20 Lynch St., outside main doors)

MARATHON, Ont. --- Town of Marathon and Hemlo Operations host annual Marathon-Hemlo Mining and Prospecting Expo. Through Sept. 27.

Fedelxn–Buzz

DATE: 2007.09.27

KEYWORDS: POLITICS

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 115

OTTAWA -- The election buzz in Ottawa is getting louder.

The federal Liberals have leased an election war room, gassed up the campaign buses and told organizers to get ready for a possible fall vote.

The Conservatives have had a campaign complex up and running in Ottawa for months.

And the Bloc and N–D–P are also talking about the increasing likelihood of a fall vote.

It all depends on the Harper government's policy–setting throne speech next month.

The Bloc and N–D–P have already dropped strong hints they'll vote down the throne speech, which means the survival of Stephen Harper's minority government may depend on Liberal Leader Stephane Dion.

Dion left the door open yesterday to supporting the Tories, provided they address four Liberal priorities -- the environment, the economy, poverty, and Afghanistan.

Earlier this week the prime minister predicted a fall vote would probably result in another minority government.

(The Canadian Press)

ScH

Afghan-Cda-Protest

DATE: 2007.09.27
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 156

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan _ A military official says Canada won't rush in with "bribes" because of a false belief that Canadian soldiers were involved in the deaths of two Afghan civilians.

Angry Afghans closed the main highway out of Kandahar city yesterday blaming international troops -- including Canadians -- for the deaths of a religious scholar and his brother.

The two died during a raid on a suspected insurgent's home the night before.

Some of the approximately 500 protesters chanted "Death to Canada," along with other countries involved in the war against the Taliban, although most of the anger was directed toward the United States.

Military officials say no Canadian soldiers were involved.

The family of the dead men has demanded reparations in the form of land or money.

But Lieutenant Derrick Farnham, spokesman for the reconstruction team that works with Afghans in Kandahar province, said the group will not react by offering what he called "treats."

Farnham says the Canadians don't want to pay off people who harbour a grudge because as it plays them against insurgents who offer bribes.

(The Canadian Press)

RvA

INDEX:International, Defence

DATE: 2007.09.27

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 73

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – A man claiming to be the Taliban spokesman Afghan authorities say they've captured has called The Associated Press on Thursday to deny it.

Qari Yousef Ahmadi disputes an Interior Ministry statement that says he had been captured in southern Helmand province a day earlier.

He says perhaps Afghan authorities arrested 'some innocent villager' who shares his name.

Ahmadi called an AP reporter with whom he has frequent phone contact. The reporter recognized the voice as Ahmadi's.

(The Associated Press)

US-Iraq

DATE: 2007.09.27
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 111

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration is asking Congress for almost 190– (b) billion dollars U–S for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in the coming year.

That's an increase of more than a third over initial projections.

In remarks prepared for a Senate hearing, U–S Defense Secretary Robert Gates says an extra 42– (b) billion dollars is needed.

He says the money would be used to buy vehicles that can protect troops against roadside bombs, refurbish worn equipment and consolidate U–S bases in Iraq.

In the prepared remarks obtained by The Associated Press, Gates says he is aware that the war in Iraq will continue to be a source of friction between the U–S president and Congress.

He says the Iraq war is one of several difficult choices America faces in the war on terror.

(The Associated Press)

NMC

TOR OUT YYY

DATE: 2007.09.27

KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 280

Tensions are escalating this morning in Myanmar.

Soldiers have fired warning shots above a new wave of pro–democracy demonstrators in downtown Yangon.

About 70–thousand anti–government demonstrators are braving a crackdown that has drawn international appeals for Myanmar's ruling junta to exercise restraint.

Witnesses say at least one man had been shot. (4)

(Afghan–Cda–Soldier) (Audio: 37)

C–F–B Trenton, Ontario, is preparing to host another solemn repatriation ceremony, when the plane carrying another fallen Canadian soldier returns home later today.

The body of Calgary–based reservist Corporal Nathan Hornburg is due to arrive in Trenton at 5 p–m Eastern.

Hornburg was killed in a mortar attack Monday near Kandahar City -- the 71st Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan since 2002. (4)

(Fed Elxn–Buzz)

The election buzz in Ottawa is getting louder every day.

The Liberals have leased an election war room, and have told organizers to get ready for a possible fall vote.

This, despite Liberal Leader Stephane Dion's latest comments that he may support the Tories' throne speech next month. (4)

(BIZ–Loonie–Pricing) (Audio: 02)

The loonie continues to hold its own since its meteoric rise to reach parity with the U–S dollar last week.

Yet, Canadians are still seeing double pricetags on small–ticket items like books, magazines, hair clips and greeting cards -- there's a Canadian price, and a lower U–S price on the same product.

But shoppers shouldn't expect to see the Canadian price coming down anytime soon.

Insiders say retailers often purchase goods at fixed exchange rates long before items reach consumers. (4)

(MUSIC–Spector)

The L–A prosecutor's office and the family of slain actress Lana Clarkson vow to press the murder case against music producer Phil Spector.

They're furious the judge declared a mistrial yesterday, after the jury reported it was deadlocked 10–2 in favour of convicting Spector.

Prosecutors will seek the court's permission next week to try him again. (4)

(ENT–Trekkies–Vulcan)

Some Trekkies in the tiny Canadian town of Vulcan, Alberta, think it only makes sense that the premiere of the new ``Star Trek" movie should be there.

That's because ``Star Trek 11" includes a storyline about the Young Spock, who's from the planet Vulcan.

The Alberta Film Commission will take Vulcan's proposal to an industry meeting in Los Angeles later this year.

``Star Trek 11" is scheduled to be released on Christmas Day 2008. (4)

(NewsWatch by Karen Rebot)

Afghan–Kidnappings

DATE: 2007.09.27

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE JUSTICE

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 138

KABUL _ Officials say two foreigners from the International Red Cross who helped free South Korean captives last month have been kidnapped in Afghanistan after talking with militants about the release of a German hostage.

An official with reliable information says the two foreigners had gone with their two Afghan drivers to Wardak province in central Afghanistan to discuss the release of a German man kidnapped in July.

The official says all four were taken captive yesterday.

The two foreigners had helped co–ordinate negotiations and the release of 19 South Korean captives late last month.

Ewaz Muslimyar, the police chief of Wardak province, confirms the two foreigners were abducted in Salar district.

The number of kidnappings has spiked this year after the Taliban secured the release of five insurgent prisoners in exchange for a captive Italian journalist in March _ a heavily criticized swap many feared would encourage abductions.

The Associated Press

TA

Afghan-Cda-Soldier-Death

DATE: 2007.09.27
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 112

C-F-B TRENTON, Ontario -- Another solemn repatriation ceremony will take place today at C-F-B Trenton in eastern Ontario.

The plane carrying the body of Corporal Nathan Hornburg, the latest Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan, is due to arrive at 5 p-m Eastern.

The 24-year-old reservist with the King's Own Calgary Regiment was killed Monday in a mortar attack near Kandahar City.

The attack happened while Hornburg, a mechanic, tried to put a track back on a tank.

He's the 71st Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan since this country's Afghan mission began in 2002.

Defence Minister Peter MacKay will be among the dignitaries who will be on hand when the body arrives.

Hornburg's family released a statement saying he ``represented the best of all of us," and ``represented what all Canadians should strive to be."

(The Canadian Press)

wfm

TOR OUT YYY

DATE: 2007.09.27

KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 275

Another solemn repatriation ceremony will be held today at C-F-B Trenton in eastern Ontario.

The body of Corporal Nathan Hornburg, the 71st Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan, is due to arrive at the military base at 5 p-m Eastern and will be driven to Toronto.

The 24-year-old reservist based in Calgary was killed in a mortar attack Monday west of Kandahar. (3)

(Afghan-Kidnapping)

Two workers with the International Red Cross who helped free 19 South Korean captives in Afghanistan last month have themselves been kidnapped.

The two foreigners were abducted yesterday.

They'd gone with their two Afghan drivers to Wardak province to speak with militants about releasing a German man kidnapped in July. (3)

(Myanmar-Protests)

Soldiers have fired warning shots this morning above a crowd of an estimated 70-thousand anti-government demonstrators in the capital of Myanmar.

Tear gas was fired at the crowd as well.

Earlier, soldiers raided Buddhist monasteries, beating and arresting monks. (3)

(Toy-Recall)

Concerns about too much lead in the paint have prompted more toy recalls in North America.

The recall involves more than 600-thousand toys and children's necklaces made in China.

Among the recalled items are five more products from R-C-2 Corporation's "Thomas and Friends Wooden Railway" line.

About 27-thousand of the affected toys were sold in Canada.

This is the second recall from the Thomas line in three months. (3)

(US-Auto-GM)

Tens of thousands of auto workers are back on the job at 80 General Motors facilities in the U-S.

They returned to work yesterday, after G–M and the U–A–W reached a tentative deal to end a two–day strike.

Production resumed for yesterday's afternoon shift at G–M Canada's two car–assembly plants in Oshawa, Ontario, and will resume today at the transmission plant in Windsor.

All three plants were idled after running out of parts from the U–S. (3)

(EBay–Taxman) (Audio: 07)

If you're among the growing number of Canadians who sell a lot of stuff on EBay, you need to beware of the taxman.

Canada Revenue Agency has won a Federal Court order requiring EBay Canada to turn over the names, phone numbers, addresses and e–mail addresses of its high–volume sellers.

The Globe and Mail says the agency wants to see if people with monthly sales topping one–thousand dollars reported all income made online, to ensure the taxman gets his cut. (3)

(NewsWatch by Karen Rebot)

Taliban kill 2 Danish soldiers, four Red Cross staffers seized

IDNUMBER 200709280045
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A15
DATELINE: KABUL, Afghanistan
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse
WORD COUNT: 151

KABUL, Afghanistan (AFP) — Four Red Cross staff, two of them foreigners, were held by unknown kidnapers yesterday as military officials announced two Danish soldiers were killed in a new attack by extremist Taliban fighters.

An overnight operation near the border with Pakistan, meanwhile, killed 18 Taliban, a provincial official said, adding there were some civilian casualties although he could not confirm claims that eight were killed.

The International Committee of the Red Cross employees were captured Wednesday about 50 kilometres from Kabul while on a mission to secure the release of a German engineer kidnapped 10 weeks ago, officials said.

Security forces had yesterday afternoon surrounded the "armed thieves" who abducted the four, said Anayatullah Mangal, governor of Sayed Abad district, where the group was snatched.

He was optimistic the group would be freed quickly but by late yesterday there had been no progress.

A Taliban spokesman said his group was not involved in the disappearance of the Red Cross workers.

Van Doos take steps to counter anti-Canada talk; Troops caught between factions amid rumour of deadly home raid

IDNUMBER 200709280044
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A15
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher and Meagan Fitzpatrick
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 402

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — The Van Doo battle group intends "to do a lot of listening" to better understand Afghan concerns following a street protest this week in Zhari District at which Canada was denounced amid allegations that they had entered a home and fatally shot two mullahs — allegations that Canada has denied.

"To a great extent, just giving them a forum can really count," said Lt. Derrick Farnham, a liaison officer with Joint Task Force Afghanistan.

But Farnham said Canada would not get involved in the centuries old "Great Game," of trying to play Afghan factions against each other.

Pointing to a map, Farnham said Zhari was "peculiar" because a line could be drawn with the tribes of the eastern half of Zhari enjoying good relations with the Afghan government and Canadian troops and the tribes of western half mostly opposed to the government and the Canadians. Inevitably, these two groups also had differences with each other.

