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Required reading; A cheat-sheet to Canada's best fiction, non-fiction and poetry this season

IDNUMBER 200709300121
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: The Citizen's Weekly Arts & Books
PAGE: C1 / FRONT
BYLINE: Carla Lucchetta
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 1292

The much-anticipated Canadian fall book season is upon us, and including the appearances of a couple of fiction award-winning heavy-hitters like M.G. Vassanji, Frances Itani, Elizabeth Hay and David Adams Richards, choices are as diverse as they are large.

The big story is in the non-fiction offerings, with books by Brian Mulroney, Jean Chrétien, activist journalists Naomi Klein and Maude Barlow and TV's Rick Mercer, as well as veteran journalist Christie Blatchford's inside look at the Canadian military, and another about the mystique of Pierre Elliot Trudeau.

Fiction

Remembering the Bones

By Frances Itani

HarperCollins, \$29.95

Winner of the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Deafening, Ottawa writer Frances Itani is back with the story of Georgina Danforth Witley, who, on her way to London to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's 80th birthday, crashes her car. Stuck in a ditch and unable to move, she recites the names of her bones to remind herself she is alive, and recounts the details and memories of her life. Now available.

The Architects are Here

By Michael Winter

Penguin, \$34

This is the much-anticipated offering from Newfoundland writer Michael Winter, author of *The Big Way*. Gabriel English reunites with an old friend, forcing them to reminisce about a childhood tragedy. It's a tale of how tragedy, grief and uncertainty tests friendship. Now available.

What Happened Later

By Ray Robertson

Thomas Allen, \$29.95

Toronto writer Ray Robertson provides a glimpse into Jack Kerouac's life after the fame of *On the Road*, and the story of a young man named Ray Robertson who is obsessed with the mythic author. Now available.

The Gum Thief

By Douglas Coupland

Random House, \$32

Vancouver's Douglas Coupland continues to entertain with his unique brand of humour tinged with bittersweet sentimentalism. *The Gum Thief* is a look at what happens when a down-on-his-luck, middle-aged Staples employee befriends a young, lost alterna-chick colleague. Now available.

Late Nights on Air

By Elizabeth Hay

McClelland & Stewart, \$32.99

Winner of the Ottawa Book Award for *Garbo Laughs* and now longlisted for a Giller for *Late Nights*, Elizabeth Hay's latest, written partly from her own experiences canoeing in the North, revolves around a group of urbanites united by their jobs at a Yellowknife radio station. Sharing stories about what circumstances brought them north, they also bear witness to the changing Canadian North. Now available.

The Assassin's Song

By M.G. Vassanji

Doubleday, \$34.95

Two-time Giller Prize-winner M.G. Vassanji is back with a story about an Indian heir to the throne whose longing for an ordinary life brings him to North America, but leaves him torn between modern life in British Columbia and the obligations to his royal heritage in India. Now available.

The Solitude of Emperors

By David Davidar

McClelland & Stewart, \$32.99

Penguin Canada chief David Davidar takes up the pen once more. Set in the 1990s, his story is about a young man who flees his small town in India for more modern Bombay and gets caught up in the heady religious and political energy. His journey then takes him to a small mountain village which he discovers is not immune to the conflict. Now available.

Turtle Valley

By Gail Anderson-Dargatz

Random House, \$32

B.C. writer Gail Anderson-Dargatz's new novel takes place in the shadow of a raging forest fire, as a woman

prepares to evacuate her family home and uncovers family secrets that parallel those in her own life. Through her previous novels, *The Cure for Death by Lightning* and *A Recipe for Bees*, Anderson–Dargatz is known for her keen observations of character and human nature against rural Canadian backdrops. Now available.

Macdonald

By Roy MacSkimming

Thomas Allen, \$34.95

Roy MacSkimming recreates the life of Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, with a fictional account of his final election, complete with scandals and divisive issues that mirror some of those that plague our country today. Now available.

Spanish Fly

By Will Ferguson

Penguin, \$32

Humourist Will Ferguson (*Why I Hate Canadians*, *Beauty Tips from Moose Jaw*) offers a comedy about a group of con artists who travel across the Southwest wreaking havoc in pre–Second World War America. Now available.

The Lost Highway

By David Adams Richards

Doubleday, \$34.95

David Adams Richards follows up last year's Commonwealth Writers' Prize–winning *Friends of Meagre Fortune* with *The Lost Highway*. Alex Chapman resents his great–uncle for, among other things, ruining his chance to marry the love of his life. When he has an opportunity for revenge, he takes it. One of Canada's most lauded writers writes on the theme of family rivalries and betrayal. Due in November.

Poetry

The Door

By Margaret Atwood

McClelland & Stewart, \$22.99

Margaret Atwood's first book of poetry since 1995's *Morning in the Burned House*, *The Door* contains a whopping 50 poems, from the personal to the political, all rendered with the author's skilled creative imagery and depth. Now available.

Non–fiction

Brian Mulroney

Memoirs: 1939–1993

By Brian Mulroney

McClelland & Stewart, \$50

Already making headlines, former prime minister Brian Mulroney's memoir provides a retrospective of his life, from humble beginnings in Baie-Comeau through his nine years in office. Now available.

The Shock Doctrine: The Rise

of Disaster Capitalism

By Naomi Klein

Random House, \$36.95

Naomi Klein's Shock Doctrine is a result of exhaustive first-hand research and reporting in disaster zones by the No Logo author, which exposes how "disaster capitalism" is alive and well in places like Chile, Iraq, South Africa, the U.S. and even Canada.

The Film Club

By David Gilmour

Thomas Allen, \$27.95

Governor General's Award-winner David Gilmour (A Perfect Night to Go to China) took an off-the-map journey with his teenage son, allowing him to drop out of school as long as he agreed to watch three films a week with his father. The result is The Film Club, which explains how the experience changed both their lives. Now available.

Rick Mercer: The Book

By Rick Mercer

Doubleday, \$29.95

Canada's well-known satirist Rick Mercer presents a collection of his best political rants and encounters with famous figures from showbiz and literature. Now available.

Jean Chrétien:

My Years as Prime Minister

By Jean Chrétien

Knopf, \$39.95

Not long out of the highest office in Canada, Jean Chrétien writes a memoir of his trials and triumphs in My Years as Prime Minister. Due Oct. 16.

Mystic Trudeau:

The Fire and the Rose

By B.W. Powe

Thomas Allen, \$26.95

Philosopher and polemical writer B.W. Powe explores what is beneath the enduring image of Pierre Elliot Trudeau and reveals some of the mystical and spiritual elements that motivated one of our country's best-loved public figures. Due in October.

Beijing Confidential:

A Tale of Lost and Found

In the New Forbidden City

By Jan Wong

Doubleday, \$34.95

Globe and Mail scribe Jan Wong gives readers a look at her experiences at university in China through a journey back to search for a person she felt she had betrayed. Due Oct. 30.

Fifteen Days: Stories of Bravery and Friendship, Life and Death from Inside the New Canadian Military

By Christie Blatchford

Doubleday, \$34.95

Globe and Mail columnist Christie Blatchford tackles the Afghanistan mission from the viewpoint of an imbedded journalist in her first full-length book. Oct. 30 release.

Blue Covenant: The Global

Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water

By Maude Barlow

McClelland & Stewart, \$19.99

If water is the new oil, then activist and visionary Maude Barlow has a recommendation here about how to protect, and make equal, the world's supply. Available Oct. 16.

Sports

The New Game: How Hockey

Got Faster, Cleaner, and Better

By Steve Paikin

Penguin, \$35

Required reading; A cheat-sheet to Canada's best fiction, non-fiction and poetry this season

TV Ontario host Steve Paikin documents the changing tide of the way Canada's national sport is played. Now available.

Hitman: My Real Life in the Cartoon World of Wrestling

By Bret Hart

Random House, \$35

Culled from his own audio diaries kept throughout years of travelling and performing as a WWE superstar, Bret Hart chronicles his career and touches on the impact of his brother's death and his own health issues prior to and after his retirement at age 43. Due Oct. 16.

Music

It Ain't Easy: Long John Baldry and the Birth of the British Blues

By Paul Myers

Douglas & McIntyre, \$24.95

Journalist and musician Paul Myers chronicles the life of Long John Baldry (who lived in Vancouver from the late '70s on), interviewing Baldry's friends and former bandmates, including Eric Clapton, Elton John, John Mayall, Cameron Crowe and Rod Stewart, and paints a portrait of the influence of the renowned musician on the British music scene and beyond. Now available.

Carla Lucchetta is a Toronto writer.

Karzai asks Taliban for meeting; Deadly attack prompts Afghan leader to make emotional plea to Mullah Omar

IDNUMBER 200709300089
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Ahmad Masood, Reuters / A distraught Afghan boy searches for his father, who went missing and is feared dead after a suicide bombing in Kabul yesterday. A Taliban suicide bomber killed at least 30 and injured dozens more in an attack on a bus carrying soldiers. ;

DATELINE: KABUL
BYLINE: M. Karim Faiez and Laura King
SOURCE: The Los Angeles Times
WORD COUNT: 543

KABUL – President Hamid Karzai, expressing horror at a suicide bombing here in the Afghan capital that killed at least 30 people and wounded dozens more, offered yesterday to meet with Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar to stop the carnage.

Mr. Karzai spoke at an emotional news conference hours after an early morning blast tore through a bus carrying soldiers to their posts. The explosion was so powerful it ripped the roof and sides from the bus, scattering body parts and debris along a street in the city centre.

Nearly all of the dead were thought to be soldiers, but at least two were civilians who were near the bus when it blew up.

A purported Taliban spokesman calling himself Zabibullah Mujahed claimed responsibility for the attack in text messages sent to Western news agencies.

Several times in recent weeks, Mr. Karzai has suggested direct talks with the Taliban, the austere Islamic militia driven from power by a U.S.-led invasion nearly six years ago.

But yesterday's appeal, aimed directly at fugitive Taliban leader Mullah Omar and warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, carried more raw urgency than the U.S.-backed president's previous overtures.

"If I find their address, there is no need for them to come to me -- I'll personally go there and get in touch with them," Mr. Karzai told reporters at his presidential palace.

Apparently paraphrasing the question he would put to them, he asked: "Esteemed mullah, sir, and esteemed Hekmatyar, sir, why are you destroying the country?"

U.S. diplomats and military officials in Afghanistan would not comment directly on Mr. Karzai's appeal, although one U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, cautioned against taking Mr. Karzai's offer to talk to the insurgents himself too literally.

Karzai asks Taliban for meeting; Deadly attack prompts Afghan leader to make emotional plea to Mullah Omar

Taliban fighters have responded to the president's previous overtures by demanding that all foreign forces leave Afghanistan before any talks could take place. NATO, in turn, has said it would consider negotiations only with fighters who were willing to lay down their arms.

In intensified fighting in the last 18 months, the insurgents have made little headway against a vastly superior U.S.– and NATO–led force, but have extracted a heavy toll in civilian lives and rendered large swaths of the country unsafe.

The bus bombing was the worst in the capital since a similar blast in June, which also targetted a bus carrying security personnel, and killed about 35 people.

As in Iraq, Afghans have become accustomed to attacks carried out during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, but Mr. Karzai said the timing rendered the attack particularly heinous.

"It was a terrible tragedy, no doubt an act of extreme cowardice," Mr. Karzai told reporters. "Whoever did this was against people, against humanity, definitely against Islam. A man who calls himself Muslim will not blow up innocent people in the middle of Ramadan."

The bombing left searchers clambering onto rooftops and even into treetops to retrieve scraps of mangled flesh. Survivors told police that the bomber had been wearing a military uniform.

Meanwhile, the International Committee of the Red Cross said four of its employees who were kidnapped last week had been freed unharmed.

Franz Rauchenstein, deputy head of the organization's delegation in Kabul, called the release of the two foreigners and two Afghan nationals "a great relief" and said no ransom had been paid or any other concessions made.

Abductions of aid workers and other foreign nationals have become more common in the last year. Twenty–three South Korean church workers were kidnapped in July, and 21 of them were released after protracted negotiations. Two of the hostages were killed.

Afghanistan mission gives Quebec chance to make country proud: top diplomat

IDNUMBER 200709300088
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
DATELINE: MONTREAL
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 611

MONTREAL – For Canada's top diplomat in Kandahar, success means learning from past mistakes and hanging on to ground taken — and then retaken — from the Taliban.

But gains in Afghanistan could also have an important sociopolitical spinoff back home: Making the rest of Canada proud of Quebec's contribution to greater world stability.

So says Quebec-born Michel de Salaberry, Canada's new senior civilian co-ordinator for Kandahar. In a rare interview since the Foreign Affairs Department appointed him Canada's top diplomat in Kandahar, Mr. de Salaberry says he is proud of his Quebec roots and the opportunity to serve alongside his home province's Royal 22nd Regiment, the Van Doo.

"It's our chance — it's the francophones' chance — to show good service to Canada," Mr. de Salaberry explained. "In many ways, French Canada has been a source of stress for the whole of the country. This is one opportunity for the whole of the country to be proud of its French-speaking element."

Any noticeable increase in support in Quebec for Canada's military mission in Afghanistan would be welcome news to a minority Conservative government determined to carry on with the NATO mission in the face of an increasingly skeptical public — especially in Quebec — and an emboldened political opposition posturing to topple the government, perhaps in a matter of weeks.

At 61, Mr. de Salaberry wasn't coaxed out of retirement last summer to do the Conservatives any political favours. After a distinguished string of ambassadorships in Iran, Jordan and Egypt, he says he was flattered, but also bound by a deeply held conviction to fight the roots of fanaticism that threaten the world.

Mr. de Salaberry's primary function is to elevate the non-military aspects

of the Canadian contribution to Afghanistan, and do so from the dangerous southern terrain around Kandahar. He reports to Canada's ambassador to Afghanistan, Kabul-based Arif Lalani, but he is responsible for six fellow diplomats in the violence-racked southern province of Kandahar.

His job is to better co-ordinate the development and diplomatic efforts with the military mission, whose focus is to strengthen security in the region and eventually stamp out the insurgency.

"There's a new level of understanding between Canadian government departments," Mr. de Salaberry notes.

"What is new is joint planning. That didn't occur before. It's a switch from conceiving of three different lines of programs."

On the ground, this better level of integration means more long-term planning between government departments about how to reinforce any gains by Canada's military.

Last year, Canada led NATO forces on the hard-fought Operation Medusa that drove the Taliban out of the Panjwaii and Zhari districts west of Kandahar. But smaller cells of Taliban insurgents reinfiltred the region afterwards, planting roadside bombs that have inflicted several deaths on the Canadian soldiers. Insurgents have also killed more than a dozen Afghans in attacks on poorly fortified police outposts.

In the past week, Canada has mounted a renewed offensive in the region, which, despite the death of one Calgary-based soldier, is showing positive signs. Canada is also ramping up its training of Afghan police by opening a teaching centre for more senior officers next to the Canadian provincial reconstruction team in downtown Kandahar.

Mr. de Salaberry does not try to sugar-coat the job ahead: Creating a viable police force for Afghanistan when its ranks have a literacy rate of 10 per cent and poor pay makes many officers vulnerable to corruption. Monthly salaries will be doubled to \$140 as a start, but many challenges remain.

The diplomat refuses to speculate on what will happen after February 2009, when Canada's military commitment is set to expire. All he'll say is that "a military presence" of some sort will be required for some time to come.

MPs issue statement branding U.S. army, CIA as 'terrorists'

IDNUMBER 200709300086
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 131

Iranian lawmakers branded the U.S. armed forces and the Central Intelligence Agency as "terrorist" in a statement read out in parliament yesterday, Iranian media said. Signed by 215 members of the 290-seat legislature, the statement was an apparent response to reports that Washington is considering labelling a unit of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards a foreign terrorist organization. The legislators criticized the U.S. military and the CIA for what they called terrorist actions, citing the Second World War atomic bombing of Japan, the Vietnam war and the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan as examples. The statement also criticized the U.S.'s "unlimited support for the racist and aggressive Zionist regime (Israel)."

Karzai courts Taliban; Afghan president seeks dialogue; Peter MacKay sets conditions

PUBLICATION: The Sunday Herald

DATE: 2007.09.30

SECTION: Front

PAGE: A1

SOURCE: The Associated Press

BYLINE: Jason Straziuso

ILLUSTRATION: Minister of Defence Peter MacKay at swearing-in ceremony for military recruits at HMCS Scotian in Halifax on Saturday. Responding to Karzai's overture to the Taliban, MacKay said the militants must renounce violence. (Ingrid Bulmer / Staff); Mujtaba, an Afghan boy, cries for his father who is missing following a suicide blast in Kabul, Afghanistan on Saturday. (RAFIQ MAQBOOL / AP)

WORD COUNT: 844

KABUL – In his most dramatic peace overture yet, Afghan President Hamid Karzai on Saturday offered to meet Taliban leader Mullah Omar and give militants a position in government.

Karzai's offer came hours after a suicide bomber in army disguise attacked a military bus in Kabul, killing 30 people.

Strengthening a call for negotiations he has made with increasing frequency in recent weeks, Karzai said he was willing to meet the reclusive Omar and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former prime minister and factional warlord leader.

"If I find their address, there is no need for them to come to me, I'll personally go there and get in touch with them," Karzai said. "Esteemed Mullah, sir, and esteemed Hekmatyar, sir, why are you destroying the country?"

Karzai said he has contacts with Taliban militants through tribal elders but that there are no direct and open government communication channels with the fighters. Omar's whereabouts are not known, though Karzai has claimed he is in Quetta, Pakistan, a militant hotbed across the border from Afghanistan's Kandahar province.

"If a group of Taliban or a number of Taliban come to me and say, 'President, we want a department in this or in that ministry or we want a position as deputy minister ... and we don't want to fight anymore If there will be a demand and a request like that to me, I will accept it because I want conflicts and fighting to end in Afghanistan," Karzai said. "I wish there would be a demand as easy as this. I wish that they would want a position in the government. I will give them a position," he said.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul has said it does not support negotiations with Taliban fighters, labelling them as terrorists, though the United Nations and NATO have said an increasing number of Taliban are interested in laying down their arms. NATO's ambassador to Afghanistan, Daan Everts, said this month that NATO would look into the possibility of talks.

U.S. President George W. Bush met Karzai on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York on Wednesday where the two discussed the battle against al-Qaida and the Taliban, though it has not been made public whether the two talked about the possibility of peace talks with militants.