Because only one group was willing to deal with Canada, Farnham said: "It is quite possible it may harden attitudes" on the other side, but Canada had little choice if only one group wished to establish relations.

"After 30 years of revolt and fighting, to think it is just going to end because we're here is unrealistic," Farnham said. The key, he said, was to take small steps to establish good governance.

A Van Doo officer at Patrol Base Wilson in Zhari District repeated what had been said a day earlier by colleagues in Kandahar, categorically denying that Canadian troops had any part in the alleged raid earlier this week.

Enlisted troops at the same small base were incredulous that such allegations had been made.

Elsewhere, two soldiers from the Van Doo battle group were wounded yesterday morning in Panjwaii, approximately 40 kilometres west of the Kandahar military base. They came under fire when insurgents attacked a joint Canadian-Afghan army patrol near a new police station using rocket-propelled grenades and small weapons.

Van Doos take steps to counter anti-Canada talk; Troops caught between factions amid rumour of deadly home raid

The soldiers suffered gunshot and shrapnel wounds to their legs. Both men were listed in stable condition.

One of the two wounded soldiers, whose names will not be released, was to be flown to Landstuhl, Germany, for specialized treatment at a U.S. military hospital.

The incident happened at 8:45 a.m. local time. The injured soldiers were evacuated from the scene by helicopter.

At the time of the attack, Canadian troops were participating in a joint mission, Operation Sadiq Sarbaaz, with Afghan national security forces near a site where a new police substation is under construction in the northern part of Panjwaii.

Once the troops came under fire they were successful in securing the area, said Lt. Isabelle Riche, a public affairs officer with the Defence Department.

Canadians won't pay 'bribe' after slaying of Afghan cleric 'No Canadian force was involved'

IDNUMBER 200709280064
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: World And Comment
PAGE: AA01
BYLINE: Bruce Campion-Smith
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 564

Canadian officials have moved quickly to assure Afghan officials that their troops played no part in this week's shooting deaths of a local religious leader and his brother.

But military officers say they won't rush to use development projects to appease simmering public anger over the deaths, which prompted some 500 Afghans to block a highway west of here Wednesday.

"We don't want to be in a situation where we're seen as just bribing people who have a grudge against us," said Lieut. Derrick Farnham, a Canadian who works with the civil-military team on reconstruction.

"That's something that's been done in the past and it's been termed the great game in Afghanistan where locals play one side off the other in terms of getting treats and gifts. That's something we want to avoid," he said.

"There's been too long a history in Afghanistan of giving things and doing projects to try and solve problems. That's not the goal at all. It's to re-establish a country and make it work by itself."

Tensions have been running high since Tuesday when residents say foreign soldiers killed the two men during house raids in Senjaray, a community west of Kandahar.

A Canadian official said the two men were Taliban insurgents.

Still, the deaths prompted a rare public demonstration as residents blocked a main highway. Chanting "death to Canada" and "death to foreigners," they called for international troops to be sent home.

"I can assure you that no Canadian force was involved in that operation," one military official said yesterday. "Right now we're talking to the governor to explain to him that it was not a Canadian operation."

Despite Canadian denials, the family of the dead men demanded that amends be made.

"My cousins are killed illogically," Abdul Hai, 25, said yesterday. "They must be given compensation."

An area elder said the family should receive land or money for the deaths.

"There are 18 family members left at the same house, including children and women," said Qudratullah, 39. "Only one man remains at the family to feed the family, so that makes no sense that one man can feed the 18

family members."

The Senjaray neighbourhood is in Zhari district, a traditional home for Taliban activity. Because it doesn't support the government, it's lost out on lucrative redevelopment contracts.

"We don't have good access to the side that doesn't want us there. We operate fairly well in that half of the district that wants us. And we want to help them," Farnham said.

But he said when those in the disenchanted district see improvements happening elsewhere, they'll get "jealous" and seek help.

"Our response will easily be ... let us help you," he said.

Still, he conceded that the lack of opportunities might harden attitudes among those residents.

"But we are not invited in to many areas. We have tried to do development there. We're not wanted."

Farnham admitted the simmering public anger – and the problems that produce them – won't be so easily settled.

"There's been good reason to be disenchanted with Afghanistan for 30 years and it's not something we can solve overnight," he said.

"There's been 30 years of revolts and fighting. To think that it's going to end just because we're here is not reasonable. There are going to be problems no matter what we do. We're going to try and minimize the problems."

Meanwhile, two Canadian soldiers are recovering in hospital after being wounded yesterday during a morning firefight with insurgents in the Panjwaii district.

One soldier was shot in the leg; the other suffered shrapnel wounds from a rocket-propelled grenade. They were evacuated to the medical facility at the Kandahar airfield, where they were in stable condition last night. It's expected one soldier will be taken to Landstuhl, Germany for further treatment.

The action happened in an area west of Ma'sum Ghar where Canadians conducted an offensive Monday to retake territory for a police substation.

As a result of operations over the last several weeks to reinforce territory and establish these new stations, a pocket of Taliban insurgents are now surrounded in Zhari district. Canadians are hoping they'll lay down their weapons.

With files from The Canadian Press

Harper and Tory strategist reveal dark side

IDNUMBER 200709270184
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.09.27
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: News
PAGE: A19
BYLINE: James Travers
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 561

It's delicious that Stephen Harper's contrasts were so evident this week in New York, the home of the black-and-white cookie. For those unacquainted with the deli treat, one side of the lemony shortbread is frosted with dark chocolate, the other creamy vanilla.

Personal preference usually determines the first bite. But digesting the Prime Minister's Manhattan performance demands the Protestant ethic discipline of leaving the choicest bits for last.

At the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations, Harper was at his impressive best. Showing parts of his political persona too rarely seen here, he was consistently thoughtful, impeccably briefed and appropriately amusing.

It's not that questions lobbed by an informed audience were softball. They spanned the current affairs spectrum from Arctic sovereignty to affection for Canada in a world that loves to hate America. In remarks and answers, Harper mixed unusual candour with the common ploy used by travelling prime ministers to distance themselves from the U.S. and particularly from an unpopular president.

Harper only nibbled on the dark side when straying, as he so often does internationally, into domestic politics. Speaking over the heads of American academics to Canadian voters, he concluded that minority governments are now the Ottawa norm and that the next election isn't likely to produce an exception.

It's not surprising Harper would seize any opportunity to exaggerate ballot box safeguards on ruling party power. An election is in the fall wind and nothing stands more squarely in the way of a Conservative majority than fear of a Conservative majority.

But in being too clever by half, the Prime Minister went a step too far and at just the wrong moment. His transparently false musing that strategists wouldn't like him saying what is clearly in party interest follows too closely Tom Flanagan's revelations of coldly calculating Conservative methods.

In a new book and seemingly everywhere else, Flanagan, Harper's 2004 campaign chairman, lays bare cynicism that would make even Liberals blush. Distilled to its essence, the archconservative Calgary professor argues that rather than give Canadians the government they want, Conservatives must manipulate voters until they elect one they don't.

Remarkable for its sophistication and expediency, Flanagan's template gains credibility from two campaigns, one losing, one winning. But its immediacy is rooted in an October throne speech that may well end in the

government engineering its own defeat as well as in a Tuesday report that the defence department crafted the speech Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai presented to Parliament a year ago.

Pushing the country into an election while blaming the opposition is a standard gambit that only needs to be seen for what it is to be fairly judged. But using non-partisan public institutions, particularly the military, for the political purpose of surreptitiously moulding national opinion is as slippery a slope as appointing a bureaucrat with Tory ties to lead the RCMP.

Both decisions would be worrying even if an inner circle Conservative wasn't making it so clear how far the party will go to gain unfettered power and how anxious it is to fully apply its ideology. But Flanagan is and that adds caveats to even the Prime Minister's most persuasive performances.

Harper in peak form remains the most palatable part of the Conservative cookie. But the dark half still leaves the same old bitter taste, one that would be unhealthy to acquire.

James Travers' national affairs column appears Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Reasonable solution

IDNUMBER 200709280054
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A15
BYLINE: Ron Santana
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 245

Re: Election rule change favours Musharraf, Sept. 18

The political and constitutional difficulties facing Pakistan will be dealt with by this country's judiciary and political parties but violations of human rights such as freedom of assembly and free speech are a concern to the rest of the world. The recent arrests of opposition party leaders and activists do not bode well for democracy.

While the populous South Asian nation has been switching between democracy and military rule for most of the six decades of independence, Canadians are interested in a stable Pakistan as that country has nuclear weapons and a missile delivery system. If the nuclear arsenal falls into wrong hands, the consequences for the region and the rest of the world are truly frightening. An unstable Pakistan may also place Canadian troops in neighbouring Afghanistan in greater danger.

Pakistan has a highly educated middle class with a large number of lawyers who are, under trying circumstances, spearheading the constitutional struggle to maintain democratic rights, which the military does not seem to value. At the same time, that country also has fundamentalist parties that preach extremism.

I hope that the country comes to a reasonable solution to the problem of the army chief of staff doubling up as the country's president which many think is not a good thing. Pakistan deserves Canada's support in preserving democracy and for the development of the country.

Ron Santana,

Ottawa

Van Doos doing 'a lot of listening' following protests; Canadians find themselves in zone of divided loyalties

IDNUMBER: 200709280019
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A6
DATELINE: KANDAHAR
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher and Meagan Fitzpatrick
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen; With files from Agence France–Press
WORD COUNT: 526

KANDAHAR – The Van Doos battle group intends "to do a lot of listening" to better understand Afghan concerns following a street protest this week in Zhari District at which Canada was denounced with allegations that they had entered a home and fatally shot two mullahs — allegations that Canada has denied.

"To a great extent, just giving them a forum can really count," said Lieut. Derrick Farnham, a liaison officer with Joint Task Force Afghanistan.

But Lieut. Farnham said Canada would not get involved in the centuries–old "Great Game," of trying to play Afghan factions against each other.

Pointing to a map, Lieut. Farnham said Zhari was "peculiar" because a line could be drawn with the tribes of the eastern half of Zhari enjoying good relations with the Afghan government and Canadian troops and the tribes of western half mostly opposed to the government and the Canadians. Inevitably, these two groups also had differences with each other.

Because only one group was willing to deal with Canada, Lieut. Farnham said: "It is quite possible it may harden attitudes" on the other side, but Canada had little choice if only one group wished to establish relations.

"After 30 years of revolt and fighting, to think it is just going to end because we're here is unrealistic," Lieut. Farnham said. The key, he said, was to take small steps to establish good governance.

A Van Doos officer at Patrol Base Wilson in Zhari District repeated what had been said a day earlier by colleagues in Kandahar, categorically denying that Canadian troops had any part in the alleged raid earlier this week.

Enlisted troops at the same small base were incredulous that such allegations had been made.

Elsewhere, two soldiers from the Van Doos battle group were wounded yesterday morning in Panjwaii, approximately 40 kilometres west of the Kandahar military base. They came under fire when insurgents attacked a joint Canadian–Afghan army patrol near a new police station using rocket–propelled grenades and small weapons.

Van Doos doing 'a lot of listening' following protests; Canadians find themselves in zone of divided loyalties

The soldiers suffered gunshot and shrapnel wounds to their legs. Both men were listed in stable condition.

One of the two wounded soldiers, whose names will not be released, was to be flown to Landstuhl, West Germany, for specialized treatment at a U.S. military hospital.

The incident happened at 8:45 a.m. Afghan time. The injured soldiers were rescued from the scene by helicopter.

At the time of the attack, Canadian troops were participating in a joint mission, Operation Sadiq Sarbaaz, with Afghan national security forces near a site where a new police substation is under construction in the northern part of Panjwahi.

Once the troops came under fire, they were successful in securing the area, said Lieut. Isabelle Riche, a public affairs officer with the Defence Department.

Also yesterday, four Red Cross staff, two of them foreigners, were being held by unknown kidnappers as military officials announced two Danish soldiers were killed in a new attack by extremist Taliban fighters.

The International Committee of the Red Cross employees were captured Wednesday about 50 kilometres from Kabul while on a mission to secure the release of a German engineer kidnapped 10 weeks ago, officials said.

Security forces yesterday had surrounded the "armed thieves" who abducted the four, said Anayatullah Mangal, governor of Sayed Abad district, where the group was snatched.

An overnight operation near the border with Pakistan, meanwhile, killed 18 Taliban, a provincial official said, adding there were some civilian casualties, although he could not confirm claims that eight were killed.

Peace Arch message: Bring the troops home

IDNUMBER 200709280046
PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial
PAGE: A15
COLUMN: Sound Off
KEYWORDS: WAR; IRAQ; ARMED FORCES; UNITED STATES
BYLINE: Jim Sinclair and Rick Bender
SOURCE: Special to the Sun
WORD COUNT: 327

Working people from both sides of the border will gather Saturday at the Peace Arch border crossing to send a strong message to both our governments -- it's time to bring our troops home.

Organizations representing more than 800,000 workers have come to the same conclusion. It is not because we are afraid to fight that we are opposed. Working people are fighters. Our countries have been built by the struggle and sacrifices of ordinary citizens acting with extraordinary courage.

As trade union leaders, we are challenged to speak out because it is the daughters and sons of working people whose lives are being wasted.

The cost of continuing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is enormous. More than 3,000 Americans have been killed and 30,000 have been wounded. While Canadians have not died at the same level (71 deaths), they have the highest death rates. A Canadian soldier in Kandahar is nearly six times as likely to die as an American in Iraq.

We have sacrificed our sisters and brothers in wars that have no victories, wars that do not bring freedom to these countries, but violence, death and insecurity. If the death tolls of the invading countries are high, the toll in Iraq is truly staggering.

As the tolls climb, so does the economic cost. Staggering amounts of public money (working people's taxes) support these wars while living standards decline and poverty grows on both sides of the border.

As well, both countries have fallen far short of our commitments to providing foreign aid to developing countries.

George W. Bush and Steven Harper lead governments that continue, despite mounting evidence to the contrary, to demand more money to bring "peace" to the region. After six years of war and massive military and civilian casualties, peace is no closer and the people of both countries know it.

We want to conclude by extending our sympathy to the families of the young men and women in both countries who have died.

Jim Sinclair is president of the British Columbia Federation of Labour; Rick Bender is president of the Washington State Labor Council.

Building trust tricky business

SOURCETAG 0709280684
PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 11
BYLINE: RICHARD LATENDRESSE
COLUMN: In Afghanistan
WORD COUNT: 432

It takes a while for soldiers to trust a reporter. They're a defensive bunch — even when it comes to journalists. But I've noticed that after you've been on operations, on patrol or simply sharing a military tent, the guard comes down.

After a month with Canadian soldiers in southern Afghanistan, they were willing to talk. And in some cases, willing to share with me that they feel they're wasting their time here. Some of the Canadians talk about how ungrateful — devious, even — the locals are, as they smile at NATO forces by day and collaborate with the enemy by night.

Granted, it's a small number, but those soldiers on the ground are not alone in their pessimism.

The Afghanistan mission is seen as a failure by 69% of Germans, 66% of Italians and 63% of British and French respondents to an international Angus Reid poll released last month. Of the Canadians sampled, 49% think the operation is futile.

Before leaving Kandahar, I sat down with the top Canadian soldier in Afghanistan, Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche. I wanted three concrete examples that this mission is a success.

SAFETY

He cited improved safety in parts of the region, a better capacity for Afghans to run their own affairs — in particular, the progress in training Afghan soldiers — and reconstruction in the country.

All of that may be true, but it's in very small doses.

I did chat with locals in villages repopulated under better security. But I came across just as many abandoned villages.

I did see Afghan soldiers risking their lives in combat. But it was obvious that without Canadian support, they'd surely be wiped off the map. Afghan police are still just a joke.

As for the reconstruction, success stories are few. I did witness thriving communities — the military happened to visit them while a journalist was on board. Otherwise, I probably wouldn't have seen any.

Laroche is not wrong. But what he's describing is an Afghanistan in motion, and the country I saw is pretty numb. Between the optimism of the top soldier and the desperation of the less confident, there are real Afghans grasping at the chance to lead a normal life.

There was pain in the eyes of locals asked to collaborate with Canadian soldiers or with the young Afghan army, afraid the Taliban will catch up with them.

So it goes. Canadian soldiers spend a few hours in a village, then move out, leaving the villagers on their own.

If the Canadians don't revisit these villages in the coming days and weeks, and especially if they disappear altogether after February 2009, like so many in Ottawa want, progress made will disintegrate.

NO REPLACEMENTS

Other members of NATO are not eager to make their mark on the south of this poor country. Once the Canadians leave, the Afghans will be abandoned, just like they already fear.

What's needed most — not only from our soldiers but from all Canadians — is patience. Years of patience. Otherwise, all the energy, money, and especially the 70 Canadian lives lost there, will have been wasted.

Once again, we would be leaving behind Afghans who want a real life, and who are counting on us to help them succeed.

WI Building trust tricky business

SOURCETAG 0709280380
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 22
BYLINE: RICHARD LATENDRESSE
DATELINE: Afghanistan
WORD COUNT: 432

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Injured Canuck soldiers recover in Kandahar

SOURCETAG 0709280372
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 14
BYLINE: THE CANADIAN PRESS
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
WORD COUNT: 82

Two Canadian soldiers are recovering in hospital following a Taliban ambush.

The soldiers were part of an operation in the Panjwaii district where Canadians are re-establishing a police substation in an area known to be a stronghold for Taliban insurgents.

One of the wounded soldiers was shot in the leg. The other received shrapnel wounds from a rocket-propelled grenade at around 8:45 a.m. yesterday.

Both are in stable condition in hospital at Kandahar Airfield.

As is customary, the names of the wounded soldiers were not released.

They were taking part in Operation Sadiz Sarbaaz, or Honest Soldier, the same operation that claimed the life of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg earlier in the week. **KEYWORDS=CANADA**

Fallen soldier coming home

SOURCETAG: 0709280371
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 14
ILLUSTRATION: photo of NATHAN HORNBURG Will travel Highway of Heroes
BYLINE: THE CANADIAN PRESS
WORD COUNT: 182

The body of a Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan on Monday is scheduled to return home today, not yesterday as initially planned.

Capt. Nicole Meszaros of CFB Trenton says a mechanical problem developed in the Airbus aircraft that will carry the body of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg to the base in eastern Ontario.

The repatriation ceremony for Hornburg will begin at 3 p.m. Present to pay their respects will be Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada Michaëlle Jean, Minister of National Defence Peter MacKay and other dignitaries.

Hornburg, 24, a reservist with the King's Own Calgary Regiment, died in Afghanistan while he tried to put a track back on a tank while under fire. He is the 71st Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan since the mission began in 2002.

After arriving at CFB Trenton, a convoy will transport Hornburg's body to Toronto where an autopsy will be performed.

Hornburg will be the first Afghan casualty to officially travel the Highway of Heroes since the stretch of Highway 401 from Trenton to Toronto was renamed by the Ontario government.

In a statement issued Wednesday, Hornburg's family said he was "a leader of men. He never shrunk from responsibility, no matter how difficult the call. ... He had a warrior's heart." **KEYWORDS=CANADA**

Building trust tricky business

SOURCETAG 0709280621
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 15
BYLINE: RICHARD LATENDRESSE
COLUMN: In Afghanistan
WORD COUNT: 432

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Letters from the battlefield This year's Tour of Duty Gala fundraiser features poignant reminders of the price of war

SOURCETAG: 0709280611
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 8
ILLUSTRATION: photo of WILHEMINA BEERENFENGER–KOEHLER Silver Cross mother
BYLINE: EARL MCRAE, OTTAWA SUN
COLUMN: McRae's World
WORD COUNT: 588

As a parent, and as long as you live, you never forget the day and year and hour your child died, and it is only coincidence, but somehow right, that the big event Wilhemina Beerenfenger–Koehler will be attending as an honoured guest next Tuesday night happens to fall four years to the day that her soldier son Robbie was killed in Afghanistan.

Beerenfenger–Koehler of Embrun is this year's Memorial Silver Cross Mother representing all of Canada's mothers who've lost sons and daughters in war, commemorating their loved ones who never came home again. Cpl. Robbie Beerenfenger, 29, and Sgt. Robert Short, 42, 3rd Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment, were killed Oct. 2, 2003, when their Jeep hit a landmine. Three other soldiers were seriously injured.

The event at the Canadian War Museum is by the Perley and Rideau Veterans Health Centre Foundation, its third annual, to raise funds for the facility, and is called the Tour of Duty Gala, this year's theme Keep The Home Fires Burning.

FEW TICKETS LEFT

Should you wish, or be able, to attend you can phone 613–526–7173 up until 2 p.m. today for tickets at \$175 each, or \$1,200 for a table of eight. There are still a few left for this important gala that in its three years has raised more than \$150,000 towards improving the quality of life for residents at the centre.

We hear of the stories from the battlefield in war, the exploits of the soldiers, but what we seldom hear about is that which they'd tell you is so meaningful to them, so necessary, so comforting — and those are the letters of love and longing and support from their loved ones back home; their wives, their girlfriends, their children, their brothers, their sisters, their moms and dads.

Letters from home, letters to home, letters to those who keep the home fires burning, treasured letters put away and kept down through the years, letters, some of which, will be read at the Tour of Duty Gala on Tuesday night by those who wrote them, those who received them.

When the Perley and Rideau Foundation announced the project a few months ago, asking for letters with six winners to be picked, it received scores of them from across the province.

"The letters," says Paul Finn, managing director of the foundation, "covered World War Two right up through Bosnia to Afghanistan. Letters from the families, and some from the soldiers themselves who'd served. Some were not letters, but their reminiscences about those times from their perspective at home. The winning entries are very moving, very poignant."

MUSEUM TOUR

Lt.-Gen. Walter Natynczyk, vice-chief of the defence staff, will be at the gala that starts (business dress) with cocktails at 6 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m. and features a full and private tour of the War Museum.

Entertainment will be provided by the Perley and Rideau Dazzling Pearls — four women who work at the centre — on violin, flute, piano, and guitar.

There'll be silent and live auctions, and among the many prizes: An Ottawa Sun balloon ride. Four tickets to the Nov. 10 game between the Senators and Canadiens. A Sens jersey autographed by Chris Phillips. Two return airline tickets to London (England). Several golf packages, one of them two nights at the Deerhurst Lodge in Muskoka. Bottles of scotch. Jewelry. Six wood carvings of airmen, sailors, and soldiers made by the Perley and Rideau vets. Paintings. Tickets to the NAC.

And (dare I say it) dinner for five with The Four-Eyed Lippy Little Shin Kicker at Moe's World Famous Newport Restaurant, headquarters of the Elvis Sighting Society, the King dropping in from Tweed always a possibility.