A State Department duty officer said he couldn't immediately comment on Karzai's offer to meet Omar, noting that most policy makers were still in New York.

Canada's defence minister said the Taliban would have to renounce violence and accept the NATO mission if it wants to work with the Afghan government.

"There must be a renouncing of the violence, there must be an acceptance that NATO forces are not going to leave the country, that these preconditions that the Taliban have laid out in the past will not be part of the occasion," said Peter MacKay.

Speaking in Halifax, MacKay also said that any co-operation must lead to peace in the war-torn country.

Saturday's explosion – the second deadliest since the fall of the Taliban in 2001 – ripped off the roof of the bus and tore out its sides, leaving a charred hull of burnt metal. It was reminiscent of the deadliest ever attack, when a bomber boarded a police academy bus at Kabul's busiest transportation hub in June, killing 35 people.

Police and soldiers climbed trees to retrieve some body parts. Nearby businesses also were damaged.

"For 10 or 15 seconds, it was like an atom bomb – fire, smoke and dust everywhere," said Mohammad Azim, a police officer who witnessed the explosion.

Karzai said 30 people were killed – 28 soldiers and two civilians.

The Health Ministry said another 30 were wounded. Two women were among the dead, and 11 people whose bodies were ripped apart so badly had yet to be identified.

"It was a terrible tragedy, no doubt an act of extreme cowardice," Karzai said.

"Whoever did this was against people, against humanity, definitely against Islam. A man who calls himself Muslim will not blow up innocent people in the middle of Ramadan," the Muslim holy month.

A purported Taliban spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, claimed the militant group was responsible for the blast in a text message to The Associated Press. Mujahid said the bomber was a Kabul resident named Azizullah.

The bus had stopped in front of a movie theatre to pick up soldiers when a bomber wearing a military uniform tried to board around 6:45 a.m. local time, army spokesman Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi said.

"Typically there are people checking the IDs of soldiers who want to board the bus," Azimi said. "While they were checking the IDs the bomber tried to get on the bus and blew himself up there."

NATO's International Security Assistance Force, meanwhile, said one of its soldiers was killed in eastern Afghanistan during combat operations Saturday. ISAF did not release the soldier's nationality, but most in the east are American.

Four employees with the International Committee of the Red Cross, kidnapped earlier this week while negotiating the release of a German hostage, were freed in good health Saturday, the ICRC said.

The number of kidnappings in Afghanistan has spiked in recent months after the Taliban secured the release of five insurgent prisoners in exchange for a captive Italian journalist in March – a heavily criticized swap that many feared would encourage abductions.

The Taliban kidnapped 23 South Koreans in July, a crisis that scored the militants talks with South Korean

government delegates. Two of the Koreans were killed; 21 were released.

'There must be a
renouncing of the
violence, there must
be an acceptance that
NATO forces are not going to leave the
country.'

Wood cuts to the quick

PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)
DATE: 2007.09.30
SECTION: Republic of words
PAGE: B5
COLUMN: Fiction review
SOURCE: Features editor
BYLINE: Ken Simmons
WORD COUNT: 618

It is easy for us to forget the past. We ignore its lessons and end up in Afghanistan or Iraq. We take for granted the accomplishments of past generations, demanding ever more without acknowledging what others fought so hard to secure, even to the sacrifice of their own lives.

As is so often the case, it is art that reminds us of these times, either modern works looking back or, as is the case with "Graphic Witness," contemporary art, of and from the time.

"Graphic Witness" is a collection of novels, chosen and introduced by Ontario artist and educator George Walker, that say eloquently in pictures what words often struggle to convey.

These wordless novels are presented not only as historical documents, but as the seed of what has become one of the most important mediums of modern time, the graphic novel.

Don't think these "comics" have impact? You need only look to Hollywood, which once relied on Shakespeare, Steinbeck and Hemingway for inspiration. Beyond Batman and Hulk, the stories of such films as "Road to Perdition," "A History of Violence" and "300" were first told in tiny, inked panels.

In his introduction to "Graphic Witness," Walker draws this line beyond the subjects of his collection – Frans Masereel, Lynd Ward, Giacomo Patri and Laurence Hyde – but it is in these four artists he has uncovered the essence of the graphic novel; it is here he makes a stand for its place in history.

And rightly so. Each of the four novels offers a window into the world that created it, the politics and the pressures of society. The Belgian Masereel's "The Passion of Man" was first published in 1918. Its dark images recount the struggles of a young man in pre-war Europe. Born out of wedlock, child and mother are banished from the family home.

Raised on the streets, the boy struggles to do a man's work to earn his keep, but fails. Caught stealing to eat, he spends years in prison. Once freed, he again must rely on his back for food, but he also teaches himself to read, begins a relationship, and takes up the struggle of his fellow workers.

As was the truth for so many early labour organizers, it doesn't end well.

Three of the four novels touch on this theme. Ward's "Wild Pilgrimage" (1932) follows the same path, although with a greater depth that allows the artist to touch on other distinctly American issues, such as the lynching of African-Americans, or the more universal internal struggles of the itinerant male.

Again, the results are not unexpected.

Patri's "White Collar" (1940) is, if anything, even more discouraging, as it follows the hero from desk success to entrepreneurial failures during the Depression. Ironically, it is among the ranks of his blue-collar brothers that he finds his cause, and salvation.

Only Canadian Hyde veers from the labour theme, focusing his chisels on the travesty of South Seas hydrogen bomb testing in "Southern Cross" (1951).

Yes, "chisels." As Walker so wonderfully explains, these images were created using woodcuts – although not necessarily in wood. He discusses tools and method, and his obvious passion for the topic is enough to make any would-be printer consider the process.

Any panel of either of these novels could hang alone as a prime example of the form. Each artist brings his own style to the monotone images, in either black or sepia, and as similar as they are in technique, they are worlds apart in style.

And that makes "Graphic Witness" a double value for any fan of comics or history.

Walker, an artist in his own right, will visit St. John's next weekend, holding a graphic novel workshop under the aegis of the Writers' Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador Saturday, Oct. 6, then launching "Graphic Witness" and his own "Images from the Neocerebellum: The Wood Engravings of George A. Walker" Sunday at 1:30 p.m. at the Eastern Edge Gallery.

ksimmons@thetelegram.com

Karzai offers to meet Taliban leader

PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)

DATE: 2007.09.30

SECTION: News

PAGE: A14

SOURCE: The Associated Press

BYLINE: Jason Straziuso

DATELINE: Kabul

WORD COUNT: 415

In his most dramatic peace overture yet, Afghan President Hamid Karzai Saturday offered to meet Taliban leader Mullah Omar and give militants a position in government. Karzai's offer came hours after a suicide bomber in army disguise attacked a military bus in Kabul, killing 30 people.

Strengthening a call for negotiations he has made with increasing frequency in recent weeks, Karzai said he was willing to meet the reclusive Omar and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former prime minister and factional warlord leader.

"If I find their address, there is no need for them to come to me, I'll personally go there and get in touch with them," Karzai said. "Esteemed Mullah, sir, and esteemed Hekmatyar, sir, why are you destroying the country?"

Karzai said he has contacts with Taliban militants through tribal elders but that there are no direct and open government communication channels with the fighters.

Omar's whereabouts are not known, though Karzai has claimed he is in Quetta, Pakistan, a militant hotbed across the border from Afghanistan's Kandahar province.

"If a group of Taliban or a number of Taliban come to me and say, 'President, we want a department in this or in that ministry or we want a position as deputy minister ... and we don't want to fight anymore ... If there will be a demand and a request like that to me, I will accept it because I want conflicts and fighting to end in Afghanistan," Karzai said.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul has said it does not support negotiations with Taliban fighters, labelling them as terrorists, though the United Nations and NATO have said an increasing number of Taliban are interested in laying down their arms.

U.S. President George W. Bush met Karzai on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York on Wednesday where the two discussed the battle against al-Qaida and the Taliban, though it has not been made public whether the two talked about the possibility of peace talks with militants.

A U.S. State Department duty officer said he couldn't immediately comment on Karzai's offer to meet Omar, noting most policy makers were still in New York.

Canada's defence minister said the Taliban would have to renounce violence and accept the NATO mission if it wants to work with the Afghan government.

"There must be a renouncing of the violence, there must be an acceptance that NATO forces are not going to leave the country, that these preconditions that the Taliban have laid out in the past will not be part of the

occasion," said Peter MacKay.

There must be a renouncing of the violence, there must be an acceptance that NATO forces are not going to leave the country...

Canadian Defence Minister Peter MacKay

Liberal defence critic to go on unauthorized fact-finding trip

PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)

DATE: 2007.09.30

SECTION: National

PAGE: A5

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Alexander Panetta

DATELINE: Ottawa

WORD COUNT: 294

The Liberal defence critic says he's headed on an unauthorized fact-finding trip to Afghanistan after having his request to visit the troops consistently ignored by the Harper government.

Denis Coderre says he's set to leave for Kabul and Kandahar to visit with development workers, Afghan government officials and Canadian soldiers.

"(Afghanistan) is a major issue for the Canadian people," Coderre said in an interview Saturday.

"I think that for the sake of the debate it's important that I go. Since I couldn't get an answer I decided to go on my own."

The Montreal-area MP says he's made multiple requests with Defence Minister Peter MacKay's office but that they were systematically ignored or rejected. He said he first asked to go when Gordon O'Connor was defence minister but sometimes didn't get his calls returned.

Coderre says he has the full blessing of his leader, Stephane Dion, and that his boss has also informed the Harper government Coderre wants to go to Afghanistan.

While visiting dignitaries generally use transportation supplied by the Department of National Defence, Coderre has made his own travel arrangements to Afghanistan and within the country.

He does not yet have permission from the Canadian government to visit the international base in Kandahar, but says he's confident that he will be allowed to meet with the troops.

"Since (all requests) passed through the defence minister's office, I would see it as a partisan gesture from the defence minister if I'm denied access," he said.

A spokesman for MacKay said MP trips are usually organized through parliamentary committees and not through the minister's office.

Since the House of Commons is prorogued and its committees are temporarily suspended, Coderre would have to wait until the House resumes next month for permission.

There's one problem with waiting: the government could collapse in a vote on its policy-setting throne speech immediately after Parliament resumes on Oct. 16, which could trigger an election.

With a potential election looming, the future of the Afghan mission could be a matter of intense debate this fall.

But Coderre shrugged off any suggestion he's about to embark on an intercontinental political stunt.

Karzai offers to meet Taliban leader Mullah Omar as suicide bomber kills 30

DATE: 2007.09.29

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 870

KABUL _ In his most dramatic peace overture yet, Afghan President Hamid Karzai on Saturday offered to meet Taliban leader Mullah Omar and give militants a position in government. Karzai's offer came hours after a suicide bomber in army disguise attacked a military bus in Kabul, killing 30 people.

Strengthening a call for negotiations he has made with increasing frequency in recent weeks, Karzai said he was willing to meet the reclusive Omar and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former prime minister and factional warlord leader.

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Karzai said he has contacts with Taliban militants through tribal elders but that there are no direct and open government communication channels with the fighters. Omar's whereabouts are not known, though Karzai has claimed he is in Quetta, Pakistan, a militant hotbed across the border from Afghanistan's Kandahar province.

“If a group of Taliban or a number of Taliban come to me and say, ‘President, we want a department in this or in that ministry or we want a position as deputy minister ... and we don't want to fight anymore If there will be a demand and a request like that to me, I will accept it because I want conflicts and fighting to end in Afghanistan,” Karzai said.

“I wish there would be a demand as easy as this. I wish that they would want a position in the government. I will give them a position,” he said.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul has said it does not support negotiations with Taliban fighters, labelling them as terrorists, though the United Nations and NATO have said an increasing number of Taliban are interested in laying down their arms. NATO's ambassador to Afghanistan, Daan Everts, said this month that NATO would look into the possibility of talks.

U.S. President George W. Bush met Karzai on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York on Wednesday where the two discussed the battle against al-Qaida and the Taliban, though it has not been made public whether the two talked about the possibility of peace talks with militants.

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Canada's defence minister said the Taliban would have to renounce violence and accept the NATO mission if it wants to work with the Afghan government.

“There must be a renouncing of the violence, there must be an acceptance that NATO forces are not going to leave the country, that these preconditions that the Taliban have laid out in the past will not be part of the occasion,” said Peter MacKay.

Speaking in Halifax, MacKay also said that any co-operation must lead to peace in the war-torn country.

Saturday's explosion _ the second deadliest since the fall of the Taliban in 2001 _ ripped off the roof of the bus and tore out its sides, leaving a charred hull of burnt metal. It was reminiscent of the deadliest ever attack, when a bomber boarded a police academy bus at Kabul's busiest transportation hub in June, killing 35 people.

Police and soldiers climbed trees to retrieve some body parts. Nearby businesses also were damaged.

"For 10 or 15 seconds, it was like an atom bomb _ fire, smoke and dust everywhere," said Mohammad Azim, a police officer who witnessed the explosion.

Karzai said 30 people were killed _ 28 soldiers and two civilians. The Health Ministry said another 30 were wounded. Two women were among the dead, and 11 people whose bodies were ripped apart so badly had yet to be identified.

"It was a terrible tragedy, no doubt an act of extreme cowardice," Karzai said. "Whoever did this was against people, against humanity, definitely against Islam. A man who calls himself Muslim will not blow up innocent people in the middle of Ramadan," the Muslim holy month.

A purported Taliban spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, claimed the militant group was responsible for the blast in a text message to The Associated Press. Mujahid said the bomber was a Kabul resident named Azizullah.

The bus had stopped in front of a movie theatre to pick up soldiers when a bomber wearing a military uniform tried to board around 6:45 a.m. local time, army spokesman Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi said.

"Typically there are people checking the IDs of soldiers who want to board the bus," Azimi said. "While they were checking the IDs the bomber tried to get on the bus and blew himself up there."

NATO's International Security Assistance Force, meanwhile, said one of its soldiers was killed in eastern Afghanistan during combat operations Saturday. ISAF did not release the soldier's nationality, but most in the east are American.

Four employees with the International Committee of the Red Cross, kidnapped earlier this week while negotiating the release of a German hostage, were freed in good health Saturday, the ICRC said.

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

The Taliban kidnapped 23 South Koreans in July, a hostage crisis that scored the militants face-to-face talks with South Korean government delegates. Two of the Koreans were killed; 21 were eventually released.

U.S. commander plays dual role in Gulf: warns Iran, but avoids war threats

DATE: 2007.09.29

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DEFENCE ECONOMY

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 841

DOHA, Qatar _ As the top U.S. military commander in the Middle East was leaving the Al-Jazeera television studios after an interview, one of the station managers shook his hand and joked: "Sir, you just made apartment prices jump in Dubai."

The reason: Admiral William Fallon just said he didn't believe war with Iran was looming.

These are words the Persian Gulf is desperate to hear _ from hungry developers in boomtowns such as Doha and Dubai to jittery Kuwaiti oil executives whose tankers sail within sight of Iran's coastline.

Fallon took on a challenging dual role _ part pacifier and part enforcer _ as he hopscotched around the region during a trip that ended last week. The U.S. Central Command chief tried to assure nervous allies that the Pentagon was not locked in a collision course with Iran.

But he also left no doubt that U.S. forces will come down increasingly hard on suspected Iranian aid to militias in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The two-pronged message, some experts say, could be the outline of Washington's emerging strategy against Iran's growing swagger and defiance of western pressure to curb its nuclear ambitions.

"It's all about trying to contain Iran without turning this into a war," said Ali al-Ahmed, director of the Institute for Gulf Affairs in Washington.

Fallon was peppered with questions about Iran at every stop in his trip.

Gulf rulers fretted about how conflict would derail their countries' galloping growth as malls, villas and skyscrapers _ including the world's tallest in Dubai _ sprout in the vanilla-hued sand. Dubai currently hosts about one-quarter of the world's construction cranes, according to local boosters.

The Gulf's military brass presented their own worries. Most of them were spun around grave scenarios in which an Iran-U.S. war would quickly swallow the entire region and make the Iraq battles seem like a sideshow.

In Kuwait _ separated from Iran by just a small sliver of Iraqi coast _ Fallon was urged to review its defence pact for new contingencies including threats by Shiite militiamen and Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

Fallon did his best to soothe the anxiety.

"This constant drum beat of conflict is what strikes me which is not helpful and not useful," Fallon said in a half-hour interview with Al-Jazeera television broadcast Sept. 23.

"I expect that there will be no war and that is what we ought to be working for," added Fallon, whose comments were translated into Arabic. "We ought to try and to do our utmost to create different conditions."

Fallon's predecessor, retired army general John Abizaid, had already sketched out a standoff straight from the pages of the Cold War if Iran's nuclear labs one day produce warheads _ as the West fears. Abizaid said the U.S. has the deterrent power to keep Iran in check. The bottom-line: The West could find ways to live with a nuclear-armed Iran just as it did with the Soviet Union, he predicted.

Jon Alterman, the Middle East program director at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, said the comments by Fallon and Abizaid are ``consistent with the president's position that military action is not the first option, but they're not going to remove it from the list of possibilities."

``I've been hearing military people saying this for quite some time ... I don't think it's the first choice of many people in government, and it's certainly not the first choice of many people in the military," said Alterman.

The alternative is sharpening the tools already in place: economic sanctions and attempts at international isolation, said Peter Rodman, who was a top international policy adviser at the Pentagon until earlier this year.

``The purpose of economic sanctions is to exhaust the non-military option," he said.

At the United Nations, the five permanent Security Council nations plus Germany agreed Friday to delay discussions on a resolution to toughen sanctions against Iran. They want to give Tehran until November to answer questions about its disputed nuclear program.

But Iran is not an easy country to leverage. It has weathered a U.S. diplomatic and economic cold shoulder since shortly after the 1979 Islamic Revolution by building ties with Europe and, more recently, Russia and China _ all keen on remaining a trading partner in a country with a young and educated population.

Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, is also seeking new friends in what he dubs an ``anti-imperialism" coalition. On Thursday, he was given a warm welcome by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez after arriving from Bolivia, where he pledged \$1 billion in Iranian investment.

Iran can afford to be generous. It sits on plentiful reserves of oil and natural gas, which brings in a steady flow of cash for the theocracy's showcase priorities. Among them: a military that likes to show off its independence.