Again. For tickets — 613-526-7173, deadline 2 p.m. today. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Good works

IDNUMBER 200709280112
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Primetime
PAGE: D3
KEYWORDS: 0
SOURCE: The Edmonton Journal
WORD COUNT: 325

October Charity Craft Sales Fridays, 3 to 9 p.m., and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 170 East Whitecroft, Sherwood Park. Dried flowers, wooden items and semi-precious jewellery. Call 467-3492 or 449-5305.

Fall Concert Series in support of the E4C School Snack Program, at Southminster-Steinhauer United Church, 10740 19th Ave. Doors open at 7:30 p.m., concert at 8 p.m. Oct. 13, Woodbend Bluegrass Band; Nov. 24, CHICKAdivas; Dec. 8, Keri Lynn Zwicker and Harp Rouge. Tickets from Tix on the Square or at the door.

Occupational Therapy Fun Run, Walk and Wheel Sept. 29 at Corbett Hall, University of Alberta, 8205 114th St., registration 10 a.m., in support of the Canadian Paraplegic Association. Fees are \$33 before Sept. 8, \$38 after. Contact Graham Ciciarelli at 915-5829, Erin Dubyk at 887-2191, or Amy MacKinnon at 424-6312.

Online Auction Oct. 1 to 31 in support of the Canadian Breast Cancer Network. Call 1-800-685-8820 or visit www.realauction.ca/cbcn.

Ten Thousand Villages, 10432 82nd Ave., is co-ordinating the collection of school supplies for children in Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries in the developing world. Visit the store to pick up a list, or call 439-8349.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Scarecrow Festival Oct. 12, 13 and 14 at Northlands needs volunteers. Contact Marg Korby at 487-4281 or e-mail: mkorby@shaw.ca.

BAZAARS AND GARAGE SALES

Giant Flea Market Sept. 28, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Sept. 29, 9 a.m. to noon at Pilgrim United Church, 9008 135th Ave.

Rummage Sale Sept. 28, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sept. 29, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Ebenezer United Church, 16302 106th Ave. Call 489-5803.

Cosmo Tots' Treasures Fall Sale Sept. 29 at St. Albert Senior Citizens' Club, 7 Tache St., St. Albert. Early Birds 9-10 a.m. \$3; Regular 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., \$1. Call 458-1422 or visit svcosmo.org.

Pyroghy, Cabbage Roll and Garage Sale Sept. 29, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at All Saints Orthodox Cathedral, 5824 118th Ave.

To include your fundraising event send us the date and time, nature of activity and phone number for public contact by Monday prior to the publication date. Events can be publicized for two weeks. Send to: goodworks@thejournal.canwest.com, fax 429-5500 or mail to Good Works, The Journal, Box 2421., Edmonton, AB, T5J 2S6.

Gunfire scatters crowd after bombing attempt

IDNUMBER 200709280030
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A10
KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM; BOMBINGS
DATELINE: BATI KOT, Afghanistan
SOURCE: Reuters
WORD COUNT: 203

BATI KOT, Afghanistan – At least one U.S. soldier opened fire to scatter a crowd of civilians and police on Thursday after failed suicide bomb attacks on a U.S. military convoy, the U.S. military and witnesses said.

A car bomb targeting a U.S. convoy in the village of Bati Kot, 15 kilometres east of Jalalabad, killed the driver, two passengers and a nearby civilian, but none of the soldiers was hurt, the U.S. military said in a statement.

Afghan police securing the site in eastern Afghanistan were then attacked by an insurgent dressed in police uniform. He was killed by police and coalition troops before he could detonate his suicide vest, the statement said. To add to the confusion, a fire department vehicle speeding to the scene rammed into the U.S. and Afghan vehicles.

Meanwhile, Taliban insurgents kidnapped four staff of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) southwest of the Afghan capital Kabul, but will release them soon, a Taliban spokesman said Thursday.

The ICRC confirmed that four men, including two expatriates, had been seized by the "armed opposition" on Wednesday and called for a swift resolution of the situation.

The Swiss-based agency said its humanitarian work would continue in Afghanistan, one of its biggest operations worldwide.

Canadians vow to listen more; Troops move to counter protest while denying shooting allegations

IDNUMBER 200709280029

PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal

DATE: 2007.09.28

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A10

Colour Photo: Agence France–Presse; Getty Images, file / Two Canadian soldiers stand guard at the Provincial Reconstruction Team premises in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

ILLUSTRATION: Defence Minister Peter MacKay said this week that Canada will decide by April next year whether to extend its mission in Afghanistan where 71 Canadian troops have died battling the Taliban. ;

KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

BYLINE: Matthew Fisher and Meagan Fitzpatrick

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 403

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – The Van Doo battle group intends "to do a lot of listening" to better understand Afghan concerns following a street protest this week in Zhari District at which Canada was denounced amid allegations Canadian soldiers had entered a home and fatally shot two mullahs.

Canada has denied the allegations.

"To a great extent, just giving them a forum can really count," said Lieut. Derrick Farnham, a liaison officer CIMIC, a civilian–military co–operation element with Joint Task Force Afghanistan.

But Farnham said Canada would not get involved in the centuries–old "great game," of trying to play Afghan factions against each other.

Pointing to a map, Farnham said Zhari was "peculiar" because a line could be drawn with the tribes of the eastern half of Zhari enjoying good relations with the Afghan government and Canadian troops and the tribes of western half mostly opposed to the government and the Canadians.

Inevitably, these two groups also had differences with each other.

Because only one group was willing to deal with Canada, Farnham said: "It is quite possible it may harden attitudes" on the other side, but Canada had little choice if only one group wished to establish relations.

"After 30 years of revolt and fighting, to think it is just going to end because we're here is unrealistic," Farnham said.

The key, he said, was to take small steps to establish good governance.

A Van Doo officer at Patrol Base Wilson in Zhari District repeated what had been said a day earlier by colleagues in Kandahar, categorically denying that Canadian troops had any part in the alleged raid earlier this

week.

Enlisted troops at the same small base were incredulous that such allegations had been made.

Elsewhere, two soldiers from the Van Doo battle group were wounded on Thursday morning in Panjwaii, approximately 40 kilometres west of the Kandahar military base.

They came under fire when insurgents attacked a joint Canadian–Afghan Army patrol near a new police station using rocket–propelled grenades and small weapons.

The soldiers suffered gunshot and shrapnel wounds to their legs. Both men were listed in stable condition.

One of the two wounded soldiers, whose names will not be released, was to be flown to Landstuhl, West Germany, for specialized treatment at a U.S. military hospital.

The incident happened at 8:45 a.m. local time. The injured soldiers were evacuated from the scene by helicopter.

At the time of the attack, Canadian troops were participating in a joint mission, Operation Sadiq Sarbaaz, with Afghan national security forces near a site where a new police substation is under construction in the northern part of Panjwaii.

Once the troops came under fire they were successful in securing the area, said Lt. Isabelle Riche, a public affairs officer with the Defence Department.

The latest injuries follow several other incidents this week in which soldiers have been hurt while engaging in gun battles and come under attack from rocket–propelled grenades.

Lavish promises could spark spending rebellion

IDNUMBER 200709280083
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: City & Region
PAGE: B4
COLUMN: Don Braid
KEYWORDS: INFRASTRUCTURE; PROVINCIAL MUNICIPAL FINANCES; MUNICIPAL TAXES; MAYORS; POLITICIANS
BYLINE: Don Braid
SOURCE: Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 491

If citizens can be bought with their own money, Calgarians will at least sell for some extremely high prices.

Dave Bronconnier, seeking re-election as mayor, is spraying money promises, pledging \$930 million over five years for LRT, and \$300 million in 10 years for new recreation centres.

Bronconnier is bidding for the hearts of frustrated commuters and suburban hockey moms. With that alliance, you could probably pacify Afghanistan.

But the spending pledges do seem lavish, considering that none of this has yet been approved by council and the first infrastructure money under the new provincial deal hasn't even arrived yet.

Bronconnier judges that Calgarians want the same thing from him they wanted back in 2001 and again in 2004 — more transportation and services.

He's probably right; but there will come a moment, very likely in this three-year term, when a spending rebellion erupts in Calgary.

We might even be on the leading edge of that mood now, as housing prices slide and uncertainly spreads in the oilpatch.

But this is a one-month campaign, and Bronconnier sets the tone.

The voluble Alnoor Kassam is in a spending mood, too. No surprise there; any candidate so lavish with his own campaign cash is likely to be quite generous with ours.

Kassam says he'd build a recreation centre a year for 10 years and pay much of the cost by attacking "inefficiencies."

This is the cry of every outsider candidate. Those who make their way to city hall always discover that you can save a bit on paper clips, but the vast majority of city operating money goes to staff salaries that are engraved in union contracts.

So where the heck do we get all the money from to keep these promises? And will there be entirely new taxes?

The new provincial infrastructure program will cover the building costs. The problem looms later, when the city has to maintain and operate all the new facilities.

The city can probably keep up with new operating costs, imposing only modest property tax hikes, as long as the tax base keeps expanding.

That means a continuing need for newcomers to move here, get jobs, buy houses and pay taxes.

The flight to Calgary has been happening for so long that we've started to think it's normal. But it isn't. Someday, the migration will stop.

When that happens, the rest of us will still be stuck with the bill. And we'll have to pay much higher property taxes.

Bronconnier, you'll notice, has never said that the infrastructure money will eliminate the need for higher property taxes. He knows he can't say that honestly.

Now Kassam is attacking him on radio ads, saying he also wants new taxes on house sales, amusements, vehicle registrations and several other things.

Bronconnier, the mayor of Edmonton and the two municipalities associations did ask the province last spring to allow towns and cities to collect such taxes.

The province reserved its decision pending further discussion. When the infrastructure deal came through, the municipalities quietly dropped the request. Two senior provincial sources tell me the idea is now dead.

Bronconnier says: "It's a phantom policy. We don't have the authority to impose these taxes, and for the next 10 years we don't have a need. We secured a \$3.3-billion funding deal with the premier.

"Pushing these taxes is certainly not on the agenda for the next term."

That's plain enough. But the plan still hasn't been officially withdrawn by the municipalities or rejected by the province. Someday these taxes might rise again.

Meanwhile, no serious candidate can promise that all this capital spending will not be followed by higher property taxes. Anybody who does is fooling himself, or trying to fool us.

dbraid@shaw.ca

Return of soldier's body delayed one day

IDNUMBER 200709280081
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: City & Region
PAGE: B3
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Courtesy, Edmonton Garrison, Herald Archive /Cpl. Nathan Hornburg of Calgary was killed Monday in Afghanistan during a firefight. ;
KEYWORDS: DEATHS
BYLINE: Deborah Tetley
SOURCE: Calgary Herald
NOTE: Obituary of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg.
WORD COUNT: 266

One day later than planned, fallen Calgary soldier Cpl. Nathan Hornburg is expected to arrive in Canada today and begin the journey to his final resting place in southern Alberta.

A mechanical problem with the airplane being used to transport Hornburg out of Afghanistan to Canadian Forces Base Trenton prompted the 24-hour delay.

The 24-year-old's remains are now expected to touch down in Ontario this afternoon, about 1 p.m. Calgary time.

For friends preparing to lay Hornburg to rest, the delay has prolonged the inevitable.

"Time has stood still since Nathan died," said 22-year-old Michael Pederson, a friend of Hornburg's and a fellow reservist in the King's Own Calgary Regiment.

"This just means we all have one more day to try to understand all of this. There's no rush," Pederson said.

Hornburg, the driver of an armoured recovery vehicle, was killed just before sunset on Monday during a prolonged battle with the Taliban.