Iran has upgraded its Shahab-3 missile to a range of 2,000 kilometres, capable of reaching Israel and carrying a nuclear warhead. Earlier this month, Ahmadinejad attended a military display that included torpedoes, surveillance drones and what Iran called its new domestically manufactured warplanes.

Fallon _ a former navy pilot _ scoffed at the jet-fighter. Photos indicated it was an embellished version of an old F-5, which was introduced in the 1960s and sold to Iran's monarchy before the Islamic Revolution.

Fallon mentioned the plane often during his trip, telling allies he believes Iran is not as strong as it portrays itself. ``Not militarily, economically or politically," he said.

Any co-operation with Taliban must come with conditions: MacKay

DATE: 2007.09.29

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 177

HALIFAX _ Defence Minister Peter MacKay says the Taliban will have to renounce violence and accept the NATO mission in Afghanistan if it wants to work with the Afghan government.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai renewed his call Saturday for talks with the Taliban after a deadly suicide bombing in Kabul.

Karzai said he wants to meet with Taliban leader Mullah Omar for peace talks and is willing to consider giving the militants a position in government.

Speaking at an enrolment ceremony for new military personnel in Halifax, MacKay says any co-operation must include the preconditions that Karzai has laid out. Those include the Taliban's renunciation of violence and acceptance of the fact that NATO forces aren't leaving the country any time soon.

MacKay said he's comfortable with anyone who is prepared to move away from activities on the ground that put Canadian soldiers, and others who are part of the NATO mission, at risk.

He added, ``if that involves having the (Taliban) leadership accept those conditions and renounce the violence, then it's moving towards what we all want to see, and that is a stable, peaceful society in Afghanistan."`

Retired admiral wants more emphasis on internal military intelligence

DATE: 2007.09.29

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 466

CALGARY _ With the eyes of the Canadian intelligence community focused almost exclusively on operations in Afghanistan, it might be time to consider the threats within Canada's borders, a conference of security and intelligence officials was warned Saturday.

``When I look at the next 10 to 15 years, the thing that bothers me the most is terrorism _ but not just in Afghanistan," said retired Rear Admiral Roger Girourard, former commander of Maritime Forces Pacific for the Canadian Forces.

Girourard, who joked that being retired makes him ``fireproof," was speaking at a session on ``Adapting to New Theatres of Operation" at the annual conference of the Canadian Association of Security and Intelligence Studies.

The admiral told delegates he worries about security threats in the Philippines and Indonesia and the possibility of fissionable material from North Korea arriving in Syria or even closer to home for Canadians.

``Can someone tell me why that now we've opened the Port of Prince Rupert and with the degree of traffic that we have there, that they (North Korean ships) can't land there?" he asked.

``Because I'm from B.C. I worry about radicalized environmentalism, eco-terrorism and we haven't talked a lot about the religious fervour of that topic and where it might take us in the next five years."

The three-day conference attracted leading experts, scholars and policy makers in the intelligence and security fields. The theme of the conference was ``Evolution, Revolution or Same Old, Same Old? Reality Check on Security, Intelligence, Law Enforcement and Defence in 2007."

Girourard charged that Canada has not had a strategic global vision on matters of security intelligence and has expected the Department of National Defence to provide more than the government has been willing to pay for.

``Up until now Canadian Forces-DND have survived by continuing to offer that up. I'm not sure how much longer they've got it in them, he said, noting there needs to be more of a role for the military when it comes to security here at home.

``We don't engage ourselves in certain observations of Canadians and with some events like, oh, call it the Olympics, is that still the right construct?"

Brig.-Gen. David Fraser, the Canadian who commanded NATO forces in southern Afghanistan for nine months last year, told the session that improved intelligence in Afghanistan is essential to keep one step ahead of the Taliban.

But with troops patrolling an area about one-third the size of Alberta it's a tough battle, said Fraser, now commandant of Canadian Forces College.

“Metaphorically speaking, on the best day I could probably know about 20 per cent of what was going on out there. It's not perfect because there's an enemy out there that is adaptive.

“I've always looked at the intelligence team and thought you've got the hardest job in the room because you have to look into the future. To expect that you're going to have perfect situational awareness is unrealistic.”

Liberal defence critic goes on unauthorized fact-finding trip to Afghanistan

DATE: 2007.09.29
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 433

OTTAWA _ The Liberal defence critic says he's headed on an unauthorized fact-finding trip to Afghanistan after having his request to visit the troops consistently ignored by the Harper government.

Denis Coderre says he's set to leave for Kabul and Kandahar to visit with development workers, Afghan government officials and Canadian soldiers.

“(Afghanistan) is a major issue for the Canadian people,” Coderre said in an interview Saturday.

“I think that for the sake of the debate it's important that I go. Since I couldn't get an answer I decided to go on my own.”

The Montreal-area MP says he's made multiple requests with Defence Minister Peter MacKay's office but that they were systematically ignored or rejected. He said he first asked to go when Gordon O'Connor was defence minister but sometimes didn't get his calls returned.

Coderre says that he has the full blessing of his leader, Stephane Dion, and that his boss has also informed the Harper government that Coderre wants to go to Afghanistan.

While visiting dignitaries generally use transportation supplied by the Department of National Defence, Coderre has made his own travel arrangements to Afghanistan and within the country.

He does not yet have permission from the Canadian government to visit the international base in Kandahar but says he's confident that he will be allowed to meet with the troops.

“Since (all requests) passed through the defence minister's office, I would see it as a partisan gesture from the defence minister if I'm denied access,” he said.

A spokesman for MacKay said MP trips are usually organized through parliamentary committees and not through the minister's office.

But since the House of Commons is prorogued and its committees are temporarily suspended, Coderre would have to wait until the House resumes next month to get permission.

There's one problem with waiting: the government could collapse in a vote on its policy-setting throne speech immediately after Parliament resumes on Oct. 16, which could trigger an election.

With a potential election looming, the future of the Afghan mission could be a matter of intense debate this fall.

But Coderre shrugged off any suggestion that he's about to embark on an intercontinental political stunt.

“It's not a stunt. I'm doing my job,” he said.

“I think that as a member of Parliament and as a National Defence critic, it's important for me to know what's going on in the field, at the diplomatic level, at the development level and of course at the military level.”

The Liberals and Bloc Quebecois want Canada to scale back its fighting operations in Afghanistan once the current mission expires in February 2009, while the government wants to continue. The NDP wants troops withdrawn immediately.

The government has repeatedly accused its opponents of failing to support the troops. Prime Minister Stephen Harper even once implied that opposition parties were Taliban-lovers when they raised concerns about the treatment of detainees.

But Coderre says his party's support for the soldiers overseas is unconditional.

“Democracy demands that we ask questions,” he said.

“We can question this government's mismanagement of the mission. But we do support the troops.”

With BC–Afghanistan, Bgt

DATE: 2007.09.29
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DEFENCE
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 238

Some of the deadliest insurgent attacks in Afghanistan since the U.S.–led offensive began Oct. 7, 2001:

Sept. 29, 2007 _ A suicide bomber in Afghan army uniform blows himself up on military bus in Kabul, killing 28 soldiers and two civilians.

Sept. 10, 2007 _ A suicide bomber on a motorized rickshaw attacks a busy market in Gereshk in Helmand province, killing 28 people, including 13 police.

June 17, 2007 _ A bomb rips through a bus carrying police instructors in Kabul, killing 35 people.

May 20, 2007 _ A suicide bomber detonates himself in a crowded market in the eastern city of Gardez, killing 14.

Feb. 27, 2007 _ A suicide bomber detonates himself outside the main U.S. base at Bagram Airfield, killing 23 people, during a visit by Vice–President Dick Cheney.

Sept. 30, 2006 _ A suicide bomber outside the gates of the Interior Ministry in Kabul kills 12 people.

Sept. 26, 2006 _ A suicide bomber on foot kills 18 outside compound of Helmand provincial governor in town of Lashkar Gah.

Sept. 8, 2006 _ Car bomber rams U.S. convoy in Kabul, killing 16, including two American soldiers.

Aug. 28, 2006 _ 21 civilians are killed by a suicide bomber targeting an ex–police chief in Lashkar Gah.

Aug. 3, 2006 _ 21 civilians are killed in a suicide car bombing near Canadian military vehicles in a market in Kandahar province.

Jan. 16, 2006 _ A man with explosives strapped to his body drives a motorbike into a crowd watching a wrestling match in Kandahar province and kills 21 people.

Jan. 5, 2006 _ A militant blows himself up in a town in central Uruzgan province during a supposedly secret visit by the U.S. ambassador, killing 10 Afghans.

June 1, 2005 _ A suspected al–Qaida fighter detonates explosives strapped to his body in a mosque in Kandahar city, killing 20 worshippers.

Aug. 13, 2003 _ An explosion tears apart a bus in southern Afghanistan, killing at least 15 civilians.

Sept. 5, 2002 _ 30 people killed and 167 wounded in a Kabul car bombing.

More than 100 Nova Scotians bound for Canadian Forces basic training

DATE: 2007.09.29

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 396

HALIFAX _ The number of new recruits joining the Canadian Forces signals a national ``awakening" of the military's importance, Defence Minister Peter MacKay said Saturday as dozens of young men and women prepared to leave for basic training in Quebec.

``You are signing up at an important time in our country's history," he told hundreds of families and friends at the military complex, HMCS Scotian.

``The time when once again, the world has ... asked for our help."

The enrolment ceremony was one of the largest held in Halifax in several years.

The 102 men and women accepted into the Canadian Forces, including 32 reserve positions and 70 regular force recruits, are all from Nova Scotia.

The regular force recruits _ which include infantrymen, aviation system technicians, marine electricians and medical technicians _ left Halifax on Saturday for 13 weeks of training in St. Jean, Que.

They will then complete job-specific training, which can last up to a year.

MacKay told reporters the number of people signing up is growing, particularly in provinces such as Quebec and Nova Scotia.

``I think it's significant," MacKay said following the ceremony.

``I would describe it as an awakening in the country of the importance of military service, of the utility that it provides in the job market as a career."

It's unknown whether any of the most recent recruits will eventually be sent to Afghanistan to join the more than 2,300 troops already serving there, but many said they would be willing to do whatever is asked of them.

Canada's mission to Afghanistan is due to end in February 2009, but the government wants it to continue.

``If I'm called upon to go to Afghanistan, so be it," said Pte. Robert Morrice, 21, a future combat engineer from Kingston, N.S.

``It's my job now."

Morrice's younger brother, who was also officially welcomed into the Canadian Forces on Saturday, said he was excited to join the military as an infantryman regardless of where he serves.

``It's in the family, and I've always wanted to serve Canada," said Pte. Bryant Morrice, 19, moments before stepping on a bus bound for the Halifax airport with his brother.

“My grandfather's been in it, my father's been in it for almost 30 years, and we wanted to keep it in the family.”

MacKay said recruiting members to the Canadian Forces is important, especially in light of Canada's involvement in Afghanistan.

While one rotation is serving in Afghanistan, he said, another group is preparing to deploy.

“We need to keep the tempo,” said MacKay. “We need to keep recruits coming in, keep our levels high.”

Col. Matthew Overton, commander of the Canadian Forces recruiting group, said recruitment is going well, but there is a need for more naval equipment technicians, linemen and artillerymen.

“We're really pleased with the way Canadians are responding to the call to join the force,” he said. “We have a recurring need for new Canadians to join us, to provide that renewal of young Canadians.”

INDEX:Defence, International, Politics

DATE: 2007.09.29

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 91

OTTAWA – The Liberal defence critic says he's headed on an unauthorized fact-finding trip to Afghanistan.

After having his request to visit the troops consistently ignored by the Harper government, Denis Coderre says he's set to leave for Kabul and Kandahar.

The Montreal-area MP hopes to visit with development workers, Afghan government officials and Canadian soldiers.

Coderre made multiple requests to Defence Minister Peter MacKay's office for permission to go, but says they were systematically ignored or rejected.

He says he has the full blessing of his leader, Stephane Dion.

And despite not having permission from Ottawa to visit the international base in Kandahar, Coderre says he's confident he'll be allowed.

(The Canadian Press)

--Fourth NewsWatch--

DATE: 2007.09.29

KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 230

Troops in Myanmar (MEE'-ahn-mahr) have seized control of the streets.

Protesters -- who've been trying to end the decades-long military dictatorship -- are losing hope.

The two largest cities are quiet today, with soldiers and police stationed on almost every corner.

Parks and businesses are closed. (4)

(Afghan Violence)

Police say a suicide bomber who killed at least 30 Afghan soldiers today was wearing an Afghan army uniform when he boarded a crowded military bus.

Besides the dead, 30 others were wounded.

The force of the blast ripped the roof off the bus and blew out its sides.

Just hours after the blast, Afghan President Hamid Karzai offered to meet personally with the leader of the Taliban for peace talks.

Karzai says he's not willing to pull out foreign troops -- a key Taliban demand. (4)

(Afghan Cda Soldier)

The remains of the 71st Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan are back on Canadian soil.

A plane carrying Corporal Nathan Hornburg's flag draped casket landed yesterday afternoon at C-F-B Trenton, Ontario.

Governor General Michaëlle Jean and Defence Minister Peter MacKay were among the dignitaries to pay their respects during a solemn repatriation ceremony.

The 24-year-old reservist -- with the King's Own Calgary Regiment -- was killed in a mortar attack Monday. (4)

(Mexican Refugees Day)

A warning from Canada's public safety minister.

Stockwell Day says there'll be ``consequences'' for any illegal refugees trying to enter this country without proper documentation.

Day is looking to verify reports out of Windsor about a flood of refugee claimants.

Windsor's mayor says he's been told to expect another busload of refugees this week. (4)

(Dollar)

The high-flying loonie ended the week on a strong note.

The dollar closed above parity with the U-S greenback for the first time in nearly 31 years.

One economist says he expects the currency will get even stronger in the months to come.

The dollar closed at a dollar and half-a-cent U-S.

Davis says firm commodity prices, and lower interest rates in the U-S are factors behind the currency's strength. (4)

(Tropical Weather)

The 13th named storm of the Atlantic season is Tropical Storm Melissa.

It's far out at sea.

Meantime, the remnants of Hurricane Lorenzo are still bringing rain to central Mexico. (6)

(NewsWatch by Geri Smith)

Federal-Surplus

DATE: 2007.09.29

KEYWORDS: BUSINESS ECONOMY FINANCE POLITICS

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 124

OTTAWA --- Pressure is building on the Conservative government to announce major tax cuts as early as the October economic update.

Yesterday, the finance department reported it was amassing another large surplus.

The department had just closed the books on last year's massive 13.8 (b) billion-dollar surplus --- about four (b) billion more than it had recently predicted.

Now it's saying that in the first four months of this year, it was operating on a surplus of 7.8 (b) billion dollars, about one (b) billion more than last year's monster haul for the same period.

Fiscal analysts have been watching with mild surprise as the surplus built up.

The new surplus was accumulating even though program spending rose by 3.7 (b) billion dollars during the first third of the year.

The money went to cover higher transfer payments and increased expenses for such things as the war in Afghanistan.

(The Canadian Press)

bjk

Any co-operation with Taliban must come with conditions: MacKay

DATE: 2007.09.29

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 179

HALIFAX – Defence Minister Peter MacKay says the Taliban will have to renounce violence and accept the NATO mission in Afghanistan if it wants to work with the Afghan government.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai renewed his call Saturday for talks with the Taliban after a deadly suicide bombing in Kabul.

Karzai said he wants to meet with Taliban leader Mullah Omar for peace talks and is willing to consider giving the militants a position in government.

Speaking at an enrolment ceremony for new military personnel in Halifax, MacKay says any co-operation must include the preconditions that Karzai has laid out. Those include the Taliban's renunciation of violence and acceptance of the fact that NATO forces aren't leaving the country any time soon.

MacKay said he's comfortable with anyone who is prepared to move away from activities on the ground that put Canadian soldiers, and others who are part of the NATO mission, at risk.

He added, 'if that involves having the (Taliban) leadership accept those conditions and renounce the violence, then it's moving towards what we all want to see, and that is a stable, peaceful society in Afghanistan.'

(The Canadian Press)

Afghan-Cda-Soldier

DATE: 2007.09.29
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 105

C-F-B TRENTON, Ont. _ A 24-year-old soldier killed in Afghanistan is back on Canadian soil.

A plane carrying Corporal Nathan Hornburg's body touched down at C-F-B Trenton yesterday afternoon.

A sombre repatriation ceremony was held at the eastern Ontario military base.

Governor General Michaëlle Jean, Defence Minister Peter MacKay and Chief of Defence Staff General Rick Hillier were among the dignitaries to pay their respects.

A group of veterans and emergency personnel gathered outside the base.

Hornburg became the first Afghanistan casualty to travel down the Highway of Heroes since the stretch of Highway 401 from Trenton to Toronto was renamed by the Ontario government.

The young corporal was a reservist with the King's Own Calgary Regiment.

He died Monday while trying to put a track back on a tank while under fire.

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

(CJBQ, Belleville Intelligencer)

LAK

--Sixth NewsWatch--

DATE: 2007.09.29

KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 234

The streets of Myanmar's two biggest cities are eerily quiet.

That's a big change following deadly crackdowns this week on tens of thousands of anti-government protesters.

One small demonstration today in Yangon (yahn-GOHN') ended almost immediately.

Soldiers moved in quickly and dragged several men to waiting trucks. (6)

(Afghan Violence)

The blast inside the Afghan army bus was so powerful it ripped off the roof and blasted out the sides.

At least 30 people died and another 30 were wounded.

A suicide bomber -- wearing an Afghan army uniform -- boarded the crowded bus this morning and set off the explosion. (6)

(Afghan Cda Soldier)

Another solemn repatriation ceremony has been held at C-F-B Trenton, Ontario.

The military plane carrying the flag draped casket of 24-year-old Corporal Nathan Hornburg touched down yesterday afternoon.

Family and friends of the Alberta reservist were joined by dignitaries, including Governor General Michaëlle Jean.

Hornburg is the first Afghanistan casualty to travel along the newly-named Highway of Heroes between Trenton and Toronto, where autopsies are performed on the fallen soldiers.

He was killed Monday. (6)

(NS Torture)

The gruesome details of a vicious assault behind a high school in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia are surfacing.

It's alleged an 18-year-old woman was beaten repeatedly, burnt with cigarettes and set on fire in the attack September 20th.

Two girls -- aged 14 and 15 -- and 18-year-old woman are facing charges in the case.