He was struck by fragments from a mortar shell fired by insurgents near the village of Zangabad in the Panjwahi district.

He had dismounted from his Leopard tank during the firefight to fix a tread that had come off the vehicle.

Hornburg, who had been a member of King's Own Calgary Regiment for at least six years, is the first Canadian to have died in ground combat in Afghanistan since October 2006, and the 71st to die in that country since 2002.

More than half of the 71 Canadian soldiers who have died in Afghanistan since 2002 were killed in that district.

Hornburg's mother Linda, father Michael and older sister Rachel are in Trenton for the repatriation ceremony.

Following the ceremony, a military cavalcade will take Hornburg to Toronto, where an autopsy will be performed before his body is released to the family.

Funeral arrangements have not been finalized, according to King's Own Calgary Regiment public affairs spokesman Capt. Malcolm Day.

Hornburg's body is being escorted from Afghanistan to Canada by Cpl. Cade Seely, Hornburg's friend and fellow reservist.

"It's military policy and protocol that a soldier stay with his comrade from theatre to interment," Day said.

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Japan rallies to Afghan mission

IDNUMBER 200709280053
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A20
COLUMN: Asia Report: News From the Region
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Yasuo Fukuda;
KEYWORDS: TRADE MISSIONS
DATELINE: TOKYO
BYLINE: Kimiko de Freytas–Tamura
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse
WORD COUNT: 261

Japan's new prime minister won public and international support Thursday for his first key task of renewing a military mission backing Afghanistan, a battle that helped bring down his predecessor.

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, a seasoned lawmaker who took charge Tuesday, has been welcomed with strong approval ratings as voters hope he brings stability after a tumultuous year under Shinzo Abe.

Polls published Thursday showed public opinion had shifted to support an extension of Japan's military mission, while 11 nations made a joint appeal for the opposition to drop objections to renew the deployment.

Meeting with top bureaucrats Thursday, Fukuda said his government was in an "unprecedentedly tense situation."

"It is extremely important to restore trust," Fukuda said. "Without having trust from the people of the country, we will not be able to realize any policies or reforms."

The opposition swept July elections in a backlash against scandals that surrounded Abe's government, ousting the ruling Liberal Democratic Party from control of the upper house of parliament for the first time.

The opposition, saying that officially pacifist Japan should not be part of "American wars," has vowed to end the naval mission in the Indian Ocean, under which Japan provides free fuel to war planes and ships of U.S.-led forces.

Abe quit this month, citing opposition leader Ichiro Ozawa's refusal to meet him to discuss extending the mission.

Fukuda has also pledged to extend the mission, which expires Nov. 1 without passage of further legislation, saying that Japan, the world's second-largest economy, needed to contribute to international security.

"I will make efforts to make it possible to continue the mission," Fukuda told U.S. President George W. Bush in a telephone call Wednesday, according to the premier's office.

Van Doos try to ease tension over alleged fatal shootings

IDNUMBER 200709280038
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A13
KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher and Meagan Fitzpatrick
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 406

The Van Doo battle group intends "to do a lot of listening" to better understand Afghan concerns following a street protest this week in Zhari District at which Canada was denounced amid allegations that they had entered a home and fatally shot two mullahs — allegations Canada has denied.

"To a great extent, just giving them a forum can really count," said Lieut. Derrick Farnham, a liaison officer with CIMIC, a civilian–military co–operation element with Joint Task Force Afghanistan.

But Farnham said Canada would not get involved in the centuries old "Great Game," of trying to play Afghan factions against each other.

Pointing to a map, Farnham said Zhari was "peculiar" because a line could be drawn with the tribes of the eastern half of Zhari enjoying good relations with the Afghan government and Canadian troops and the tribes of the western half mostly opposed to the government and the Canadians. Inevitably, these two groups also had differences with each other.

Because only one group was willing to deal with Canada, Farnham said: "It is quite possible it may harden attitudes" on the other side, but Canada had little choice if only one group wished to establish relations.

"After 30 years of revolt and fighting, to think it is just going to end because we're here is unrealistic," Farnham said. The key, he said, was to take small steps to establish good governance.

A Van Doo officer at Patrol Base Wilson in Zhari District repeated what had been said a day earlier by colleagues in Kandahar, categorically denying that Canadian troops had any part in the alleged raid earlier this week.

Enlisted troops at the same small base were incredulous that such allegations had been made.

Elsewhere, two soldiers from the Van Doos were wounded on Thursday morning in Panjwaii, approximately 40 kilometres west of the Kandahar military base. They came under fire when insurgents attacked a joint Canadian–Afghan army patrol near a new police station using rocket–propelled grenades and small weapons.

The soldiers suffered gunshot and shrapnel wounds to their legs. Both men were listed in stable condition.

One of the two wounded soldiers, whose names will not be released, was to be flown to Landstuhl, Germany, for specialized treatment at a U.S. military hospital.

The incident happened at 8:45 a.m. local time. The injured soldiers were evacuated from the scene by helicopter.

At the time of the attack, Canadian troops were participating in a joint mission, Operation Sadiq Sarbaaz, with Afghan national security forces near a site where a new police substation is under construction in the northern part of Panjwaii.

Once the troops came under fire they were successful in securing the area, said Lieut. Isabelle Riche, a public affairs officer with the Defence Department.

Mystery kidnappers hold Red Cross staff; New Taliban attacks kill two in Afghanistan

IDNUMBER: 200709280037
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A13
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Agence France–Presse, Getty Images Archive / Securityforces have surrounded the abductors of four Red Cross employees. Afghan officials expected the hostages to be freed quickly, but no progress had been made by late Thursday. ;
KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM; FOREIGN AID; AFGHANISTAN
DATELINE: KABUL, AFGHANISTAN
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse
WORD COUNT: 412

Four Red Cross staff, two of them foreigners, were held by unknown kidnappers Thursday as military officials announced two Danish soldiers were killed in a new attack by Taliban fighters.

An overnight operation near the border with Pakistan, meanwhile, killed 18 Taliban, a provincial official said, adding there were some civilian casualties, although he could not confirm claims that eight were killed.

The International Committee of the Red Cross employees were captured Wednesday about 50 kilometres from Kabul while on a mission to secure the release of a German engineer kidnapped 10 weeks ago, officials said.

Security forces had on Thursday afternoon surrounded the "armed thieves" who abducted the four, said Anayatullah Mangal, governor of Sayed Abad district, where the group was snatched.

He was optimistic the group would be freed quickly but by late Thursday there had been no progress.

Mangal said authorities were in contact with the kidnappers via tribal elders but were not sure who they were or what they wanted.

A Taliban spokesman said his group was not involved in the disappearance of the Red Cross workers.

"There are criminal groups who would abduct people for ransom. It might be their work," Zabihullah Mujahid told AFP by telephone from an undisclosed location.

The Red Cross confirmed the group had been seized while returning from a mission Wednesday to facilitate the release of the German engineer and around four Afghans abducted with him in mid–July.

Spokeswoman Carla Haddad said the agency was in touch with the group to try to secure the release of its employees, one from Myanmar, another from Macedonia and two Afghans.

"Contacts were established by the ICRC with all parties concerned with the aim to resolve the situation as quickly as possible," she said.

The report of a new kidnapping comes after a string of abductions of foreigners in Afghanistan, some claimed by the Taliban movement and some blamed on criminals after cash.

The hardline Islamic Taliban launched an insurgency soon after being driven from government in late 2001 in an invasion led by the United States following the 9/11 attacks, which were blamed on al-Qaeda leaders in Afghanistan.

The Taliban have stepped up their attacks this year, with 5,000 dead — most of them fighters, according to an AFP count based on official reports.

In the latest incident, Taliban fighters attacked a military base in the south on Wednesday, killing two Danish soldiers with the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force, the Danish army said Thursday.

Including the latest deaths, 175 international troops have been killed in Afghanistan this year, most of them in combat operations against the Taliban.

People wounded in the overnight operation in the eastern Kunar province on the border with Pakistan were treated in a hospital in the provincial capital of Asadabad, and said around eight civilians were killed.

Building trust tricky business

SOURCETAG 0709280259
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A9
BYLINE: RICHARD LATENDRESSE
WORD COUNT: 421

It takes a while for soldiers to trust a reporter. They're a defensive bunch — even when it comes to journalists. But I've noticed that after you've been on operations, on patrol or simply sharing a military tent, the guard comes down.

After a month with Canadian soldiers in southern Afghanistan, they were willing to talk. And in some cases, willing to share with me that they feel they're wasting their time here. Some of the Canadians talk about how ungrateful — devious, even — the locals are, as they smile at NATO forces by day and collaborate with the enemy by night.

Granted, it's a small number, but those soldiers on the ground are not alone in their pessimism.

The Afghanistan mission is seen as a failure by 69 per cent of Germans, 66 per cent of Italians and 63 per cent of British and French respondents to an international Angus Reid poll released last month. Of the Canadians sampled, 49 per cent think the operation is futile.

Before leaving Kandahar, I sat down with the top Canadian soldier in Afghanistan, Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche. I wanted three concrete examples that this mission is a success.

He cited improved safety in parts of the region, a better capacity for Afghans to run their own affairs — in particular, the progress in training Afghan soldiers — and reconstruction in the country.

All of that may be true, but it's in very small doses.

I did chat with locals in villages repopulated under better security.

But I came across just as many abandoned villages.

I did see Afghan soldiers risking their lives in combat. But it was obvious that without Canadian support, they'd surely be wiped off the map. Afghan police are still just a joke.

As for the reconstruction, success stories are few. I did witness thriving communities — the military happened to visit them while a journalist was on board. Otherwise, I probably wouldn't have seen any.

Laroche is not wrong. But what he's describing is an Afghanistan in motion, and the country I saw is pretty numb. Between the optimism of the top soldier and the desperation of the less confident, there are real Afghans grasping at the chance to lead a normal life.

There was pain in the eyes of locals asked to collaborate with Canadian soldiers or with the young Afghan army, afraid the Taliban will catch up with them.

So it goes. Canadian soldiers spend a few hours in a village, then

move out, leaving the villagers on their own.

If the Canadians don't revisit these villages in the coming days and weeks, and especially if they disappear altogether after February 2009, like so many in Ottawa want, progress made will disintegrate.

Other members of NATO are not eager to make their mark on the south of this poor country. Once the Canadians leave, the Afghans will be abandoned, just like they already fear.

What's needed most — not only from our soldiers but from all Canadians — is patience. Years of patience. Otherwise, all the energy, money, and especially the 71 Canadian lives lost there, will have been wasted.

Once again, we would be leaving behind Afghans who want a real life, and who are counting on us to help them succeed.

Ambushed Canadian soldiers injured in Taliban stronghold

SOURCETAG 0709280516
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 39
ILLUSTRATION: photo by Omar Sobhani, Reuters A British gunner is patrolling an area in a helicopter yesterday in Afghanistan's southern Helmand province.
BYLINE: THE CANADIAN PRESS
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
WORD COUNT: 96

Two Canadian soldiers are recovering in hospital following a Taliban ambush.

The soldiers were part of an operation in the Panjwaii district where Canadians are re-establishing a police substation in an area known to be a stronghold for Taliban insurgents.

One of the wounded soldiers was shot in the leg. The other received shrapnel wounds from a rocket-propelled grenade at around 8:45 a.m. local time yesterday.

Both are in stable condition in hospital at Kandahar Airfield. As is customary, the names of the wounded soldiers were not released.

They were taking part in Operation Sadiz Sarbaaz, or Honest Soldier, the same operation that claimed the life of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg earlier in the week. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Afghan police dying Canadian military introduce new training program

SOURCETAG: 0709280515

PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun

DATE: 2007.09.28

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 38

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Dene Moore, The Canadian Press Sgt. Jean-Pierre Dion, a member of the new Police Operational Mentoring Liaison Team, speaks to Afghan police about searching vehicles in Pashmul, Afghanistan, yesterday.

BYLINE: THE CANADIAN PRESS

DATELINE: PULCHAKAN, Afghanistan

WORD COUNT: 418

Mohammad Haq pulls up the sleeve of his black shalwar kameez to show the scar from a Taliban bullet. He has another on his right temple, one on his abdomen and another on his back.

Haq, 26, is an Afghan National police officer and he's one of the lucky ones. He's alive. He also appears to be stoned on a hot afternoon at the Pulchakan police substation. Drug use is a known problem among the Afghan police, a ragtag bunch with many other shortcomings. Yet they are a cornerstone of Canada's exit strategy from this wartorn land. In military talk, the Afghan National Police have a problem with "survivability." It means they're dying and in great numbers.

The Pulchakan police substation is in the Zhari district of Kandahar, heartland of the Taliban and a place where 33 Afghan police were killed by insurgents this summer. In July alone, 71 Afghan police were killed by insurgents in NATO's Regional Command South, which covers the provinces of Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul, Uruzgan and Nimruz of Afghanistan. According to the International Crisis Group, approximately 630 Afghan police officers were killed in the year ending March 2007. The Afghan Interior Ministry says 500 have died since then.

"That's one of the reasons we've been put together," says Maj. Louis Lapointe, commander of the Police Operational Mentoring Liaison Team, a new program involving 50 Canadian military police and infantry who have just started training the Afghan police. The Afghan police lack many important things.

Some of them have boots; others don't. Many seem to share a single uniform, or none at all. They are notoriously corrupt, ill-equipped and poorly trained — if they're trained at all. The youngest of the police are 12 to 14 years old, and few of them can read or write. Yet an effective, functioning local police force is what's required before Canada and other foreign governments can scale back their presence without giving up the progress they've made. Canadian military and political officials have ruled out negotiation with the Taliban to end the war. Referring to the nine Afghan police officers he and his colleagues have been training, Sgt. Jean-Pierre Dion said: "This is the future." They earn an average of about \$77 a month. Ultimately, there are plans for upward of 80,000 Afghan police officers. But with such a staggering death rate, recruitment has fallen short. **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

Amputee honoured Soldier lost both legs in Afghanistan

SOURCETAG: 0709280508
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 27
ILLUSTRATION: photo of PAUL FRANKLIN 'Couragous'
BYLINE: RENATO GANDIA, SUN MEDIA
WORD COUNT: 239

A soldier who lost both his legs in Afghanistan was honoured last night by the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital's Award of Courage.

Master Cpl. Paul Franklin, a member of 3 Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry and a former patient at Glenrose, was recognized for his "extraordinary courage and determination" in recovering from the injuries he suffered while on a tour of duty Kandahar in 2006.

"Paul is a wonderful example of the kind of individual this award is designed to recognize as he has overcome tremendous obstacles," said Isabel Henderson, senior operating officer of the Glenrose. "He is not only rebuilding his life but he is also sharing his experience with others."

Franklin accepted the award with his wife Audra and eight-year-old son Simon.

"It's a truly great honour and it's a nice thing because it's from my friends and my peers that worked within the charity," said Franklin, who founded a new charity to help other amputees.

He was "kinda shocked" when he learned that he was being honoured. "I was just trying to recover. I didn't think I was doing something exceptional at the time."

Franklin was leading a military convoy in Afghanistan on Jan. 15, 2006, assigned to transport and protect Canadian diplomat Glyn Berry, when the vehicle he was driving was attacked by a suicide bomber. Both of his legs were amputated above the knee.

Bev Agur, Franklin's physiotherapist at the Glenrose, said every patient she sees has courage and is able to move on with his or her life, but Franklin was different.

When he attended therapy sessions at the Glenrose he "warmly met other patients and encouraged them," the physiotherapist said.

"He moved beyond his rehabilitation to reaching out to other people." KEYWORDS=EDMONTON

Ragtag Afghan police key to Canada's exit

SOURCETAG 0709280827

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2007.09.28

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 33

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Goran Tomasevic, Reuters Afghanistan National Army Special Forces soldiers -- a separate group from the poorly trained, ill-equipped and notoriously corrupt Afghan National policemen -- listen to their officers during a training session in a military camp near Kandahar yesterday.

BYLINE: CP

DATELINE: PULCHAKAN, Afghanistan

WORD COUNT: 153

Mohammad Haq pulls up his sleeve to show the scar from a Taliban bullet.

He has another on his right temple, one on his abdomen and another on his back.

Haq, 26, is an Afghan National policeman and he's lucky. He's alive.

He also appears to be stoned at the Pulchakan police substation. Drug use is a problem among the Afghan police, a ragtag bunch with many other shortcomings.

Yet they are a cornerstone of Canada's exit strategy from this war-torn land.

In military talk, the Afghan National Police have a problem with "survivability." It means they're dying and in great numbers.

According to the International Crisis Group, about 630 Afghan policemen were killed in the year ending March 2007.

"That's one of the reasons we've been put together," says Maj. Louis Lapointe, commander of the Police Operational Mentoring Liaison Team, a new program involving 50 Canadian military police and infantry who are training the Afghan police.

"They're facing insurgents who are well-equipped and they've got some kind of military training, which the police don't have."

Two weeks into the program, the police mentoring team are all too aware of the obstacles ahead of them, yet they are determined.

"I've got a good group," says Sgt. Marc Langelier, whose team has been at the substation in Lakokwel for 12 days.

"Most of them are older and they've been fighters for many, many years.

"They want to learn." KEYWORDS=WORLD

Deaths won't spark Canadian 'bribes'

SOURCETAG 0709280826
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 33
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
WORD COUNT: 77

A military official says Canada won't rush in with "bribes" because of a false belief Canadian soldiers were involved in the deaths of two Afghans.

Afghans closed the highway out of Kandahar Wednesday, blaming international troops for the deaths of a scholar and his brother during a raid on a suspected insurgent's home. Some protesters chanted "Death to Canada."

Military officials say no Canadian soldiers were involved, but the family of the dead men demanded amends yesterday. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Afghans try pot luck on the farm

SOURCETAG 0709280824
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 32
BYLINE: REUTERS
DATELINE: BALKH, Afghanistan
WORD COUNT: 245

As Afghanistan struggles to cut raging opium production and aid workers look for alternative crops, some former poppy farmers are planting marijuana.

Afghanistan's opium crop topped all records this year.

The country produced about 93% of the world's supply of the drug.

But while there has been a sharp rise in poppy production in the troubled south, the drug crop has been eliminated in a growing number of provinces in the safer north of the country.

The northern province of Balkh is seen as a success story — from 7,000 hectares of poppies cultivated in 2006, it was declared opium-free this year after strong local government action.

But near the ancient citadel of Balkh, in fields once pink with poppy flowers, jagged green marijuana stalks peak above other crops.

Elsewhere, whole cannabis fields produce a pungent aroma strong enough to be picked by passing motorists.

Farmers are being cautious.

"They are not my fields," said Shamseddin, surrounded by head-high cannabis plants in full flower.

"I don't know who they belong to," he said, dropping a sickle to the ground and nudging it away with his foot.

Others say they only planted marijuana to shield their cotton fields from livestock or that it was just a trial crop.

"The landlords used to plant poppy, but then the government came along and destroyed the crops," said farm worker Mohammad Yassin.

"This year we planted marijuana, the dealers will come and buy the crop from us, so we'll see what we make from it. We probably won't plant any next year."

Though not as profitable as opium, marijuana still makes more money than other legal crops.

"In order to survive and feed their families, the farmers have to cultivate marijuana," said Balkh drug squad chief Faiz Mohammad. "Other crops don't give a good profit."

Last month, the U.S. unveiled strategy to combat opium production.

It plans to spend \$25 million to \$50 million in the next fiscal year to reward provinces that make significant progress against drugs.

But the governor of Balkh, credited for helping eliminate opium in his area, has complained he has not received promised incentives for doing so, nor any funds for cutting back cannabis crops.

KEYWORDS=WORLD

U.S., Brits push tougher NATO drug stance

SOURCETAG 0709280823
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 32
BYLINE: REUTERS
DATELINE: SANGIN, Afghanistan
WORD COUNT: 130

American and British officials in Afghanistan want peacekeepers stationed there to provide more intelligence, transport and security to help under-resourced Afghan officials arrest drug lords.

"Counter-narcotics . . . has to be blended with military intelligence," said Karen Tandy, head of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency.

"More needs to be done to target traffickers. Interdict them and you cut off a chunk of funding to the insurgents."

The U.S.-British proposal will mean NATO getting more closely involved in so-called interdiction.

The 26-nation alliance has so far played a low-key role in counter-narcotics for fear of turning Afghan public opinion against its soldiers.

But with a UN report last month naming Afghanistan as the largest drugs producer since 19th century China, pressure had been building for a change of stance.

"We are heading towards a narco-terror situation," said NATO's top commander of operations U.S. Gen. John Craddock, adding he would personally raise the issue of a greater NATO role. **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

Afghan mission warrants much serious thought

SOURCETAG 0709280790
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 14
BYLINE: ROY CLANCY
COLUMN: Editorial
WORD COUNT: 244

The grim reality of the war in Afghanistan was brought home with the death of Calgary reservist Cpl. Nathan Hornburg.

The untimely passing of this 24-year-old will no doubt provoke much discussion about this conflict in a faraway land.

The loss of a young man so full of potential forces us to contemplate the terrible price any war exacts.

Canadians will argue about the merit or folly of the Afghanistan mission -- and so we should. When our best and brightest are called on to make the ultimate sacrifice, it warrants serious reflection.

Reading the statement by Hornburg's family printed in the Sun yesterday was both touching and illuminating.

It gives us a glimpse into his approach to life and helps us better understand his motivation for signing up to serve in a conflict far removed from our own comfortable lives.

Most 24-year-olds are preoccupied with furthering their careers, chasing opportunities and searching for a soulmate.

Hornburg wasn't a career soldier. He was a volunteer with the King's Own Calgary regiment, under no obligation to serve in Afghanistan.

Yet he chose to put his life on hold to fight for a cause in which he believed.

According to his family, he didn't take his decision lightly.

"Nathan decided to go to that country fully informed and aware of the danger. He went because he felt it was right and that he could help those in need ... because he felt, from the bottom of his heart, that it was the right thing to do."

All his family asks is that we devote the same amount of thought to this conflict.

"It would break our hearts to know the future of the mission in Afghanistan may be determined by uninformed reaction and political opportunism, rather than by the studied measure of logic and wisdom."

We can only hope our elected representatives heed their message.

The reality Hornburg faced was far removed from the theatrics of the House of Commons. The price he paid was far greater than any petty consequences our politicians face.

This complicated struggle must be afforded the same serious contemplation it was given by this young man.

That's the very least we can do.

Soldier's return delayed Technical issues halt arrival of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg's casket

SOURCETAG: 0709280771

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2007.09.28

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 3

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Jack Cusano, Sun Media Royal Canadian Air Cadet Tyrone Alexander, 15, writes a heartfelt message to the family of fallen Calgary soldier Cpl. Nathan Hornburg yesterday at the Mewata Armoury. Hornburg was the victim of a mortar strike while serving in Afghanistan.