The father of the victim is quoted as saying he didn't even recognize his daughter when he arrived at her

hospital bedside. (6)

(Tobacco Flap)

Medical experts are fuming.

They're expressing outrage over Health Canada's participation at a U-S tobacco conference this week.

They say the government agency's presence only lends credibility to a disgraced industry.

The Non-Smokers' Rights Association cite the findings of a U-S judge who called the tobacco giants liars and racketeers.

Health Canada officials plan to continue attending despite the critical findings of the U-S judge. (6)

(Tropical Weather)

More deaths are being blamed on hurricane Lorenzo.

The storm's pounding rain has caused mudslides and floods that killed at least five people in Mexico.

Meanwhile, tropical storm Melissa has formed in the Atlantic.

But it doesn't pose any immediate threat to land. (6)

(NewsWatch by Geri Smith)

Afghan–Violence

DATE: 2007.09.29
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 75

KABUL, Afghanistan — At least 27 people have been killed in a suicide bomb attack on an Afghan army bus in Kabul.

The suicide bomber boarded a crowded army bus and detonated a huge explosion that ripped off the roof and blasted out the sides.

Officials say 21 people were wounded in the attack.

Dozens of civilians and police officers picked through the charred hull of the bus immediately after the blast, searching for bodies.

A high–ranking Afghan army medical official said 27 bodies had been taken to two hospitals.

(The Associated Press)

mei

INDEX:International,Defence,Politics

DATE: 2007.09.29
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 114

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghan officials say four employees with the International Committee of the Red Cross, kidnapped earlier this week, have been freed in good health.

The four men, one from Myanmar, one from Macedonia and two from Afghanistan, were taken captive on Wednesday in central Afghanistan while working to secure the release of a German hostage.

Officials say there is no news about the German.

The number of kidnappings in Afghanistan has spiked in recent months after the Taliban secured the release of five insurgent prisoners in exchange for a captive Italian journalist in March.

The swap was heavily criticized because many feared it would encourage abductions.

The Taliban kidnapped 23 South Koreans in July, a hostage crisis that scored the militants face-to-face talks with South Korean government delegates.

Two of the Koreans were killed; 21 were eventually released.

(The Associated Press)

mcw

INDEX:Defence

DATE: 2007.09.29

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 108

HALIFAX _ Dozens of young men and women from Nova Scotia are bound for basic training in Quebec after being officially welcomed into the Canadian Forces.

The 102 men and women _ including 32 reserve and 70 regular force recruits _ took part in an enrolment ceremony today in Halifax.

It was one of the largest ceremonies of its kind in recent years.

Defence Minister Peter MacKay spoke to the recruits before they boarded a bus bound for the Halifax airport.

He says they have signed up at an ``important time."

MacKay also says he believes the growing number of new recruits signals a national awakening of the military's importance.

It's not known whether the new recruits will eventually be deployed to Afghanistan.

Private Robert Morrice (morris), a 21-year-old from Kingston, Nova Scotia, says it's his job now and he'll go to the war-torn country if needed.

(The Canadian Press)

mep

INDEX:International,Defence,Politics

DATE: 2007.09.29
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 105

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghan President Hamid Karzai is offering to meet personally with the leader of the Taliban.

Karzai wants to meet with Mullah Omar for peace talks and says he's willing to consider giving the militants a position in government.

But Karzai says he's not willing to pull out foreign troops.

The offer comes on the heels of a devastating suicide bombing in Kabul.

A Taliban suicide bomber wearing an Afghan army uniform set off a huge explosion while trying to board a military bus in the capital, killing 30 people, most of them soldiers.

Karzai has called for negotiations with the Taliban with increasing frequency over the last several weeks.

He says he has had contact with Taliban militants through tribal elders but that there are no direct and open government communication channels with the fighters.

(The Associated Press)

'I'm a different person now'

IDNUMBER 200709300125
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: News
PAGE: A17
ILLUSTRATION: franklin family photo Thirty–eight–year–old Paul Franklin —seen walking with his son, Simon — says amputees pay a price to stand tall. ;
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 1421

On Jan. 15, 2006, Master Cpl. Paul Franklin, a 38–year–old Edmontonian, was in Afghanistan with 1 Field Ambulance, part of the 3rd Battalion of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

Working as a medic, he was driving a Gelaendewagen the 25 kilometres from Kandahar Airfield to the compound on the outskirts of town where he was housed.

His passengers were Pte. Will Salikin, Cpl. Jeff Bailey and Canadian diplomat Glyn Berry.

A suicide bomber attack killed Berry and seriously injured the three soldiers. Franklin lost his left leg and sustained serious injuries to his right one.

Two Afghan children also died in the blast, while dozens of bystanders were injured.

Liane Faulder's *The Long Walk Home* chronicles the struggles of Franklin, his wife, Audra, and their son, Simon.

An excerpt:

March 7, 2006:

Paul sat up in his bed at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital in Edmonton and looked down at his stumps.

Bev Agur, Paul's therapist at Edmonton's Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital, said lots of amputees, especially early on, couldn't look at their maimed limbs. Paul had no problem with that. Although he couldn't put weight on the stumps – they would always need a socket to move him anywhere – he was grateful the stumps were as long as they were, 28 centimetres from his hip bones. Any shorter, and it would have been much more difficult to support a set of prosthetic legs.

Of course, fitting them was one thing. Walking on them was quite another. For weeks now, medical professionals had been delivering Paul the hard facts; odds were that Paul would not walk again after suffering a double, above–the– knee amputation.

Paul refused to accept that he would be spending most of his time in a wheelchair. In the weeks after the explosion, he had experienced that way of living and he didn't much like it. For one thing, people talk to those in wheelchairs in a louder voice, as if not being able to walk means you are also deaf, or stupid.

"In a wheelchair, people ignore you completely or cater to you horribly," Paul said. "It's a funky, funky experience."

Still, amputees pay a price to stand tall. One of the many problems with walking on prostheses is that it requires a huge amount of metabolic energy. It is vastly more energy efficient, and faster, to use a wheelchair than to walk on prosthetic legs, which weigh about 4.5 kilograms each. Wheelchairs are more stable, and quite easy to manoeuvre with practice.

Moving in a wheelchair leaves the hands free; wearing prostheses requires the use of arm crutches, at least at first. Patients who lose their legs also lose a sense of where their body rests in space, and their centre of gravity changes. Bev began to work on restoring basic balance by tossing Paul a ball while he sat up in bed, with more and more force, so he could learn to stabilize himself in his new body. There was a trapeze over Paul's bed. He began to do chin-ups and other arm strengthening exercises. Bev also gave Paul five-pound-weights and big rubber bands to use for resistance training for his arms.

To Paul, these felt like discouragingly puny efforts. He thought of his last big endurance test, a marathon in Dubai that he had enjoyed while on his way back to Afghanistan after his holiday in California.

Before she wrapped up the modified physio session in Paul's room, Bev gave him some balls of different sizes so he could toss them around later that evening when Simon arrived. This would give the boy something to do when he came to visit and would give Paul another opportunity for exercise. Great, thought Paul. Tossing a ball to your dad as he sits in bed in a hospital filled with old people on walkers and young people in wheelchairs. That sounds like fun.

Bev didn't know it at the time, but suggesting Paul play ball with Simon went to the core of one of Paul's biggest fears. Paul was always the "cool" dad on the block, the one who learned to skateboard just so he could play with Simon and the neighbourhood kids. To Paul, being a good dad meant riding bikes with Simon and kicking a soccer ball in the backyard. A man who could not play sports or roughhouse with his son was a poor excuse for a father.

Paul genuinely feared he would have nothing in common with Simon as he grew up, and would lose a relationship that meant more to him than he had ever known.

"I like the guy that I was before. He was a neat guy," Paul said. "I wouldn't mind being him again. But I'm a different person now, without a doubt. I know that person is a good person, but is he a good fit with Audra? Audra fell in love with me before. Will she fall in love with this new person? I don't know."

Since the accident, Paul had focused in a single-minded way on learning to walk again. The people around him – from the psychologist he saw at the Glenrose to his friends and family members – carefully asked him why it was important to be exactly like the man he was. Why did his legs matter when his soul was intact? Paul knew they had a point. At a deeper level, he recognized that he would never be the man he was before the explosion; that man disappeared on the streets of Kandahar on Jan. 15, 2006, and no amount of strenuous effort would bring him back. Paul's determination to walk defied reason at times.

May 18, 2006:

Wearing two artificial limbs attached with a harness to his pelvis, Paul steps from the garage of his home into the alley. His 6-year-old son, Simon, is at his side. It is just after 8 a.m. and Simon has to be at school by 8:40 a.m. Today they must be on time because Simon has show and tell first thing, and show and tell is Daddy and his new prostheses. Paul grips his arm crutches and takes a deep breath. This is his first day out of the rehabilitation hospital.

"Let's head for the front sidewalk," he says to Simon. "It's cleaner and there are less rocks."

Rocks and clumps of dirt, common in this new area teeming with construction, are hazardous to Paul, as are curbs, cracks and children who fly by on their bicycles.

"You okay with these little dirt blobs?" Simon asks, pointing to some streaks of mud on the pavement.

"Yeah, but the step-ups are hard," Paul says. "I'm sorry I'm so slow, Simon."

"That's okay," the boy says.

Simon is chatty this morning, the way he used to be before the explosion that changed his family forever. He talks about wanting to go on a military mission, like his dad. Paul reminds him he has to be 18 years old to do that. Simon thinks that maybe it might be a good idea to join cadets in the meantime. Since the explosion, Simon has suffered from headaches. He throws tantrums. He won't eat. Yet today, he is his old self.

"I'm taller than you when I'm walking and you're in the wheelchair," Simon tells his dad.

"That's true," Paul says.

About halfway to school is an intersection, with traffic. They have to cross the street. Painstakingly, Paul moves from one street corner to the other while a car patiently waits. He waves thank you to the driver. He has made sure to wear a long-sleeved T-shirt meant for running, because it wicks the perspiration away from his skin.

Paul doesn't want to wear a sweaty shirt in front of Simon's class. His leg is hurting – a lot – but he persists. There is nothing else to do but keep going.

"It's funny in the real world, because you absolutely have to do things," Paul says.

"Now you're in the real world, Daddy," Simon replies.

When Paul reaches the wheelchair ramp at the school, he hands one of his crutches to Simon and uses the right handrail to pull himself along, hoping a different position will help him to deal with the incline, which seems extreme. Pain stabs through his right stump. At the top of the ramp, a teacher waits, holding open the door. It's 8:35 a.m. They have made it to school on time.

At school, Simon is too shy to introduce his father to Mrs. O'Shea's Grade 1 class. Paul pulls the boy close and they sit together on a shelf at the front of the room.

Paul tells his story, using pictures drawn with a felt pen on the whiteboard.

Here is a suicide bomber who has a mad face and seven rockets strapped to his car. Here is a stick man with no legs who is saying, Ow, Ow, Ow.

One child asks a question: What happened to the suicide bomber?

Paul replies that the suicide bomber is way high, up in space.

Then show and tell ends, and Paul must begin to walk 600 metres back home, alone. Simon worries about how his dad will manage. Paul just smiles and shakes his head. Don't worry.

'I'm a different person now'

Excerpted from *The Long Walk Home: Paul Franklin's Journal from Afghanistan, A Soldier's Story*, by Liane Faulder.

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MacKay says Taliban must stop violence, accept NATO

IDNUMBER 200709300045
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: News
PAGE: A19
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 195

Defence Minister Peter MacKay said the Taliban will have to renounce violence and accept the NATO mission in Afghanistan if it wants to work with the Afghan government.

MacKay was speaking at an enrolment ceremony for new military personnel in Halifax as Afghan President Hamid Karzai yesterday renewed his call for talks with the Taliban after a deadly suicide bombing in Kabul.

But MacKay said any co-operation must include the Taliban's acceptance that NATO forces aren't leaving the country any time soon.

In Ottawa, Liberal defence critic Denis Coderre said he will make an unauthorized fact-finding trip to Afghanistan after his request to visit the troops has been consistently ignored by the Harper government.

"(Afghanistan) is a major issue for the Canadian people," Coderre said yesterday. "I think that for the sake of the debate it's important that I go. Since I couldn't get an answer I decided to go on my own."

Also yesterday, Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier said Ottawa will ask the UN to name a special envoy for Afghanistan.

"We believe that at the leadership level in Afghanistan we need someone ... with a clear mandate," Bernier said, citing former British prime minister Tony Blair's role as Middle East special peace envoy.

From the Star's wire services

Afghan president offers Taliban militants a role in governing; Hours after suicide bomb attack kills 30 in Kabul, Karzai says: 'I want conflicts and fighting to end'

IDNUMBER 200709300044
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Met
SECTION: News
PAGE: A01
BYLINE: Jason Straziuso
SOURCE: Associated Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 660

President Hamid Karzai yesterday offered to meet the Taliban leader and give militants a government position only hours after a suicide bomber in army disguise attacked a military bus, killing 30 people – nearly all of them Afghan soldiers.

Strengthening a call for negotiations he has made with increasing frequency in recent weeks, Karzai said he was willing to meet with the reclusive leader Mullah Omar and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former prime minister and factional warlord leader.

"If I find their address, there is no need for them to come to me, I'll personally go there and get in touch with them," Karzai said. "Esteemed Mullah, sir, and esteemed Hekmatyar, sir, why are you destroying the country?"

Karzai said he has contacts with Taliban militants through tribal elders but there are no direct and open government communication channels with the fighters. Omar's whereabouts are unknown, although Karzai has claimed he is in Quetta, Pakistan, a militant hotbed across the border from Afghanistan's Kandahar province.

"If a group of Taliban or a number of Taliban come to me and say, 'President, we want a department in this or in that ministry or we want a position as deputy minister ... and we don't want to fight any more' ... If there will be a demand and a request like that to me, I will accept it because I want conflicts and fighting to end in Afghanistan," Karzai said.

"I wish there would be a demand as easy as this. I wish that they would want a position in the government. I will give them a position," he said.

The UN and NATO have said an increasing number of Taliban are interested in laying down their arms. NATO's ambassador to Afghanistan, Daan Everts, said this month that the alliance would look into the possibility of talks.

Yesterday's explosion – the second deadliest since the fall of the Taliban in 2001 – ripped off the roof of the bus and tore out its sides in Kabul, leaving a charred hull of burnt metal. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.

It was reminiscent of the deadliest attack since the U.S.-led invasion, when a bomber boarded a police academy bus at Kabul's busiest transportation hub in June, killing 35 people.

Police and soldiers climbed trees to retrieve body parts.

"For 10 or 15 seconds, it was like an atom bomb – fire, smoke and dust everywhere," said Mohammad Azim, a police officer who witnessed the explosion.

Karzai said 30 people were killed – 28 soldiers and two civilians. The Health Ministry said another 30 were wounded. Two women were among the dead, and 11 people were ripped apart so badly they had yet to be identified.

"It was a terrible tragedy, no doubt an act of extreme cowardice," Karzai said. "Whoever did this was against people, against humanity, definitely against Islam.

"A man who calls himself Muslim will not blow up innocent people in the middle of Ramadan," the Muslim holy month.

The bus had stopped in front of a movie theatre to pick up soldiers when a bomber wearing a military uniform tried to board early yesterday, army spokesperson Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi said.

"Typically, there are people checking the IDs of soldiers who want to board the bus," Azimi said. "While they were checking the IDs, the bomber tried to get on the bus and blew himself up there."

Karzai earlier this month renewed a call for talks with the Taliban, and a spokesperson for the militant group initially said the fighters might be open to negotiations. But Qari Yousef Ahmadi later said foreign troops must first leave the country – a demand Karzai said yesterday he would not meet.

"It should be very clear that until all our roads are paved, until we have good electricity and good water, and also until we have a better Afghan national army and national police, I don't want any foreigners to leave Afghanistan," he said.

He said he still wanted negotiations with Taliban militants of Afghan origin "for peace and security." He ruled out talks with Al Qaeda and other foreign fighters.

NATO's International Security Assistance Force, meanwhile, said one of its soldiers was killed in eastern Afghanistan during combat operations yesterday. ISAF did not release the soldier's nationality, but most in the east are American.

Four employees with the International Committee of the Red Cross, kidnapped earlier this week while negotiating the release of a German hostage, were freed yesterday.

Afghan mission a balancing act

IDNUMBER 200709300046
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Monitor
PAGE: C3
SOURCE: Times Colonist
WORD COUNT: 144

Re: "Generals shouldn't be selling war," letter, Sept. 24.

Letters such as this indicate a lack of knowledge as to how the military functions.

Gen. Rick Hellier is on a campaign to recruit personnel for the Canadian Forces who can perform the difficult missions required in hotspots around the world, including Afghanistan. These missions require Forces personnel to perform both combat operations and humanitarian endeavours, since one does not happen often without the other. In Afghanistan, schools and hospitals are opening and women and children are being cared for, while the Taliban are being effectively dealt with.

We are in Afghanistan under both United Nations and NATO mandates and have been welcomed by a democratically elected government. This same government is pleading for Canada to stay to finish the important work required.

Don't let our animosity towards George W. Bush and the U.S. policies in Iraq stop us from helping the Afghan people.

H.J. Rice,

Victoria.

B.C. soldier slowly regains his health after axe attack

IDNUMBER 200709300010
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Lisa Petka Photography / Capt. Trevor Greene poses with his fiancée, Debbie Lepore. ;
DATELINE: VANCOUVER
BYLINE: Lena Sin
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 501

VANCOUVER — The flutter in Capt. Trevor Greene's legs last week may seem infinitesimal, but it's the first sign that the B.C. soldier and former journalist, author and entrepreneur may one day walk again.

"He is so determined," says Debbie Lepore, Greene's fiancée. "His main goal is walking. We're a long, long, long way off from that, but that's his main goal."

A year and a half ago, Greene was at a meeting with Afghan village elders when he took off his helmet and laid down his weapon out of respect. Moments later, a crazed teen leaped out of the crowd and buried an axe deep into Greene's head. His fellow soldiers shot the attacker dead.

The brutal blow left Greene immobile and unable to speak, but his cognitive capacity remained intact. Now, sheer determination is seeing him through his mission of recovery.

Remarkably, Greene, 42, wants Canadians to know that he'd go back overseas in a heartbeat.

"We cannot give in to terrorists," he says in a barely audible whisper. He staunchly believes that success is possible in Afghanistan, that Canada needs to stay the course but adds: "It's time for another NATO country to step up and take the lead."