BYLINE: NADIA MOHARIB, SUN MEDIA

WORD COUNT: 258

The arrival of the casket carrying the body of a fallen Calgary soldier has been rescheduled for this afternoon at an Ontario military air base.

The family of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, a reserve soldier from the King's Own Calgary Regiment, was in Ontario yesterday expecting to welcome the body of the soldier back to his homeland.

Issues with the CC-150 Polaris aircraft carrying his body back, however, meant the reunion was delayed, said Capt. Nicole Meszaros.

"There was some mechanical problems," she said from CFB Trenton, adding efforts were made to hasten the homecoming.

"The intent is always to get the fallen soldier home as quickly as possible and with as much dignity as possible."

Hornburg was killed when he was the victim of a mortar strike in Afghanistan less than one month into his first overseas mission.

A member of a tank squadron taking part in Operation Honest Soldier, Hornburg was repairing the track on a Leopard 2 tank in a bid to help comrades in the midst of an intense battle just west of Kandahar when he was fatally hit.

He was 24.

After returning to Canada, Hornburg's final journey will take him down the Highway of Heroes, a stretch of Hwy. 401 from CFB Trenton to the coroner's office in Toronto, where crowds of people come out to pay respects and salute the motorcade carrying the fallen officer's body in a casket covered by a Canadian flag.

It is mandatory for an autopsy to be done before a fallen soldier's body is released to family members.

Capt. Malcom Day with 41 Canadian Brigade Group, which oversees the regiment, said funeral arrangements will be made according to the wishes of Hornburg's family after they have been reunited with their son.

He said the delay in the repatriation ceremony has been met with mixed feelings by those who knew and loved the young soldier.

"Some people want to get it over with and others dread it," he said.

Hornburg's death marks the 71st Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan. KEYWORDS=ALBERTA

Canadian troops move to counter protest

IDNUMBER 200709280111
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: World
PAGE: D8
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher and Meagan
Fitzpatrick
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 645

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — The Van Doo battle group intends "to do a lot of listening" to better understand Afghan concerns following a street protest this week in Zhari District at which Canada was denounced amid allegations that they had entered a home and fatally shot two mullahs — allegations that Canada has denied.

"To a great extent, just giving them a forum can really count," said Lieut. Derrick Farnham, a liaison officer with CIMIC, a civilian–military co–operation element with Joint Task Force Afghanistan.

But Farnham said Canada would not get involved in the centuries old "Great Game," of trying to play Afghan factions against each other.

Pointing to a map, Farnham said Zhari was "peculiar" because a line could be drawn with the tribes of the eastern half of Zhari enjoying good relations with the Afghan government and Canadian troops and the tribes of the western half mostly opposed to the government and the Canadians. Inevitably, these two groups also had differences with each other.

Because only one group was willing to deal with Canada, Farnham said: "It is quite possible it may harden attitudes" on the other side, but Canada had little choice if only one group wished to establish relations.

"After 30 years of revolt and fighting, to think it is just going to end because we're here is unrealistic," Farnham said. The key, he said, was to take small steps to establish good governance.

A Van Doo officer at Patrol Base Wilson in Zhari District repeated what had been said a day earlier by colleagues in Kandahar, categorically denying that Canadian troops had any part in the alleged raid earlier this week. Enlisted troops at the same small base were incredulous that such allegations had been made.

Elsewhere, two soldiers from the Van Doo battle group were wounded on Thursday morning in Panjwaii, approximately 40 kilometres west of the Kandahar military base. They came under fire when insurgents attacked a joint Canadian–Afghan Army patrol near a new police station using rocket–propelled grenades and small weapons.

The soldiers suffered gunshot and shrapnel wounds to their legs. Both men were listed in stable condition.

One of the two wounded soldiers, whose names will not be released, was to be flown to Landstuhl, West Germany, for specialized treatment at a U.S. military hospital.

The incident happened at 8:45 a.m. local time. The injured soldiers were evacuated from the scene by helicopter.

At the time of the attack, Canadian troops were participating in a joint mission, Operation Sadiq Sarbaaz, with Afghan national security forces near a site where a new police substation is under construction in the northern part of Panjwahi.

Once the troops came under fire they were successful in securing the area, said Lt. Isabelle Riche, a public affairs officer with the Defence Department.

The latest injuries follow several other incidents this week in which soldiers have been hurt while engaging in gun battles and come under attack from rocket-propelled grenades.

Canadians are used to hearing about soldiers in Afghanistan being injured or killed by roadside bombs or suicide bombers but not as familiar with soldiers dying or getting hurt during direct combat.

On Monday, Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, a 24-year-old reservist from Calgary, was killed when he was struck by a mortar as he tried to fix a tread on his Leopard tank that had fallen off while driving in a cluster of villages. Four other soldiers were wounded in the attack when they were fired upon as they tried to carry Hornburg's body away from the scene. Their injuries are not life-threatening.

The following day, on Tuesday, another Canadian soldier was seriously wounded in a Taliban ambush while on a joint patrol with Afghan police officers. That incident also involved rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire and the soldier was airlifted to a British military hospital at Camp Bastien in Helmand province for specialist care.

Hornburg, whose body was due to return to Canada on Thursday but has now been delayed a day, was the first Canadian to die in ground combat in Afghanistan since last October. He is the 71st Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan and one diplomat has also died.

Return of fallen soldier delayed

IDNUMBER 200709280108
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: World
PAGE: D8
DATELINE: CALGARY
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 184

CALGARY -- One day later than planned, fallen Calgary soldier, Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, is expected to land on Canadian soil today and begin the journey to his final resting place in southern Alberta.

A mechanical problem with the airbus being used to transport Hornburg out of Afghanistan to Canadian Forces Base Trenton in Ontario prompted the 24-hour delay.

The 24-year-old's remains are now expected to arrive in Ontario this afternoon, around 3 p.m. local time.

For friends preparing to lay Hornburg to rest, the delay has prolonged the inevitable.

"Time has stood still since Nathan died," said 22-year-old Michael Pederson, a friend of Hornburg's and a fellow reservist at the King's Own Regiment in Calgary.

"This just means we all have one more day to try and understand all of this. There's no rush," Pederson said.

Hornburg, who was driving an armoured recovery vehicle, was killed just before sunset Monday during a prolonged battle with the Taliban.

He was struck by fragments from a mortar fired by insurgents near the village of Zangabad in the Panjwai district. He had dismounted from his Leopard tank during the firefight to fix a tread that had come off the vehicle.

Hornburg was the 71st Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan since 2002.

Hornburg's mother Linda, father Michael and older sister Rachel are already in Trenton for the repatriation ceremony.

(Calgary Herald)

NDP demeans Afghan people with criticism

IDNUMBER 200709280032
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Forum
PAGE: A14
COLUMN: SP Opinions
SOURCE: The StarPhoenix
WORD COUNT: 794

There is an undercurrent of racism in the NDP's latest attack on the mission in Afghanistan.

The party's defence critic, Dawn Black, this week charged that the Canadian military had duped or coerced Afghan President Hamid Karzai into thanking Canada for sacrificing lives and money to help his country overcome decades of civil war.

"What Canadians heard was not the voice of the Afghan people, but the talking points of the Department of National Defence," Black said. To back her claim, Black hoisted documents that indicated Karzai's speech had received input from a team Canada has had in Kabul to help Afghanistan rebuild its bureaucracy.

The NDP's claim was pure hogwash, suggested Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada, but in more diplomatic terms. Omar Samad insists he and several other Afghan advisers, including the president's chief of staff, prepared their own versions of the remarks, with Karzai doing most of the crucial editing himself.

Samad rightfully is insulted that Black would as much as suggest that the Afghans are incapable of delivering their own message to Canadians.

It certainly wouldn't be unexpected that Afghan officials would consult with their hosts before delivering a speech to Canada's Parliament. And considering the Canadian team in Kabul is playing a leadership role in the UN's efforts to help rebuild a civic service capability that was destroyed in decades of strife, it isn't surprising it would help perform the very basic functions of a communications department.

But presenting a full and balanced message apparently was not Black's intent. If the NDP wants Canadians to understand its intentions for Afghanistan, it should talk about the lives of Afghan citizens in Musa Qala. This is an area that has been re-occupied by the Taliban since February after the British pulled their troops from the area, in much the same way the NDP wants Canada to do with its soldiers from Afghanistan.

Without the security of British forces to maintain security, the deal struck to allow development work to continue fell apart. The Taliban came, punished those who co-operated with the international community and re-imposed the same brutal rule they had over the entire country until 2001.

This is the area, by the way, where Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, a reservist from the King's Own Calgary Regiment, was killed while trying to fix the track on a Canadian tank. The tank was moving into the area to restore the security the British squandered by striking a similar deal to what the NDP is advocating.

Rather than make money working in Alberta's hot economy, Hornburg was in Afghanistan despite the risks because, as he told fellow soldiers, he believed that Canada was making the world a better place. But just as

Karzai's comments were discounted as the ranting of a duped puppet, Hornburg's words don't carry much weight in Black's world.

And unfortunately she isn't alone.

This month, the executive of the University of Victoria Students' Society voted to ban the Canadian military from setting up a recruitment booth at a career day in January.

Using the same insulting logic as Black, the executive argued that the military is tricking ignorant students into enlisting, without telling them of the psychological, mental or physical demands of being a member of the Canadian forces. Some also argued the military is an outlaw organization that shouldn't be allowed in student areas.

Hundreds of students protested, however, forcing the executive to hold a vote on the matter. And in any vote, it is the one who controls the message who has the advantage.

For Afghan officials and members of the international forces asked by the UN to bring peace to the country, a major frustration is how easy it is for the Taliban to have their message heard. Meanwhile, those who risk their lives to bring peace are constantly denigrated and accused of deception and conspiracy.

According to NATO's commander Dan McNeill, "The international audience does automatically believe what (the Taliban) say and I find that absurd. These people kill more civilians than any force amongst the alliance or the Afghan army. They are hard-core extremists. They behead people that don't agree with their positions."

The Afghan civilians have reason to be concerned about the international commitment to help their country. Every promise made in the past has been broken.

According to Calgary journalist Don Martin, who spent much of the summer in Afghanistan, there is a portion of the population that is hard-core supporters of the Taliban and about an equal number that supports the UN mission.

The vast majority, however, are too frightened to take a stand because, once the world does exactly what the NDP is advocating, Afghans know they will have to answer to the Taliban.

And if Black were honest about her party's position, she would make it clear what the future holds for the Afghans should the NDP get its way.

THE AFGHAN MISSION Canada defends policy on Afghan clans Officials dole out aid to villages that help; those that don't are shut out

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL
IDN: 072710309
DATE: 2007.09.28
PAGE: A18 (ILLUS)
BYLINE: GRAEME SMITH
SECTION: International News
EDITION: Metro
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN
WORDS: 782
WORD COUNT: 739

GRAEME SMITH KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN Canada will not immediately try to douse the anger that flared up this week in a village near Kandahar city after two religious teachers were killed in their homes, a military officer says, in a case that reveals the way Canadian forces are handling rebellious tribes.

The raid by foreign soldiers that left two mullahs dead on Wednesday was only the latest reason for upset in the village of Senjaray, a suburb of Kandahar city. Almost all of the people who protested in the hours afterward were members of the Alizai tribe, a group that often feels disenfranchised by the new government. They claim they're denied reconstruction projects and shut out of positions of influence in the local administration.