Greene was speaking from his sun-drenched clinic room in Ponoka, Alta., with a Superman blanket, a gift from Lepore, pulled over his bed.

In July, the couple and their two-year-old daughter, Grace, left Vancouver for the small town, 95 kilometres south of Edmonton, so that Greene can receive the best brain-injury care in the country at the Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury.

For the military reservist who has had a varied career as a journalist, business consultant and author of three books, the victories do not come easily.

But already, there's progress. Last October, after months of silence, Greene whispered his first words. Today, his voice is back to normal at least 20 per cent of the time. In December, his feeding tube was taken out and, as of March, he no longer needed a tracheostomy tube.

He has regained some promising movement in his left arm and, as of last week, some tiny but definite movement in his legs and torso muscles.

"It's so slow," Lepore says, but it's progress.

While the military is covering medical costs, friends and family can't help but worry about the couple's financial future.

To be by her fiancé's side, Lepore had to quit her part-time accounting job in Vancouver. There's no telling how long the family will need to stay in Alberta.

Greene's friend Rob Gibbs admits it was difficult seeing Greene for the first time in hospital last year.

The man then confined to a bed 24 hours a day had worked as a reporter in Japan for seven years while writing a book on the homeless and another on the women missing from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

"If he could stand up and walk out of that hospital, the first thing he'd do is put on his army gear and head back to Afghanistan," said Gibbs. "He's just a humanitarian. It's always about somebody else, he's always trying to help somebody else."

In keeping with his social activism, Greene's role in Afghanistan was that of co-operation officer, in which he met with village elders to hear about their problems.

But, even today, Greene remains modest.

"I'm just a soldier, I'm not a hero," he says. "The heroes are being scraped off the battlefields."

Donations to the Trevor Greene trust fund can be made to CIBC account No. 39-31137, bank No. 010 and transit No. 00500.

Canada's man in Kandahar; Quebec-born diplomat is proud of French Canada's role in world affairs

IDNUMBER 200709300008
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Reuters / A staff member of the International Committee of the Red Cross, right, stands with a member of the Taliban as he is being released in Wardak province yesterday. The ICRC confirmed its four staff members kidnapped by Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan had been freed, an ICRC statement said. ; Photo: John Morstad, CanWest News Service / Michel de Salaberry is Canada's new senior civilian co-ordinator for Kandahar. ;

DATELINE: MONTREAL
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 741

MONTREAL — For Canada's top diplomat in Kandahar, success means learning from mistakes and hanging on to ground taken — and then retaken — from the Taliban.

But gains in Afghanistan could also have an important sociopolitical spinoff back home: making the rest of Canada proud of Quebec's contribution to greater world stability.

So says Quebec-born Michel de Salaberry, Canada's new senior civilian co-ordinator for Kandahar. In a rare interview since the Foreign Affairs Department appointed him Canada's top diplomat in Kandahar, de Salaberry says he is proud of his Quebec roots and the opportunity to serve alongside his home province's Royal 22nd Regiment, the Van Doos.

"It's our chance — it's the francophones' chance — to show good service to Canada," de Salaberry explained. "In many ways, French Canada has been a source of stress for the whole of the country. This is one opportunity for the whole of the country to be proud of its French-speaking element."

A cousin, he says, was a co-founder of the famed Valcartier-based regiment, while his great-great-grandfather was a founder of another regiment that was eventually folded into the Van Doos.

Any noticeable increase in support in Quebec for Canada's military mission in Afghanistan would be welcome news to a minority Conservative government determined to carry on with the NATO mission in the face of an increasingly skeptical public — especially in Quebec — and an emboldened political opposition posturing to topple the government, perhaps in a matter of weeks.

At 61, de Salaberry wasn't coaxed out of retirement last summer to do the Conservatives any political favours. After a distinguished string of ambassadorships in Iran, Jordan and Egypt, he says he was flattered, but also bound by a deeply held conviction to fight the roots of fanaticism that threaten the world.

"In Afghanistan, a number of critical cleavages intersect," he says. "These are planetary strategic issues that are going to require considerable resources from Canada, whatever happens in Afghanistan."

De Salaberry's primary function is to elevate the non-military aspects of the Canadian contribution to Afghanistan, and to do so from the dangerous southern terrain around Kandahar. He reports to Canada's ambassador to Afghanistan, Kabul-based Arif Lalani, but he is responsible for six fellow diplomats in the violence-racked southern province.

His job is to better co-ordinate the development and diplomatic efforts with the military mission, whose focus is to strengthen security in the region and eventually stamp out the insurgency.

He's careful not to criticize the past efforts of the handful of diplomats and Canadian International Development Agency representatives who preceded him in the region. But his insights into his current role harbour an underlying criticism: that despite the best efforts of bureaucrats and government officials in Ottawa to play up the importance of the diplomatic and development efforts, there has not, until recently, been enough co-ordination with the military.

"There's a new level of understanding between Canadian government departments," de Salaberry notes. "What is new is joint planning. That didn't occur before. It's a switch from conceiving of three different lines of programs."

That assessment is a long way from the mantra that Canadian government officials have been preaching in Ottawa for more than a year: that the Afghanistan mission is an integrated 3-D approach that seamlessly integrates defence, diplomacy and development.

On the ground, this better level of integration means more long-term planning between government departments about how to reinforce any gains by Canada's military.

Last year, Canada led NATO forces on the hard-fought Operation Medusa that drove the Taliban out of the Panjwahi and Zhari districts west of Kandahar. But smaller cells of Taliban insurgents reinfiltred the region afterward, planting roadside bombs that have killed several Canadian soldiers. Insurgents have also killed more than a dozen Afghans in attacks on poorly fortified police outposts.

In the past week, Canada has mounted a renewed offensive in the region, which, despite the death of one Calgary-based soldier, is showing positive signs.

Stronger police outposts are being set up to secure the region, and this time de Salaberry said small numbers of Canadian troops would likely remain behind to help their Afghan counterparts hold the ground.

The diplomat refuses to speculate on what will happen after February 2009, when Canada's military commitment is set to expire. All he'll say is that "a military presence" of some sort will be required for some time to come.

De Salaberry says Canadians have to adjust their perspectives on Afghanistan.

"If we want the new product to be a new Switzerland in Asia, that's a very high ambition," he says. "A more realistic one might be Bangladesh."

Taliban free team from Red Cross; Four workers say they were not mistreated

IDNUMBER 200709300006
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
DATELINE: KABUL
BYLINE: Jon Hemming
SOURCE: Reuters
WORD COUNT: 342

KABUL — Taliban insurgents yesterday freed four staff of the International Committee of the Red Cross they had kidnapped in Afghanistan three days ago, an ICRC statement said.

"The unconditional release of our four colleagues is a great relief to us and their families," Franz Rauchenstein, deputy head of the ICRC delegation in Kabul, said in a statement.

The four men, two Afghans, a Macedonian and a citizen of Myanmar, were seized by the Taliban in Wardak province, southwest of the Afghan capital Kabul, on Wednesday.

One of the hostages said they had been well treated by their captors.

"The treatment was fine. There was no interrogation, no questioning, we lived in the same condition as the Taliban. There was food and water," the Macedonian hostage told an Afghan reporter shortly before his release.

"It was a long journey on foot in the mountains, and then we spent the night in one house — two nights — and then this morning we came down," he said in recorded comments.

"We were not afraid. We have contacts with the Taliban, we know the Taliban," he said.

The ICRC workers were seized as they were returning from a failed mission to facilitate the release of a German engineer kidnapped by the Taliban in July.

The Macedonian said the team had met the German hostage.

"We saw him, he could walk. I don't know his health condition," he said. Asked why the German had not also been freed, he said: "I cannot tell you. That it is confidential."

The Taliban commander holding them said he had thought the ICRC team were spies.

"When they arrived in Wardak, we received information that there were foreigners present for the purpose of spying," Taliban commander for Wardak, Hajimullah, told the reporter.

"We ordered our security forces to capture them. Then we investigated them and found they were working for

the ICRC and the emirate ordered their release," he said, but warned any other foreigners risked being kidnapped if they entered the area, about an hour's drive from Kabul.

The Taliban have kidnapped dozens of Afghans and foreigners in recent months as part of their campaign to create an atmosphere of insecurity and undermine the government and its western backers.

The ICRC maintains a strict neutrality in all armed conflicts, which is usually respected across the globe.

In August, the ICRC helped facilitate talks between the Taliban and South Korean officials that led to the release of 21 Korean hostages after more than a month of captivity.

A wartorn wonder of inspiration; Faulder tells the story of the Franklin family with sensitivity

IDNUMBER 200709300135
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Sunday Reader – Books & Authors
PAGE: E12
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: File, the Journal / Liane Faulder; Colour Photo: File: Bruce Edwards, the Journal / Paul Franklin, his wife, Audra and their son, Simon, 6. ; Colour Photo: The Long Walk Home: Paul Franklin's Journey From Afghanistan Liane Faulder ;
KEYWORDS: 0
BYLINE: Barry Hammond
SOURCE: Freelance
WORD COUNT: 783

The Long Walk Home: Paul Franklin's Journey From Afghanistan

Liane Faulder

Brindle & Glass

192 pp., \$21.95

Most of us take our legs for granted. Most of us don't even think about it when we walk. It's just something we do to get from one place to another. Nor do we think about what it would be like not to be able look other people in the face at more or less the same level, or what it would be like to have those others looking down at us from a height every single day.

For Master Corporal Paul Franklin, all those things changed in a matter of a few seconds while he was driving a 30-year career diplomat back to Kandahar after a meeting near Spin Boldak, in Afghanistan.

A suicide car bomber blew their vehicle, called a G-Wagon, into a twisted wreck. The diplomat, Glyn Berry, the first Canadian diplomat to be killed in the line of duty in nearly half a century, was dead. His fellow soldiers in the vehicle, Will Salikin and Jeff Bailey, were badly injured. Salikin had brain and spinal cord injuries and a shattered right arm. Bailey was in a coma and wouldn't regain consciousness for three months. Two dead Afghan children lay on top of Bailey and about twelve other Afghan citizens were injured in the blast. Paul Franklin's left leg was blown off and his right leg so severely injured that it was later also amputated above the knee. He also suffered burns to his face and hands.

While it wasn't the first fatality of a Canadian in Afghanistan, it was the first time a Canadian had been killed by a car bomb. It had been two years since the previous death in battle and marked an escalation in hostilities that continues to this day.

For Paul Franklin it also marked the end of his previous life and the beginning of a long, gruelling process to attempt to walk again, with the aid of artificial legs and canes, and a search for what his new life would be like, now that his body was so radically changed.

Liane Faulder, who previously covered Franklin's story as an Edmonton Journal reporter, has expanded her previous research and extensive interviews into a full-length book. She explores in detail the lives of Paul Franklin and his wife, Audra, both of their friends and families, and their son, Simon. She examines what Paul's previous life was like growing up, what led him to join the military as a medic, the background and meaning of the Canadian mission in Afghanistan, how the ordeal Paul suffered affected all their lives.

While, to some extent, it's a story of tragedy, it's also a story of what hard work, determination, a positive attitude, the love of family and friends, and sheer will power can accomplish.

Faulder does a good job of both letting the people the story's about speak for themselves and filling in the gaps with relevant quotes and stories from family, friends, doctors and therapists so the reader gets a clear idea of their character, their aspirations, their strengths, weaknesses, and their will to make a good life despite what circumstances have dealt them. She does this with honesty, sensitivity, and without the kind of emotional vampirism that can mar this type of story. The Franklins come across as real people. They're brave and admirable but they're not superhuman saints. She conveys the full impact of the challenges that Paul and his family overcome — this reader had no concept of how few people achieve the goals Paul Franklin sets for himself or how enormously difficult it is — yet she doesn't sentimentalize the journey.

The book covers one year in their lives from Jan. 15, 2006, when Paul is injured, to Jan. 15, 2007, the first anniversary of the event. Included are such milestones as when Paul walks his son to school and back on his artificial legs, and the evening in December when they present the military hospital in Landstuhl, Germany, where Paul first stayed, with a fundraising cheque. While one year is a short time for a story like this to cover, it's also the story of everything that led up to that year and the story of the future that may result from it.

It's an inspiring book of the dignity of ordinary people, sacrifice, heroism and human will. You'll be better for having taken the journey with the Franklins, you won't take your legs for granted so much anymore, and you'll thank Faulder for putting their story into words.

Barry Hammond is a freelance reviewer

Suicide bus bomber kills 30 in Kabul; Karzai offers to meet with Taliban rebels

IDNUMBER 200709300035

PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal

DATE: 2007.09.30

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A12

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: CanWest News Service / Lt.-Col. NicolasEldaoud, who is responsible for all convoys and all logistics for Task Force Afghanistan, stands in front of a column of Canadian Leopard tanks at Ma'sum Garrison. ;

KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM; BOMBINGS; FOREIGN AID; AFGHANISTAN

DATELINE: KABUL, afghanistan

BYLINE: Bronwen Roberts

SOURCE: Agence France–Presse

WORD COUNT: 251

KABUL, afghanistan – A suicide bomber wearing an army uniform blew up an Afghan military bus in Kabul Saturday, killing 30 people and wounding another 30 in one of the deadliest attacks of the Taliban's insurgency.

Hours after the devastating blast claimed by the Taliban, President Hamid Karzai called for "stronger vigour" in the fight against terrorism. He also reiterated an offer of talks with the rebels if they renounced violence.

The rush-hour blast was the deadliest in the city since a June explosion on a police bus killed about 35 people.

The attacker, who had been carrying a briefcase, detonated his explosives at the entrance of the bus as it picked up army personnel going to work, the defence ministry said Saturday.

The force of the explosion blew off the roof and sides of the large bus, which was reduced to mangled metal. Television pictures showed rescuers rushing bloodied bodies from the vehicle. Some of the dead were still in their seats.

"Among the dead were a number of national army officers, a number of civilian (Ministry of Defence) workers and female workers and 11 others who have not been yet identified," a Defence Ministry statement said.

The wounded were 22 Defence Ministry staff, one policeman and six civilians, it said.

TALIBAN SPOKESMAN ZABIHULLAH

Mujahed said the blast was part of the insurgents' campaign planned for the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

Karzai quickly condemned the attack. "This is something that would indicate to us that the war against terrorism must go on with much stronger vigour," the grim-faced president told reporters at his palace.

"From Algeria to Indonesia, from the United States to Japan, we all have to keep together and remain steadfast in the war against terrorism."

Taliban free four Red Cross workers; Captive said he was treated well

IDNUMBER 200709300034

PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal

DATE: 2007.09.30

EDITION: Early

SECTION: News

PAGE: A12

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Massoud Hossaini, AFP/Getty Images /International Committee of the Red Cross vehicles arrive in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Saturday. The Taliban released four Red Cross workers they had kidnapped three days earlier. ;

KEYWORDS: WAR; FOREIGN AID; TERRORISM; BOMBINGS; AFGHANISTAN

DATELINE: KABUL

SOURCE: Reuters

WORD COUNT: 273

Taliban insurgents on Saturday freed four staff of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) they had kidnapped in Afghanistan three days ago, an ICRC statement said.

"The unconditional release of our four colleagues is a great relief to us and their families," Franz Rauchenstein, deputy head of the ICRC delegation in Kabul, said in a statement.

The four men, two Afghans, a Macedonian and a citizen of Myanmar, were seized by the Taliban in Wardak province, southwest of the Afghan capital Kabul on Wednesday.

One of the hostages said they had been treated well by their captors.

"There was no interrogation, no questioning, we lived in the same condition as the Taliban," the Macedonian hostage told an Afghan reporter shortly before his release. "We were not afraid. We have contacts with the Taliban, we know the Taliban."

The ICRC team was seized as they were returning from a failed mission to facilitate the release of a German engineer kidnapped by the Taliban in July. The ICRC maintains a strict neutrality in all armed conflicts, which is usually respected across the globe.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for a suicide attack that killed 30 people and wounded another 30 aboard an Afghan military bus Saturday.

The attacker, who had been carrying a briefcase, detonated his explosives at the entrance of the bus as it picked up army personnel going to work, the defence ministry said Saturday.

The force of the explosion blew off the roof and sides of the large bus, which was reduced to mangled metal. Television pictures showed rescuers rushing bloodied bodies from the vehicle. Some of the dead were still in their seats.

"Among the dead were a number of national army officers, a number of civilian (Ministry of Defence) workers and female workers and 11 others who have not been yet identified," a Defence Ministry statement

said.0

Mission may bolster French, English bond: diplomat; 'It's the francophones' chance to show good service to Canada'

IDNUMBER 200709300022
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: De Salaberry;
KEYWORDS: BILINGUALISM; FRANCOPHONES; FRENCH LANGUAGE
DATELINE: MONTREAL
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: Ottawa Citizen; CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 562

MONTREAL – For Canada's top diplomat in Kandahar, success means learning from past mistakes and hanging on to ground taken — and then retaken — from the Taliban.

But gains in Afghanistan could also have an important sociopolitical spinoff back home: Making the rest of Canada proud of Quebec's contribution to greater world stability.

So says Quebec-born Michel de Salaberry, Canada's new senior civilian co-ordinator for Kandahar. In a rare interview since the Foreign Affairs Department appointed him Canada's top diplomat in Kandahar, de Salaberry said he is proud of his Quebec roots and the opportunity to serve alongside his home province's Royal 22nd Regiment, the Van Doo.

"It's our chance — it's the francophones' chance — to show good service to Canada," de Salaberry explained. "In many ways, French Canada has been a source of stress for the whole of the country. This is one opportunity for the whole of the country to be proud of its French-speaking element."

At 61, de Salaberry wasn't coaxed out of retirement last summer to do the Conservatives any political favours. After a distinguished string of ambassadorships in Iran, Jordan and Egypt, he says he was flattered, but also bound by a deeply held conviction to fight the roots of fanaticism that threaten the world.

De Salaberry's primary function is to elevate the non-military aspects of the Canadian contribution to Afghanistan, and do so from the dangerous southern terrain around Kandahar. He reports to Canada's ambassador to Afghanistan, Kabul-based Arif Lalani, but he is responsible for six fellow diplomats in the violence-racked southern province of Kandahar.

His job is to better co-ordinate the development and diplomatic efforts with the military mission, whose focus is to strengthen security in the region and eventually stamp out the insurgency.

Last year, Canada led NATO forces on the hard-fought Operation Medusa that drove the Taliban out of the Panjwahi and Zhari districts west of Kandahar. But smaller cells of Taliban insurgents reinfiltated the region afterwards, planting roadside bombs that have inflicted several deaths on the Canadian soldiers. Insurgents

have also killed more than a dozen Afghans in attacks on poorly fortified police outposts.

In the past week, Canada has mounted a renewed offensive in the region, which, despite the death of one Calgary-based soldier, is showing positive signs.

Canada is also ramping up its training of local Afghan police by opening a teaching centre for more senior officers next to the Canadian provincial reconstruction team in Kandahar.

De Salaberry does not try to sugar-coat the job ahead: Creating a viable police force for Afghanistan when its ranks have a literacy rate of 10 per cent and poor pay makes many officers vulnerable to corruption.

The diplomat refuses to speculate on what will happen after February 2009, when Canada's military commitment is set to expire. All he'll say is that "a military presence" of some sort will be required for some time to come.

Like many observers, de Salaberry points to the rebuilding of the former Yugoslavia that is still underway after the country imploded in 1991.

"That was a country with good infrastructure, universal literacy, a high standard of education and institutions that had the capacity to administer social assistance. In the case of Afghanistan, we're starting from a lower base. It's not that infrastructure needs to be reconstructed; it was never there."

De Salaberry said Canadians have to adjust their perspectives on Afghanistan.

"If we want the new product to be a new Switzerland in Asia, that's a very high ambition," he said. "A more realistic one might be Bangladesh."

Grit MP plans own trip to Afghan

SOURCETAG 0709300378
PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 20
BYLINE: ALEXANDER PANETTA, CP
DATELINE: OTTAWA
WORD COUNT: 388

The Liberal defence critic says he's headed on an unauthorized fact-finding trip to Afghanistan after having his request to visit the troops consistently ignored by the Harper government.

Denis Coderre says he's set to leave for Kabul and Kandahar to visit with development workers, Afghan government officials and Canadian soldiers.

"(Afghanistan) is a major issue for the Canadian people," Coderre said yesterday.

"I think that for the sake of the debate it's important that I go. Since I couldn't get an answer I decided to go on my own."

The Montreal-area MP says he's made multiple requests with Defence Minister Peter MacKay's office but that they were systematically ignored or rejected. He said he first asked to go when Gordon O'Connor was defence minister but sometimes didn't have his calls returned.

Coderre says that he has the full blessing of his leader, Stephane Dion, and that his boss has also informed the Harper government that Coderre wants to go to Afghanistan.

While visiting dignitaries generally use transportation supplied by the Department of National Defence, Coderre has made his own travel arrangements to Afghanistan and within the country.

He does not yet have permission from the Canadian government to visit the international base in Kandahar but says he's confident that he will be allowed to meet with the troops.

"Since (all requests) passed through the defence minister's office, I would see it as a partisan gesture from the defence minister if I'm denied access," he said.

A spokesman for MacKay said MP trips are usually organized through parliamentary committees and not through the minister's office.

But since the House of Commons is prorogued and its committees are temporarily suspended, Coderre would have to wait until the House resumes next month to get permission.

There's one problem with waiting: the government could collapse in a vote on its throne speech immediately after Parliament resumes on Oct. 16, which could trigger an election.

With a potential election looming, the future of the Afghan mission could be a matter of intense debate this

fall.

But Coderre shrugged off any suggestion that he's about to embark on an intercontinental political stunt.

"It's not a stunt. I'm doing my job," he said.

"I think that as a member of Parliament and as a National Defence critic, it's important for me to know what's going on in the field, at the diplomatic level, at the development level and of course at the military level."

The Liberals and Bloc Quebecois want Canada to scale back its fighting operations in Afghanistan once the current mission expires in February 2009, while the government wants to continue. The NDP wants troops withdrawn immediately.

The government has repeatedly accused its opponents of failing to support the troops. Prime Minister Stephen Harper even once implied that opposition parties were Taliban-lovers when they raised concerns about the treatment of detainees.

But Coderre says his party's support for the soldiers overseas is unconditional.

"Democracy demands that we ask questions," he said.

"We can question this government's mismanagement of the mission. But we do support the troops."

KEYWORDS=CANADA

Letters to the Editor column

SOURCETAG 0709300366
PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 11
COLUMN: Letters to the Editor
WORD COUNT: 521

CANADA IN TRANSITION

Re: Canadian army belongs on campus, POV, Sept. 27.

Mr. Berton's Point of View is suspect. If the students are not naive, and do read, are good at asking questions etc., then what is the limiting factor in them researching the military as employer?

I do not believe that the Canadian Forces historically set up at schools. Naturally in this time of conflict they are in need of bodies to bolster the federal government's misguided war aims.

Canada's military has a new face now. Pre-Afghanistan we were peacekeepers, then we became peacemakers, and sadly, today we are warriors. The politics which drive these changes are shameful. What achievable goals do we have in Afghanistan? What part of the Russian lesson did we not learn?

Canada is in transition, some would like us to be a warrior nation, others reject that but lack clout to redirect our misbegotten leaders. Papers such as your own have been on the front lines here at home, ensuring war coverage on the front page just to keep war front and centre, making it common rather than rare.

We do not need cheerleaders for war, we need thinkers with solutions to war, not puppets of the military industrial complex.

J. Kirby

Winnipeg

Our military deserves our support.

SENIOR SEMINAR

Re: Put the brakes on senile drivers, POV, Sept. 26.

CAA is addressing the issues surrounding aging drivers.

We hold a free seminar called Shifting Gears for seniors and their families who find themselves in the difficult position of having to deal with the possibility of having to give up their keys.

From experts who discuss the effects of medications on driving to the signs a senior's driving needs are changing to licensing requirements, there is a safe environment to begin this sometimes difficult and awkward discussion.

We also offer a self–diagnostic CD–ROM to help seniors screen for their driving health called Roadwise Review and senior driving workshop through CAA Driver Training.

In the case of dementia, some drivers in the early stages have sufficient insight to limit themselves.

If not, it is important to provide them a chance to make their own choices.

To register for Shifting Gears seminars near you call 1–877–588–2088.

Edyta Zdancewicz

CAA Media Specialist

Thanks for steering aging drivers right.

CITE YOUR SOURCE

Re: It's all a bunch of hot air, Letters, Sept. 25.

With all the debate about global warming, I wonder why people neglect providing sources for their knowledge.

Darren Albert has a plethora of statistics regarding the percentages of CO2 in the atmosphere, and about how much the Earth has actually warmed in the last century. He insults the scientific community by claiming they're wrong, and then pulls the hypocrite card by not citing his sources or giving background for where his information came from, reducing his claims to simple hearsay.

If you are trying to prove a point in this debate, tell us where you got your information so we can make our own informed decisions, instead of biasedly claiming that everyone else is wrong except you. And, by the way, who is Darren Albert, and how exactly does he qualify as an expert on global warming? Why should I listen to him instead of listening to an environmental scientist from the University of Winnipeg who disagrees with everything he says?

Ben Davies,

Winnipeg

Whatever happened to "it's a cycle?"

EDITORIAL COMMENT 'STUPID'

Re: Life's Issues unbalanced, Letters, Sept. 23.

Your editorial comments ("Anyone, not just Christians, can benefit from reading that page") after Thomas Restiaux's letter are just plain stupid. I shudder at the thought of the gullible people, the vulnerable and the desperate who believe the nonsense preached by charlatans. The content of the Life's Issues section on Sunday would actually be useful if the paper on which it is printed was softer, thoroughly absorbent and perforated in small squares.

Bob Russell

Winnipeg

Letters to the Editor column

Much of it is about tolerance. You may want to try it.

Mission warrants deep thought

SOURCETAG 0709300365
PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 11
BYLINE: ROY CLANCY
COLUMN: Editorial
WORD COUNT: 241

The grim reality of the war in Afghanistan was brought home with the death of Canadian 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 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.

Let's talk peace: Karzai Afghan leader wants to meet with Taliban, offers a voice in government

SOURCETAG 0709300359
PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 9
ILLUSTRATION: photo by Rahmat Gul, AP The wreckage of an army bus is lowered onto a truck in Kabul yesterday after the bus was demolished by a suicide bomber. The blast killed 30 people.
BYLINE: JASON STRAZIUSO, AP
DATELINE: KABUL
WORD COUNT: 312

In his most dramatic peace overture yet, Afghan President Hamid Karzai yesterday offered to meet Taliban leader Mullah Omar and give militants a position in government.

Karzai's offer came just hours after a suicide bomber in army disguise blew up 30 people on a military bus in Kabul.

The bus had stopped to pick up soldiers when a bomber wearing a military uniform tried to board, army spokesman Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi said.

"While they were checking the IDs of soldiers who want to board the bus, the bomber tried to get on the bus and blew himself up there," Azimi said.

A purported Taliban spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, claimed the militant group was responsible for the blast in a text message to The Associated Press.

Strengthening a call for negotiations, Karzai said he was willing to meet the reclusive Omar and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former prime minister and factional warlord.

'PERSONALLY GO THERE'

"If I find their address, there is no need for them to come to me, I'll personally go there and get in touch with them," Karzai said. "Esteemed Mullah, sir, and esteemed Hekmatyar, sir, why are you destroying the country?"

Karzai said he has contacts with Taliban militants through tribal elders but that there are no direct and open government communication channels with the fighters. Omar's whereabouts are not known, though Karzai has claimed he is in Pakistan.

"If a group of Taliban or a number of Taliban come to me and say, 'President, we want a department in this or in that ministry or we want a position as deputy minister ... and we don't want to fight anymore ... If there will be a demand and a request like that to me, I will accept it because I want conflicts and fighting to end in Afghanistan,'" Karzai said.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul has said it does not support negotiations with Taliban fighters, labelling them terrorists, though the United Nations and NATO have said an increasing number of Taliban are interested in laying down their arms.

U.S. President George W. Bush met Karzai in New York on Wednesday. It has not been made public whether the two discussed talks with militants.

Canada's defence minister said the Taliban would have to renounce violence and accept the NATO mission.
KEYWORDS=WORLD

Let's talk peace: Karzai Afghan leader wants to meet with Taliban, offers a voice in government

SOURCETAG 0709300613

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.09.30

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 10

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Rahmat Gul, The Associated Press The wreckage of an army bus is lowered onto a truck in Kabul yesterday after the bus was demolished by a suicide bomber. The blast killed 30 people.

BYLINE: JASON STRAZIUSO, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DATELINE: KABUL

WORD COUNT: 312

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KEYWORDS=WORLD

MP on a mission to give troops a boostMP on a mission to give troops a boost

SOURCETAG: 0709300039
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 24
BYLINE: TOM VAN DUSEN
DATELINE: CORNWALL
WORD COUNT: 203

The Conservative MP who claims for his riding the title of "Most Patriotic in Canada" by virtue of the number of flags it flies on Canada Day has launched another major exercise in patriotism.

Guy Lauzon, who represents Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry in the House of Commons, is sponsoring his second annual Support Our Troops campaign through Remembrance Day.

CLIMB ON BANDWAGON

It works much like the flag campaign, the objective being to get as many constituents as possible to climb aboard the bandwagon.

With the troops' initiative, they're being asked to sign letters of support to be sent Nov. 11 to the "brave men and women serving in Afghanistan." Lauzon said he's repeating the campaign based on popular demand.

"My deep respect and gratitude for the sacrifices being made has inspired it. I'm overwhelmed by the outpouring of support in SDSG."

Last year, the MP -- at his own expense -- distributed close to 1,800 "Support Our Troops" lawn and window signs, far exceeding the original target of 1,000. The effort netted 1,780 signatures.

LETTERS AVAILABLE

This time around, he ordered 2,500 signs, hoping to collect 2,000 signatures before the cutoff date. Letters are available for signing at Lauzon's constituency offices in Cornwall, Morrisburg and Winchester, along with Legion branches in Lancaster, Finch, Long Sault, Chesterville and Iroquois.

The MP is careful to point out that supporting the troops' efforts doesn't necessarily mean constituents approve of the mission. **KEYWORDS=OTTAWA AND REGION**

Let's talk peace: Karzai Afghan leader wants to meet with Taliban, offers a voice in government

SOURCETAG 0709300019

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun

DATE: 2007.09.30

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 8

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Rahmat Gul, AP The wreckage of an army bus is lowered onto a truck in Kabul yesterday after the bus was demolished by a suicide bomber. The blast killed 30 people.

BYLINE: JASON STRAZIUSO, AP

DATELINE: KABUL

WORD COUNT: 312

In his most dramatic peace overture yet, Afghan President Hamid Karzai yesterday offered to meet Taliban leader Mullah Omar and give militants a position in government.

Karzai's offer came just hours after a suicide bomber in army disguise blew up 30 people on a military bus in Kabul.

The bus had stopped to pick up soldiers when a bomber wearing a military uniform tried to board, army spokesman Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi said.

"While they were checking the IDs of soldiers who want to board the bus, the bomber tried to get on the bus and blew himself up there," Azimi said.

A purported Taliban spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, claimed the militant group was responsible for the blast in a text message to The Associated Press.

Strengthening a call for negotiations, Karzai said he was willing to meet the reclusive Omar and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former prime minister and factional warlord.

'PERSONALLY GO THERE'

"If I find their address, there is no need for them to come to me, I'll personally go there and get in touch with them," Karzai said. "Esteemed Mullah, sir, and esteemed Hekmatyar, sir, why are you destroying the country?"

Karzai said he has contacts with Taliban militants through tribal elders but that there are no direct and open government communication channels with the fighters. Omar's whereabouts are not known, though Karzai has claimed he is in Pakistan.

"If a group of Taliban or a number of Taliban come to me and say, 'President, we want a department in this or in that ministry or we want a position as deputy minister ... and we don't want to fight anymore ... If there will be a demand and a request like that to me, I will accept it because I want conflicts and fighting to end in Afghanistan,'" Karzai said.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul has said it does not support negotiations with Taliban fighters, labelling them terrorists, though the United Nations and NATO have said an increasing number of Taliban are interested in laying down their arms.

U.S. President George W. Bush met Karzai in New York on Wednesday. It has not been made public whether the two discussed talks with militants.

Canada's defence minister said the Taliban would have to renounce violence and accept the NATO mission.
KEYWORDS=WORLD

Police, Musharraf opponents clash The president faces a tough go even after Pakistan's highest court threw out election challenges against him.

SOURCETAG 0709300293

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2007.09.30

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 14

ILLUSTRATION: 1. photo by Reuters TROUBLE: Pakistani police scuffle with lawyers during a clash outside the Supreme Court in Islamabad yesterday. 2. photo of PERVEZ MUSHARRAF

BYLINE: REUTERS

DATELINE: ISLAMABAD

WORD COUNT: 177

Pakistani police wielding batons and firing tear gas clashed yesterday with lawyers and activists opposed to President Pervez Musharraf as the Election Commission accepted his nomination for an Oct. 6 vote.

On Friday, the Supreme Court dismissed challenges to army chief Musharraf's bid to seek re-election, clearing a major hurdle to his securing another term.

But despite the ruling, nuclear-armed Pakistan faces months of uncertainty as Musharraf faces fresh objections to his bid to control a country whose support is seen as crucial to U.S.-led efforts to stabilize Afghanistan and battle al-Qaida.

Violence erupted outside the Election Commission in Islamabad when a group of about 200 lawyers and activists tried to march from the Supreme Court to the Election Commission after Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz arrived.

Aziz officially proposed Musharraf for president, and was at the commission in case he needed to defend the nomination.

Musharraf's opponents later raised objections to his nomination on various grounds, including that he remains army chief, but the commission rejected them.

A lawyer for the opposition, Hamid Khan, said Musharraf's nomination would be challenged in court tomorrow, when lawyers had also called for a day of protest against yesterday's violence.

KEYWORDS=WORLD

Karzai offers to meet Taliban leaders Afghan president says if he finds out where they live, he'll personally seek them out.

SOURCETAG: 0709300290
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 10
ILLUSTRATION: 1. photo of HAMID KARZAI 2. photo of MULLAH OMAR
BYLINE: AP
DATELINE: KABUL
WORD COUNT: 342

In his most dramatic peace overture yet, Afghan President Hamid Karzai yesterday offered to meet Taliban leader Mullah Omar and give militants a position in government. Karzai's offer came hours after a suicide bomber in army disguise attacked a military bus in Kabul, killing 30 people.

Strengthening a call for negotiations he has made with increasing frequency in recent weeks, Karzai said he was willing to meet the reclusive Omar and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former prime minister and factional warlord leader.

"If I find their address, there is no need for them to come to me, I'll personally go there and get in touch with them," Karzai said. "Esteemed Mullah, sir, and esteemed Hekmatyar, sir, why are you destroying the country?"

Karzai said he has contacts with Taliban militants through tribal elders but there are no direct and open government communication channels with the fighters.

Omar's whereabouts are not known, though Karzai has claimed he is in Quetta, Pakistan, a militant hotbed across the border from Afghanistan's Kandahar province.

"If a group of Taliban or a number of Taliban come to me and say, 'President, we want a department in this or in that ministry or we want a position as deputy minister . . . and we don't want to fight anymore. . . . If there will be a demand and a request like that to me, I will accept it because I want conflicts and fighting to end in Afghanistan," Karzai said.

"I wish there would be a demand as easy as this. I wish that they would want a position in the government. I will give them a position," he said.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul has said it does not support negotiations with Taliban fighters, labelling them as terrorists, though the United Nations and NATO have said an increasing number of Taliban are interested in laying down their arms. NATO's ambassador to Afghanistan, Daan Everts, said this month NATO would look into the possibility of talks.

U.S. President George W. Bush met Karzai on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York on Wednesday where the two discussed the battle against al-Qaida and the Taliban, though it has not been made

Karzai offers to meet Taliban leaders Afghan president says if he finds out where they live, he'll personally s

public whether the two talked about the possibility of peace talks with militants. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Karzai offers to meet Taliban leaders Afghan president says if he finds out where they live, he'll personally s

Canada's positions

SOURCETAG 0709300289

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2007.09.30

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 10

ILLUSTRATION: photo by AP BOMBED: A destroyed army bus is loaded onto a trailer after a suicide bombing in Kabul, Afghanistan, yesterday.