A Canadian official confirmed yesterday that some of the Alizais' complaints have a factual basis. Villages considered hostile to the government are shut out of assistance programs in the hope they will become more compliant, and that policy won't change just because the Alizais are shouting "death to Canada" in the streets, said Lieutenant Derrick Farnham, a civilian-military liaison officer at Canadian headquarters in Kandahar.

"We try very hard not to be reactionary, to go and quell anger and solve it immediately," Lt. Farnham said. "That's something that has been done in the past, and it's been termed the 'great game' in Afghanistan, where locals play one side off the other in terms of getting treats and gifts, and that's something we want to avoid." The Canadian civilian-military co-operation unit, known as Cimic, is responsible for handing out valuable reconstruction contracts, and the bundles of cash often represent the first benefits of government control that villagers experience after the Taliban have been driven away.

The Cimic team has mapped the districts west of Kandahar according to their alignment with the government and concentrated on helping villages that seem most eager to co-operate, Lt. Farnham said, on the theory that disgruntled villages will envy the money dished out to their pro-government neighbours and try to emulate them.

This strategy of reinforcing good behaviour runs against the historical methods that foreign powers have used to subdue the restive tribes of Afghanistan, the lieutenant said. The British and the Soviets both tried to buy off their enemies, he said, but the benefits didn't last and both empires eventually failed to secure the country.

"We don't want to be in a situation where we're just seen as bribing people who have a grudge against us," he said.

THE AFGHAN MISSION Canada defends policy on Afghan clans Officials dole out aid to villages that help; those that don't are shut out

"When we make progress, it's sometimes described as glacial. It can't be fast, and it probably wouldn't be best to be fast. It has to be small steps that are steadily forward." He acknowledged that the Canadian strategy might aggravate anti-government sentiment among some tribesmen, but added that it's impractical to launch projects in areas where they're not welcome.

"It may harden attitudes," he said. "But we are not invited into many areas. We have tried to go into some areas, we have tried to do development there, but we're not wanted." Besides projects, the Canadians can also help by listening to villagers' concerns, he added.

"Just giving them a forum can really count," Lt. Farnham said, although he said he isn't aware of any plans to hold meetings with the people who protested this week.

The protests have set back Canadian attempts to build trust among the people who live near a strategic stretch of highway outside Kandahar city, another military official said.

"You can build it [confidence] for 100 days and in one afternoon you can lose it all," he said.

Latest developments * Two Canadian soldiers are recovering in hospital after a Taliban ambush. The soldiers were part of an operation in the Panjwahi district where Canadians are re-establishing a police substation in an area known to be a stronghold for Taliban insurgents.

One of the wounded soldiers was shot in the leg. The other received shrapnel wounds from a rocket-propelled grenade at around 8:45 a.m.

local time yesterday. Both are in stable condition in hospital at Kandahar Airfield.

As is customary, the names of the wounded soldiers were not released.

* Four Red Cross staffers, two of them foreigners, were headed for a second night in captivity in Afghanistan yesterday after being seized during a mission to free a German hostage.

Afghan officials said the group was kidnapped in the central province of Wardak on Wednesday by unknown gunmen but the International Committee of the Red Cross insisted they were only detained and were expected to be freed soon.

The Canadian Press, AFP

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: strife; defence; policy

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

Afghan anomalies

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL
IDN: 072710256
DATE: 2007.09.28
PAGE: A20
BYLINE: STEVE HIGGINS
SECTION: Letter to the Edit
EDITION: Metro
DATELINE: Waterloo, Ont.
WORDS: 56
WORD COUNT: 63

Steve Higgins Waterloo, Ont.

The assassination of the Afghan mullahs (Afghans Block Highway Shouting 'Death To Canada' – Sept. 27) is profoundly unsettling. This appears to have been, not a military operation, but a "hit" carried out by an American military death-squad in territory supposedly controlled by Canadian troops.

May we assume that the killers will be apprehended and charged?

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada; United States

SUBJECT TERM: strife; deaths

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

soldier's funeral delayed

IDNUMBER 200709280054
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A11
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 120

One day later than planned, fallen Calgary soldier, Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, is expected to land on Canadian soil today and begin the journey to his final resting place in southern Alberta.

A mechanical problem with the airbus being used to transport Hornburg out of Afghanistan to Canadian Forces Base Trenton in Ontario prompted the 24-hour delay.

The 24-year-old's remains are now expected to arrive in Ontario this afternoon.

For friends preparing to lay Hornburg to rest, the delay has prolonged the inevitable.

"Time has stood still since Nathan died," said 22-year-old Michael Pederson, a friend of Hornburg's and a fellow reservist at the King's Own Regiment in Calgary.

Hornburg, who was driving an armoured recovery vehicle, was killed Monday after being struck by shrapnel from mortars fired by Taliban insurgents near the village of Zangabad in the Panjwahi district.

Canadians deny killing Afghans; Protests after claim mullahs shot by Van Doos

IDNUMBER 200709280053
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A11
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Reuters / GOODWILL GESTURE: A British soldier hands a radio to an Afghan at a base in Afghanistan's Helmand province Thursday. ;
DATELINE: KANDAHAR
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher and Meagan Fitzpatrick
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 312

KANDAHAR – The Van Doo battle group intends "to do a lot of listening" to better understand Afghan concerns following a street protest this week in Zhari District at which Canada was denounced amid allegations that they had entered a home and fatally shot two mullahs — allegations that Canada has denied.

"To a great extent, just giving them a forum can really count," said Lieut. Derrick Farnham, a liaison officer CIMIC, a civilian–military co–operation element with Joint Task Force Afghanistan.

But Farnham said Canada would not get involved in the centuries old "Great Game," of trying to play Afghan factions against each other.

Pointing to a map, Farnham said Zhari was "peculiar" because a line could be drawn with the tribes of the eastern half of Zhari enjoying good relations with the Afghan government and Canadian troops and the tribes of western half mostly opposed to the government and the Canadians.

Inevitably, these two groups also had differences with each other.

Because only one group was willing to deal with Canada, Farnham said: "It is quite possible it may harden attitudes" on the other side, but Canada had little choice if only one group wished to establish relations.

"After 30 years of revolt and fighting, to think it is just going to end because we're here is unrealistic," Farnham said. The key, he said, was to take small steps to establish good governance.

A Van Doo officer at Patrol Base Wilson in Zhari District repeated what had been said a day earlier by colleagues in Kandahar, categorically denying that Canadian troops had any part in the alleged raid earlier this week.

Enlisted troops at the same small base were incredulous that such allegations had been made.

Elsewhere, two soldiers from the Van Doo battle group were wounded on Thursday morning in Panjwaii, approximately 40 kilometres west of the Kandahar military base. They came under fire when insurgents attacked a joint Canadian–Afghan Army patrol near a new police station using rocket–propelled grenades and small weapons.

The soldiers suffered gunshot and shrapnel wounds to their legs. Both men were listed in stable condition.

Little talk, even less action

IDNUMBER 200709280033
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A8
COLUMN: Don Martin
BYLINE: Don Martin
SOURCE: Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 612

There will be a gaping hole in the government's agenda when it previews its legislative lineup next month. Despite the prime minister's current jolly green giant world tour, there will be no environment bill on tackling climate change this fall.

Sources say Stephen Harper has decided against a do-over of his much-maligned Clean Air Act this fall, opting to avoid a parliamentary brouhaha as he bypasses the House of Commons in taking action against global warming.

The government's old bill, rewritten into unrecognizable mush by opposition MPs, died when Parliament prorogued this month to set up another drone from the throne in three weeks.

Any plans for a grandiose rehash have been scrubbed in favour of targeted moves to stimulate technology and change pollution habits without the hassle of facing a united front of unimpressed opposition leaders.

Ironically, the strategy makes perfect sense if the government's intention is to get something done in short order through specific funding announcements, tax assistance and regulatory change.

Any environment legislation which doesn't swear allegiance to the Kyoto Protocol gas reduction target becomes noisy cannon fire for opposition parties. The last bill was doomed from the minute it rolled out as a poorly communicated 2050 emissions reduction scheme, derided from all sides as proof of Mr. Harper as a climate change denier.

Still, it will put the opposition parties in a curious bind. How do a trio of leaders who embrace climate change as a jihad that must be vigorously attacked as a non-negotiable condition for propping up this minority government support a strategy that excludes their participation?

It won't be easy. And Mr. Harper's speech at the United Nations on Monday was not encouraging as the prelude to an aggressive climate change attack by one of the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitters.

Coming in at 508 words (and "Kyoto" wasn't one of them), his statement only observed that climate change had to be fought globally and economically without giving many hints about how his government will join the international effort.

Reporters observing the session say the prime minister appeared disinterested and yawning before he delivered his remarks.

"The development of clean, alternative energy sources is not solely the responsibility of governments and taxpayers," Mr. Harper shrugged. "Government's main role is to design tax and regulatory systems that enable the free market to work."

Things didn't get any clearer in his letter to the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon later in the day. He merely promised a "stepwise" approach that delivers "incremental improvement."

If there's a hint of future action it was in Harper's obvious infatuation with burying carbon emissions inside geological formations. This suggests that talk of government supporting a major infrastructure initiative will be to boost the Weyburn, Sask., pilot technology into a commercial-sized operation, which is a very good idea.

Beyond that, it's a guessing game where the Conservatives will go in the pursuit of pragmatic action without parliamentary debate. The Conservative government's earlier attempts at getting the public involved in eco-friendly projects are not attracting rave reviews.

The government's own National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy issued a report, released late Friday to avoid detection by reporters, that couldn't decipher measurable progress on almost every climate change program initiated by the government. It doesn't mean there wouldn't be progress eventually, just that measuring it now is difficult or impossible.

Not long ago, a Conservative pollster confided to me that the government's vulnerability was not its support for extending the Afghanistan mission, but policy timidity on the environment.

It's possible the Conservatives can take real and effective action against climate change without adding to the greenhouse gas problem generated by the parliamentary hot air which accompanies the introduction of major legislation.

But the price for ignoring the file entirely is high. It could end up with the Conservatives passing the bill to another governing party after the next election.

Don Martin is a Calgary Herald columnist. E-mail: dmartin@cns.canwest.com

Afghan farmers turn to marijuana as alternative to producing opium

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PUBLICATION: National Post
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: National
SECTION: World
PAGE: A17
ILLUSTRATION: Black & White Photo: / (See hardcopy for Photo Description);
SOURCE: Reuters
WORD COUNT: 149

As Afghanistan struggles to cut opium production and aid workers try to find alternative crops, for some former poppy farmers the choice is easy — they've planted marijuana. In the northern province of Balkh, in fields where poppies grew last year, marijuana stalks poke above other crops. Farmers are cautious, some saying they plant marijuana only to shield their cotton fields from livestock or as a trial crop. While not as profitable as opium, marijuana still makes more money than legal crops. "In order to survive and feed their families, the farmers have to cultivate marijuana," said Faiz Mohammad, Balkh's drug squad chief. The provincial governor, a former warlord, also complains he has not received the promised incentives for halting opium growing.

KEYWORDS: DRUGS; FARMERS & FARMING; ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE; LAWS & REGULATIONS

Van Doos intend to listen; Canadian troops try to counter protest

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PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.09.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A12
KEYWORDS: WAR
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 253

The Van Doo battle group intends "to do a lot of listening" to better understand Afghan concerns following a street protest this week in Zhari District at which Canada was denounced amid allegations that they had entered a home and fatally shot two mullahs – allegations that Canada has denied.

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But Farnham said Canada would not get involved in the centuries old "Great Game," of trying to play Afghan factions against each other.

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