BYLINE: SUN MEDIA NEWS SERVICES

WORD COUNT: 182

– Defence Minister Peter MacKay says the Taliban will have to renounce violence and accept the NATO mission in Afghanistan if it wants to work with the Afghan government. Speaking in Halifax, MacKay says any co-operation must include the preconditions Karzai has laid out. Those include the Taliban's renunciation of violence and acceptance of the fact NATO forces aren't leaving the country. MacKay said he's comfortable with anyone who is prepared to move away from activities on the ground that put Canadian soldiers, and others who are part of the NATO mission, at risk.

– The Liberal defence critic says he's headed on an unauthorized fact-finding trip to Afghanistan after having his request to visit the troops consistently ignored by the Harper government. Denis Coderre says he's set to leave for Kabul and Kandahar to visit with development workers, Afghan government officials and Canadian soldiers. "(Afghanistan) is a major issue for the Canadian people," Coderre said in an interview yesterday.

KEYWORDS=CANADA

Grit vows to go to Afghanistan Still waiting for permission

SOURCETAG 0709300490
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 26
ILLUSTRATION: photo of DENIS CODERRE Defence critic
BYLINE: ALEXANDER PANETTA, THE CANADIAN PRESS
DATELINE: OTTAWA
WORD COUNT: 375

The Liberal defence critic says he's headed on an unauthorized fact-finding trip to Afghanistan after having his request to visit the troops consistently ignored by the Harper government.

Denis Coderre says he's set to leave for Kabul and Kandahar to visit with development workers, Afghan government officials and Canadian soldiers.

"(Afghanistan) is a major issue for the Canadian people," Coderre said in an interview yesterday. "I think that for the sake of the debate it's important that I go. Since I couldn't get an answer I decided to go on my own."

The Montreal-area MP says he's made multiple requests of Defence Minister Peter MacKay's office but that they were systematically ignored or rejected. He said he first asked to go when Gordon O'Connor was defence minister but sometimes didn't get his calls returned.

Coderre says he has the full blessing of his leader, Stephane Dion, and that his boss has also informed the Harper government that Coderre wants to go to Afghanistan.

While visiting dignitaries generally use transportation supplied by the Department of National Defence, Coderre has made his own travel arrangements to Afghanistan and within the country.

He does not yet have permission from the Canadian government to visit the international base in Kandahar but says he's confident that he will be allowed to meet with the troops.

"Since (all requests) passed through the defence minister's office, I would see it as a partisan gesture from the defence minister if I'm denied access," he said.

A spokesman for MacKay said MP trips are usually organized through parliamentary committees and not through the minister's office. But since the House of Commons is prorogued and its committees temporarily suspended, Coderre would have to wait until the House resumes next month to get permission.

However, the government could collapse in a vote on its policy-setting throne speech immediately after Parliament resumes Oct. 16, which could trigger an election.

With a potential election looming, the future of the Afghan mission could be a matter of intense debate this fall.

But Coderre shrugged off any suggestion that he's about to embark on an intercontinental political stunt.

"It's not a stunt. I'm doing my job," he said. "I think that as a member of Parliament and as a National Defence critic, it's important for me to know what's going on in the field, at the diplomatic level, at the development level and of course at the military level."

The Liberals and Bloc Quebecois want Canada to scale back its fighting operations in Afghanistan once the current mission expires in February 2009, while the government wants to continue. The NDP wants troops withdrawn immediately. KEYWORDS=CANADA

Let's talk peace: Karzai Afghan leader wants to meet with Taliban, offers a voice in government

SOURCETAG 0709300488

PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun

DATE: 2007.09.30

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 25

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Rahmat Gul, The Associated Press The wreckage of an army bus is lowered onto a truck in Kabul yesterday after the bus was demolished by a suicide bomber. The blast killed 30 people.

BYLINE: JASON STRAZIUSO, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DATELINE: KABUL

WORD COUNT: 312

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"If a group of Taliban or a number of Taliban come to me and say, 'President, we want a department in this or in that ministry or we want a position as deputy minister ... and we don't want to fight anymore ... If there will be a demand and a request like that to me, I will accept it because I want conflicts and fighting to end in Afghanistan,'" Karzai said.

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KEYWORDS=WORLD

Musharraf's nomination sparks violence

SOURCETAG 0709300790
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Early
SECTION: News
PAGE: 12
ILLUSTRATION: photo of PERVEZ MUSHARRAF Faces opposition
BYLINE: REUTERS
DATELINE: ISLAMABAD
WORD COUNT: 251

Pakistani police wielding batons and firing tear gas clashed yesterday with lawyers and activists opposed to President Pervez Musharraf as the Election Commission accepted his nomination for an Oct. 6 vote.

On Friday, the Supreme Court dismissed challenges to army chief Musharraf's bid to seek re-election, clearing a major hurdle to his securing another term.

But despite the ruling, nuclear-armed Pakistan faces months of uncertainty as Musharraf faces fresh objections to his bid to control a country whose support is seen as crucial to U.S.-led efforts to stabilize Afghanistan and battle al-Qaida.

Violence erupted outside the Election Commission in Islamabad when a group of about 200 lawyers and activists tried to march from the Supreme Court, across an avenue, to the Election Commission after Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz arrived.

Aziz officially proposed Musharraf for president, and was at the commission in case he needed to defend the nomination during scrutiny.

Musharraf's opponents later raised objections to his nomination on various grounds but the commission rejected them.

A lawyer for the opposition, Hamid Khan, said Musharraf's nomination would be challenged in court tomorrow, when lawyers had also called for a day of protest against yesterday's violence.

The commission later said Musharraf, who took power in a 1999 coup, was among six candidates whose nominations were accepted.

The two other main candidates are Wajihuddin Ahmed, a former judge who refused to swear allegiance to Musharraf after his coup, and a member of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto's party, Makhdoom Amin Faheem.

Members of parliament and of provincial assemblies will vote for a president next Saturday before the assemblies are dissolved for a general election due by mid-January when Musharraf's ruling alliance is expected to suffer losses and lose its majority. **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

Let's talk peace: Karzai Afghan leader wants to meet with Taliban, offers a voice in government

SOURCETAG 0709300787

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2007.09.30

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 10

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KEYWORDS=WORLD

Defence critic planning Afghan trip

SOURCETAG 0709300783

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2007.09.30

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 8

BYLINE: CP

DATELINE: OTTAWA

WORD COUNT: 103

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Coderre says he has the blessing of leader Stephane Dion and his boss has also informed the Harper government Coderre wants to go to Afghanistan. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Comrades ready for final farewell Calgary regiment prepares for soldier's funeral

SOURCETAG: 0709300776
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 4
ILLUSTRATION: photo of NATHAN HORNBURG Slain in battle
BYLINE: NADIA MOHARIB AND PABLO FERNANDEZ, SUN MEDIA
WORD COUNT: 203

As the family of a soldier slain while serving in Afghanistan considers funeral arrangements, comrades in Cpl. Nathan Hornburg's unit spent yesterday preparing for any role they may be asked to play in a final farewell to Canada's newest hero.

Although the family has not confirmed to what degree it wants the military to be involved in services for the young soldier killed earlier this week, members of his unit, the King's Own Calgary Regiment, said they are planning for every contingency.

That could see Hornburg's comrades act as everything from pallbearers to mounting an honour guard.

The thought of saying goodbye to their brother in arms, which was foremost in their minds throughout the day, weighed heavy on members of the regiment, said King's Own Sgt. Trevor Petr.

"It's really tough to stay focused on what we have to do when all our thoughts are really with the family and on our friend, who we're never going to see again," he said.

Hornburg was killed Monday by a mortar round when, while under heavy fire, he tried to help a tank that had become disabled during heavy fighting in Afghanistan.

Physically and emotionally, preparations have not been easy for some of the inexperienced troops, said King's Own Sgt. Ian Day.

"At this moment, I don't think they realize the importance of what they're doing," he said.

"This is a parade unlike any other parade."

Although it is not yet known when Hornburg will return home to Calgary, services are expected to take place late next week. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Required reading; A cheat-sheet to Canada's best fiction, non-fiction and poetry this season

IDNUMBER 200709300044
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: The Citizen's Weekly Arts & Books
PAGE: C1 / FRONT
BYLINE: Carla Lucchetta
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 1292

The much-anticipated Canadian fall book season is upon us, and including the appearances of a couple of fiction award-winning heavy-hitters like M.G. Vassanji, Frances Itani, Elizabeth Hay and David Adams Richards, choices are as diverse as they are large.

The big story is in the non-fiction offerings, with books by Brian Mulroney, Jean Chrétien, activist journalists Naomi Klein and Maude Barlow and TV's Rick Mercer, as well as veteran journalist Christie Blatchford's inside look at the Canadian military, and another about the mystique of Pierre Elliot Trudeau.

Fiction

Remembering the Bones

By Frances Itani

HarperCollins, \$29.95

Winner of the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Deafening, Ottawa writer Frances Itani is back with the story of Georgina Danforth Witley, who, on her way to London to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's 80th birthday, crashes her car. Stuck in a ditch and unable to move, she recites the names of her bones to remind herself she is alive, and recounts the details and memories of her life. Now available.

The Architects are Here

By Michael Winter

Penguin, \$34

This is the much-anticipated offering from Newfoundland writer Michael Winter, author of *The Big Way*. Gabriel English reunites with an old friend, forcing them to reminisce about a childhood tragedy. It's a tale of how tragedy, grief and uncertainty tests friendship. Now available.

What Happened Later

By Ray Robertson

Thomas Allen, \$29.95

Toronto writer Ray Robertson provides a glimpse into Jack Kerouac's life after the fame of *On the Road*, and the story of a young man named Ray Robertson who is obsessed with the mythic author. Now available.

The Gum Thief

By Douglas Coupland

Random House, \$32

Vancouver's Douglas Coupland continues to entertain with his unique brand of humour tinged with bittersweet sentimentalism. *The Gum Thief* is a look at what happens when a down-on-his-luck, middle-aged Staples employee befriends a young, lost alterna-chick colleague. Now available.

Late Nights on Air

By Elizabeth Hay

McClelland & Stewart, \$32.99

Winner of the Ottawa Book Award for *Garbo Laughs* and now longlisted for a Giller for *Late Nights*, Elizabeth Hay's latest, written partly from her own experiences canoeing in the North, revolves around a group of urbanites united by their jobs at a Yellowknife radio station. Sharing stories about what circumstances brought them north, they also bear witness to the changing Canadian North. Now available.

The Assassin's Song

By M.G. Vassanji

Doubleday, \$34.95

Two-time Giller Prize-winner M.G. Vassanji is back with a story about an Indian heir to the throne whose longing for an ordinary life brings him to North America, but leaves him torn between modern life in British Columbia and the obligations to his royal heritage in India. Now available.

The Solitude of Emperors

By David Davidar

McClelland & Stewart, \$32.99

Penguin Canada chief David Davidar takes up the pen once more. Set in the 1990s, his story is about a young man who flees his small town in India for more modern Bombay and gets caught up in the heady religious and political energy. His journey then takes him to a small mountain village which he discovers is not immune to the conflict. Now available.

Turtle Valley

By Gail Anderson-Dargatz

Random House, \$32

B.C. writer Gail Anderson-Dargatz's new novel takes place in the shadow of a raging forest fire, as a woman

prepares to evacuate her family home and uncovers family secrets that parallel those in her own life. Through her previous novels, *The Cure for Death by Lightning* and *A Recipe for Bees*, Anderson–Dargatz is known for her keen observations of character and human nature against rural Canadian backdrops. Now available.

Macdonald

By Roy MacSkimming

Thomas Allen, \$34.95

Roy MacSkimming recreates the life of Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, with a fictional account of his final election, complete with scandals and divisive issues that mirror some of those that plague our country today. Now available.

Spanish Fly

By Will Ferguson

Penguin, \$32

Humourist Will Ferguson (*Why I Hate Canadians*, *Beauty Tips from Moose Jaw*) offers a comedy about a group of con artists who travel across the Southwest wreaking havoc in pre–Second World War America. Now available.

The Lost Highway

By David Adams Richards

Doubleday, \$34.95

David Adams Richards follows up last year's Commonwealth Writers' Prize–winning *Friends of Meagre Fortune* with *The Lost Highway*. Alex Chapman resents his great–uncle for, among other things, ruining his chance to marry the love of his life. When he has an opportunity for revenge, he takes it. One of Canada's most lauded writers writes on the theme of family rivalries and betrayal. Due in November.

Poetry

The Door

By Margaret Atwood

McClelland & Stewart, \$22.99

Margaret Atwood's first book of poetry since 1995's *Morning in the Burned House*, *The Door* contains a whopping 50 poems, from the personal to the political, all rendered with the author's skilled creative imagery and depth. Now available.

Non–fiction

Brian Mulroney

Memoirs: 1939–1993

By Brian Mulroney

McClelland & Stewart, \$50

Already making headlines, former prime minister Brian Mulroney's memoir provides a retrospective of his life, from humble beginnings in Baie-Comeau through his nine years in office. Now available.

The Shock Doctrine: The Rise
of Disaster Capitalism

By Naomi Klein

Random House, \$36.95

Naomi Klein's Shock Doctrine is a result of exhaustive first-hand research and reporting in disaster zones by the No Logo author, which exposes how "disaster capitalism" is alive and well in places like Chile, Iraq, South Africa, the U.S. and even Canada.

The Film Club

By David Gilmour

Thomas Allen, \$27.95

Governor General's Award-winner David Gilmour (A Perfect Night to Go to China) took an off-the-map journey with his teenage son, allowing him to drop out of school as long as he agreed to watch three films a week with his father. The result is The Film Club, which explains how the experience changed both their lives. Now available.

Rick Mercer: The Book

By Rick Mercer

Doubleday, \$29.95

Canada's well-known satirist Rick Mercer presents a collection of his best political rants and encounters with famous figures from showbiz and literature. Now available.

Jean Chrétien:

My Years as Prime Minister

By Jean Chrétien

Knopf, \$39.95

Not long out of the highest office in Canada, Jean Chrétien writes a memoir of his trials and triumphs in My Years as Prime Minister. Due Oct. 16.

Mystic Trudeau:

The Fire and the Rose

By B.W. Powe

Thomas Allen, \$26.95

Philosopher and polemical writer B.W. Powe explores what is beneath the enduring image of Pierre Elliot Trudeau and reveals some of the mystical and spiritual elements that motivated one of our country's best-loved public figures. Due in October.

Beijing Confidential:

A Tale of Lost and Found

In the New Forbidden City

By Jan Wong

Doubleday, \$34.95

Globe and Mail scribe Jan Wong gives readers a look at her experiences at university in China through a journey back to search for a person she felt she had betrayed. Due Oct. 30.

Fifteen Days: Stories of Bravery and Friendship, Life and Death from Inside the New Canadian Military

By Christie Blatchford

Doubleday, \$34.95

Globe and Mail columnist Christie Blatchford tackles the Afghanistan mission from the viewpoint of an imbedded journalist in her first full-length book. Oct. 30 release.

Blue Covenant: The Global

Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water

By Maude Barlow

McClelland & Stewart, \$19.99

If water is the new oil, then activist and visionary Maude Barlow has a recommendation here about how to protect, and make equal, the world's supply. Available Oct. 16.

Sports

The New Game: How Hockey

Got Faster, Cleaner, and Better

By Steve Paikin

Penguin, \$35

TV Ontario host Steve Paikin documents the changing tide of the way Canada's national sport is played. Now available.

Hitman: My Real Life in the Cartoon World of Wrestling

By Bret Hart

Random House, \$35

Culled from his own audio diaries kept throughout years of travelling and performing as a WWE superstar, Bret Hart chronicles his career and touches on the impact of his brother's death and his own health issues prior to and after his retirement at age 43. Due Oct. 16.

Music

It Ain't Easy: Long John Baldry and the Birth of the British Blues

By Paul Myers

Douglas & McIntyre, \$24.95

Journalist and musician Paul Myers chronicles the life of Long John Baldry (who lived in Vancouver from the late '70s on), interviewing Baldry's friends and former bandmates, including Eric Clapton, Elton John, John Mayall, Cameron Crowe and Rod Stewart, and paints a portrait of the influence of the renowned musician on the British music scene and beyond. Now available.

Carla Lucchetta is a Toronto writer.

Karzai asks Taliban for meeting; Deadly attack prompts Afghan leader to make emotional plea to Mullah Omar

IDNUMBER 200709300013
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Ahmad Masood, Reuters / A distraught Afghan boy searches for his father, who went missing and is feared dead after a suicide bombing in Kabul yesterday. A Taliban suicide bomber killed at least 30 and injured dozens more in an attack on a bus carrying soldiers. ;

DATELINE: KABUL
BYLINE: M. Karim Faiez and Laura King
SOURCE: The Los Angeles Times
WORD COUNT: 543

KABUL – President Hamid Karzai, expressing horror at a suicide bombing here in the Afghan capital that killed at least 30 people and wounded dozens more, offered yesterday to meet with Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar to stop the carnage.

Mr. Karzai spoke at an emotional news conference hours after an early morning blast tore through a bus carrying soldiers to their posts. The explosion was so powerful it ripped the roof and sides from the bus, scattering body parts and debris along a street in the city centre.

Nearly all of the dead were thought to be soldiers, but at least two were civilians who were near the bus when it blew up.

A purported Taliban spokesman calling himself Zabibullah Mujahed claimed responsibility for the attack in text messages sent to Western news agencies.

Several times in recent weeks, Mr. Karzai has suggested direct talks with the Taliban, the austere Islamic militia driven from power by a U.S.-led invasion nearly six years ago.

But yesterday's appeal, aimed directly at fugitive Taliban leader Mullah Omar and warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, carried more raw urgency than the U.S.-backed president's previous overtures.

"If I find their address, there is no need for them to come to me -- I'll personally go there and get in touch with them," Mr. Karzai told reporters at his presidential palace.

Apparently paraphrasing the question he would put to them, he asked: "Esteemed mullah, sir, and esteemed Hekmatyar, sir, why are you destroying the country?"

U.S. diplomats and military officials in Afghanistan would not comment directly on Mr. Karzai's appeal, although one U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, cautioned against taking Mr. Karzai's offer to talk to the insurgents himself too literally.

Karzai asks Taliban for meeting; Deadly attack prompts Afghan leader to make emotional plea to Mullah Omar

Taliban fighters have responded to the president's previous overtures by demanding that all foreign forces leave Afghanistan before any talks could take place. NATO, in turn, has said it would consider negotiations only with fighters who were willing to lay down their arms.

In intensified fighting in the last 18 months, the insurgents have made little headway against a vastly superior U.S.– and NATO–led force, but have extracted a heavy toll in civilian lives and rendered large swaths of the country unsafe.

The bus bombing was the worst in the capital since a similar blast in June, which also targetted a bus carrying security personnel, and killed about 35 people.

As in Iraq, Afghans have become accustomed to attacks carried out during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, but Mr. Karzai said the timing rendered the attack particularly heinous.

"It was a terrible tragedy, no doubt an act of extreme cowardice," Mr. Karzai told reporters. "Whoever did this was against people, against humanity, definitely against Islam. A man who calls himself Muslim will not blow up innocent people in the middle of Ramadan."

The bombing left searchers clambering onto rooftops and even into treetops to retrieve scraps of mangled flesh. Survivors told police that the bomber had been wearing a military uniform.

Meanwhile, the International Committee of the Red Cross said four of its employees who were kidnapped last week had been freed unharmed.

Franz Rauchenstein, deputy head of the organization's delegation in Kabul, called the release of the two foreigners and two Afghan nationals "a great relief" and said no ransom had been paid or any other concessions made.

Abductions of aid workers and other foreign nationals have become more common in the last year. Twenty–three South Korean church workers were kidnapped in July, and 21 of them were released after protracted negotiations. Two of the hostages were killed.

Afghanistan mission gives Quebec chance to make country proud: top diplomat

IDNUMBER 200709300012
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
DATELINE: MONTREAL
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 611

MONTREAL – For Canada's top diplomat in Kandahar, success means learning from past mistakes and hanging on to ground taken — and then retaken — from the Taliban.

But gains in Afghanistan could also have an important sociopolitical spinoff back home: Making the rest of Canada proud of Quebec's contribution to greater world stability.

So says Quebec-born Michel de Salaberry, Canada's new senior civilian co-ordinator for Kandahar. In a rare interview since the Foreign Affairs Department appointed him Canada's top diplomat in Kandahar, Mr. de Salaberry says he is proud of his Quebec roots and the opportunity to serve alongside his home province's Royal 22nd Regiment, the Van Doo.

"It's our chance — it's the francophones' chance — to show good service to Canada," Mr. de Salaberry explained. "In many ways, French Canada has been a source of stress for the whole of the country. This is one opportunity for the whole of the country to be proud of its French-speaking element."

Any noticeable increase in support in Quebec for Canada's military mission in Afghanistan would be welcome news to a minority Conservative government determined to carry on with the NATO mission in the face of an increasingly skeptical public — especially in Quebec — and an emboldened political opposition posturing to topple the government, perhaps in a matter of weeks.

At 61, Mr. de Salaberry wasn't coaxed out of retirement last summer to do the Conservatives any political favours. After a distinguished string of ambassadorships in Iran, Jordan and Egypt, he says he was flattered, but also bound by a deeply held conviction to fight the roots of fanaticism that threaten the world.

Mr. de Salaberry's primary function is to elevate the non-military aspects

of the Canadian contribution to Afghanistan, and do so from the dangerous southern terrain around Kandahar. He reports to Canada's ambassador to Afghanistan, Kabul-based Arif Lalani, but he is responsible for six fellow diplomats in the violence-racked southern province of Kandahar.

His job is to better co-ordinate the development and diplomatic efforts with the military mission, whose focus is to strengthen security in the region and eventually stamp out the insurgency.

"There's a new level of understanding between Canadian government departments," Mr. de Salaberry notes.

"What is new is joint planning. That didn't occur before. It's a switch from conceiving of three different lines of programs."

On the ground, this better level of integration means more long-term planning between government departments about how to reinforce any gains by Canada's military.

Last year, Canada led NATO forces on the hard-fought Operation Medusa that drove the Taliban out of the Panjwaii and Zhari districts west of Kandahar. But smaller cells of Taliban insurgents reinfiltred the region afterwards, planting roadside bombs that have inflicted several deaths on the Canadian soldiers. Insurgents have also killed more than a dozen Afghans in attacks on poorly fortified police outposts.

In the past week, Canada has mounted a renewed offensive in the region, which, despite the death of one Calgary-based soldier, is showing positive signs. Canada is also ramping up its training of Afghan police by opening a teaching centre for more senior officers next to the Canadian provincial reconstruction team in downtown Kandahar.

Mr. de Salaberry does not try to sugar-coat the job ahead: Creating a viable police force for Afghanistan when its ranks have a literacy rate of 10 per cent and poor pay makes many officers vulnerable to corruption. Monthly salaries will be doubled to \$140 as a start, but many challenges remain.

The diplomat refuses to speculate on what will happen after February 2009, when Canada's military commitment is set to expire. All he'll say is that "a military presence" of some sort will be required for some time to come.

MPs issue statement branding U.S. army, CIA as 'terrorists'

IDNUMBER 200709300010
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 131

Iranian lawmakers branded the U.S. armed forces and the Central Intelligence Agency as "terrorist" in a statement read out in parliament yesterday, Iranian media said. Signed by 215 members of the 290-seat legislature, the statement was an apparent response to reports that Washington is considering labelling a unit of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards a foreign terrorist organization. The legislators criticized the U.S. military and the CIA for what they called terrorist actions, citing the Second World War atomic bombing of Japan, the Vietnam war and the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan as examples. The statement also criticized the U.S.'s "unlimited support for the racist and aggressive Zionist regime (Israel)."

The sound of Derome's fury and a flaming ode to Cirque

IDNUMBER 200709300054
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Arts & Life
PAGE: A19
COLUMN: Chaud Show
KEYWORDS: 0
BYLINE: GAETAN L. CHARLEBOIS
SOURCE: The Gazette
WORD COUNT: 560

And on it goes ...: You'll remember we reported on a mini-controversy over preferential treatment given to Radio-Canada anchorman Bernard Derome on his trip to Afghanistan – the anglo press (Globe and Mail and this chain included) were miffed. Derome subsequently went ballistic. It went beyond mini and became a topic of conversation on the season premiere of *Tout le monde en parle*. Derome went so far as to talk to the *Journal de Montréal* (he's never talked to us!). "Where is it, this preferential treatment?" he bellowed to them. "I am furious; it's petty." He must have been furious – one recent evening, he delivered the news despite sounding like his vocal cords had been ripped apart from shrieking, and he didn't appear at all on the next evening's broadcast.

The unbearable lightness of being Dick: *Le Journal de Montréal*, in a tour de force of unoriginality, set up an Internet sting operation to troll for pedophiles. They got a bunch, just like NBC's controversial *Dateline* series *To Catch a Predator* did last spring (after which one man committed suicide). As these things are wont to do, the frenzy went beyond the *JdeM* reports – journalist Brigitte McCann also turned up on *Tout le monde en parle* (and there was a content warning for the first time in memory). The whole mess even crossed over into the consciousness of *JdeM* columnist Richard Martineau. He went onto the web and, like Columbus "discovering" the New Land, found the website for NAMBLA (North American Man/Boy Love Association). Martineau writes of what he found on the site: "the new pedophile discourse." Well, yes and no; as he said himself, 10 or so paragraphs higher in his article, NAMBLA – under the cloak of free speech – has existed since 1978 and is a running gag on Jon Stewart's *Daily Show*. But don't let facts get in the way of a good case of hysteria.

Watch out for: *C'est juste de la TV*, on ARTV Fridays at 9 p.m. It's talking heads, but they're talking about the thing we all love and love to hate: TV. And what a bunch of talking heads: funny lady Chantal Lamarre, *La Presse* smartass Marc Cassivi, ex-politicienne Lise Payette, all wrapped with solid hosting by André Robitaille. Recent discussions on the Cédrika Provencher disappearance coverage and the controversial show *Kid Nation* were fascinating.

Quoted: American comic Patton Oswalt has a new CD – *Werewolves and Lollipops* – on which he does a hilariously raunchy riff on taking his parents to Vegas and seeing that "catnip for old people," *Cirque du Soleil*. Here is a (expurgated) tidbit: "*Cirque du Soleil* is what a gay, French dude sees in his head when he's tired and horny. ... Everything about (it) is wet and French and gay and on fire at the same time."

Quick takes: French critics mutilate L'Âge des ténèbres. First the Toronto critics, now the Parisians; yup, let's send that sucker to the Oscars. ... Myriam Bédard and Geneviève Jeanson: What came first – the craziness or the sports?

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Bomber attacks bus full of soldiers; Afghan president offers to meet with Taliban leader

IDNUMBER 200709300014
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM; BOMBINGS; FOREIGN AID; AFGHANISTAN
DATELINE: KABUL
BYLINE: CARLOTTA GALL AND TAIMOOR SHAH
SOURCE: New York Times
WORD COUNT: 483

A suicide bomber wearing an Afghan military uniform detonated his explosive belt near a bus full of Afghan soldiers on their way to work here in the capital early yesterday, killing at least 30 people, including two civilians, officials said. The bombing was among the deadliest in Afghanistan this year.

Later in the day, President Hamid Karzai said that he was willing to travel to the hideout of the Taliban's leader, Mullah Muhammad Omar, to conduct peace negotiations, and that he was prepared to allocate the leadership of some ministries to Taliban officials if they rejected further violence.

The comments appeared to reflect a more conciliatory and open posture toward peace negotiations with the Taliban, and they came a day after Karzai's return from a trip to the United States that included talks at the United Nations and the White House. This year, he forswore direct negotiations with Omar and has apparently never publicly said he was prepared to name Taliban fighters as ministers.

The Taliban, which has had a resurgence across southern Afghanistan in the past two years, has accelerated its use of suicide bombings and kidnappings this year. Zabihullah Mujahid, a Taliban spokesman, said in a telephone interview that the group was responsible for the bombing yesterday.

The blast was so powerful that it peeled the sides off the bus, crushed the frame, catapulted a huge piece of the bus into a park across the street and shattered windows in shops and homes throughout the neighbourhood.

Numerous people were wounded in the attack, including day labourers who had gathered nearby in the hope of finding work, according to a statement from the Interior Ministry.

Residents and shop owners described a deafening blast followed by bedlam as bloody survivors stumbled around wailing for help.

Amid the Taliban's stepped-up campaign of violence, Karzai has been under increasing pressure from NATO countries to try to forge a political peace process that would resolve the insurgency, which many Western and Afghan officials in Afghanistan say cannot be beaten militarily.

He said yesterday that he is willing to meet face-to-face with Omar, the Taliban's leader, and with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, an extremist insurgent leader, but said he will reject the Taliban's main condition for talks: a pullout of all foreign troops.

"If I find their address, there is no need for them to come," the president said. "I'll personally go there and contact them."

He also said he is willing to fold Taliban officials into key positions in his government, including ministerial positions in his cabinet, if they agree to lay down their arms.

"If we are asked this, we will give that job to them instantly," he said. "I wish there would be a demand as easy as this."

Several former members of the Taliban government serve in parliament, and a few more hold positions in provincial governments. Prominent members of Hekmatyar's party have been given government positions and have taken part in parliamentary elections.

Also yesterday, the International Committee of the Red Cross said that four of its employees, who were kidnapped Wednesday while negotiating the release of a group of hostages, were freed.

Launching The Wars

IDNUMBER 200709300098
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Books & The Arts
PAGE: C8

Colour Photo: Tonya Zelinsky, for the Calgary Herald /Canadian war hero Master Cpl. Paul Franklin is a guest of honour at the opening of Theatre Calgary's The Wars. During intermission he is joined by friend John Lippitt, left, and wife, Audra Franklin. ; Colour Photo: Tonya Zelinsky, for the Calgary Herald / Executive director of the Calgary Downtown Association Maggie Schofield joins co-artistic director of One Yellow Rabbit, Michael Green, at a reception hosted by Theatre Calgary following the premiere of The Wars. ; Colour Photo: Tonya Zelinsky, for the Calgary Herald / Mary Welman of Vancouver's The Playhouse congratulates Andrew McNee on a wonderful performance in The Wars. ; Colour Photo: Tonya Zelinsky, for the Calgary Herald / Actress Kerry Sandomirsky enjoys an opening night reception at Julliard following her debut performance as Mrs. Ross in Theatre Calgary's production The Wars. ;

ILLUSTRATION:

KEYWORDS: 0
SOURCE: Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 158

What: The Wars.

Written and directed by Theatre Calgary's Dennis Garnhum and based on Timothy Findley's novel of the same name, The Wars takes place during the First World War and tells the story of a man struggling to reconcile his two worlds; one at home and one on the battlefield.

Entering its 40th year, The Wars opened the 2007/'08 theatre season with a bang. The sold-out performance of The Wars garnered the attention of fans of both Theatre Calgary's and Canadian author, Findley's work. The production also attracted special guests such as Master-Cpl. Paul Franklin and William Whitehead. Both men received a standing ovation from the crowd when Garnhum introduced them. Franklin is currently on tour promoting his book A Long Walk Home after losing both his legs in a bombing in Afghanistan earlier this year. Whitehead was the longtime companion of Canadian author Timothy Findley.

The Wars plays at Theatre Calgary until Oct. 7.

Bombs damage Buddhist relic

IDNUMBER 200709300037
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A13
KEYWORDS: !@DATELINE=PESHAWAR, Pakistan
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse
WORD COUNT: 129

A seventh–century Buddhist relic in Pakistan was damaged when Islamic militants blasted it with dynamite, police said Saturday.

They said home–made bombs were used to try to blow up the mountainside engraving, a Buddhist pilgrimage site, and fired at it using automatic weapons.

"Late Friday militants attempted to blow up the engraving but they could only damage it partially," local police official Masood Khan said, adding it was the second attempt to destroy the relic, in Swat in northwest Pakistan.

The incident recalled the internationally condemned destruction of the huge Bamiyan Buddhas in neighbouring Afghanistan by the hardline Taliban regime in 2001.

Swat is known for its Buddhist heritage and archaeological sites and attracts large number of tourists, mainly from Buddhist countries.

It is also a stronghold of Tehreek Nifaz–e–Shariat Mohammadi, a radical group linked to Afghanistan's Taliban militia that was banned in 2002.

Massive explosion rocks Kabul; Suicide bomber blows up bus, killing 30

IDNUMBER 200709300033

PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald

DATE: 2007.09.30

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A11

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Omar Sobhani, Reuters / An Afghan police officer keeps watch next to a bus destroyed by a suicide bomber Saturday. ; Photo: Hamid Karzai ;

KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM; BOMBINGS

DATELINE: KABUL, Afghanistan

BYLINE: John Ward Anderson

SOURCE: The Washington Post

WORD COUNT: 261

A suicide bomber dressed as a soldier boarded an Afghan National Army bus in Kabul early Saturday and detonated his explosives, killing at least 30 people and injuring 29, Afghan security officials said.

The explosion ripped through the roof and sides of the bus, leaving it a mass of twisted and charred metal. Windows as far as a block away were broken, and scattered splinters of glass, chunks of flesh and shards of metal were sent hundreds of metres.

The Taliban, Islamic extremists allied with Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, asserted responsibility for the bombing in a text message sent to The Associated Press, the news agency reported.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai condemned the attack Saturday, calling it "an act of extreme cowardice" that was "against humanity, against Islam."

The 6:45 a.m. blast in central Kabul rocked a city that was just waking up.

"We awoke to a huge explosion," said Fayed, 41, who lives in a third-floor apartment near the blast site. The boom smashed his windows and sent glass flying through his home, slightly injuring his wife and baby.

Fayed, who like many Afghans uses only one name, said he raced downstairs and found the bus a shambles, littered with the bodies of dead soldiers and three women. Three men were seriously wounded, he said, including one who had lost both legs. A sidewalk cigarette vendor who operated a stall across the street was also killed, he said.

Wahiddullah Araye, 50, was walking his children to school when the blast occurred. "A person who does a suicide bombing is not human," he said. "The people who were killed are our countrymen and I feel very sorry for them."

Taliban releases Red Cross captives; Terror group says workers abducted 'mistakenly'

IDNUMBER 200709300028
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A7
KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM; FOREIGN AID; AFGHANISTAN
DATELINE: KABUL
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse
WORD COUNT: 297

Afghanistan's Taliban on Saturday released four Red Cross workers, including two foreign nationals, captured near the capital four days ago, officials said.

The four — one from Myanmar, one from Macedonia and two Afghans — were seized in the province of Wardak on Wednesday while returning from a mission to release a German engineer and five Afghans captured by the Taliban in mid-July.

They were handed to an Afghan International Committee of the Red Cross worker some 100 kilometres south of Kabul, a spokesman for the provincial government told AFP.

"They are in good health," said the spokesman, Abdul Udood Pashtunzar.

The Red Cross would only confirm the release once the four had returned to Kabul.

A Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahed, said earlier Saturday his group had abducted the four "mistakenly."

They would be freed without conditions because the Red Cross "has a good background in Afghanistan," he had said.

The fugitive leader of the Taliban, Mullah Mohammad Omar, had an eye removed at a Red Cross hospital in the Pakistani city of Quetta after he was wounded fighting the Soviet occupation of the 1980s.

The abduction followed a string of kidnappings of foreigners in Afghanistan, some claimed by Taliban insurgents and some blamed on criminals seeking ransom.

The Red Cross has played a crucial role in facilitating the release of some of the Taliban's other hostages, including 21 South Korean Christian aid workers captured mid-July and released in August.

The team that was captured last week had been trying to negotiate the freedom of German engineer Rudolf Blechschmidt, 62, kidnapped with five Afghans the day before the South Koreans.

They were taken with another German, who was killed days later after having a seizure. Officials have said efforts were underway to secure the release of this group, but there has been little movement in the case.

The insurgents said after the resolution of the six-week South Korean kidnapping drama it would capture more foreign nationals as abductions were an effective way to pressure the Afghan government and its international allies.

The rebels killed two of the South Korean aid workers after the government refused its demand to free certain Taliban prisoners.

Afghan mission fosters respect for Quebec, says Canadian envoy; Francophones playing greater military role

IDNUMBER 200709300025
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.09.30
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
KEYWORDS: FRANCOPHONES; BILINGUALISM; FRENCH LANGUAGE; ANGLOPHONES
DATELINE: MONTREAL
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 364

For Canada's top diplomat in Kandahar, success means learning from past mistakes and hanging on to ground taken -- and then retaken -- from the Taliban.

But gains in Afghanistan could also have an important sociopolitical spinoff back home -- making the rest of Canada proud of Quebec's contribution to greater world stability.

So says Quebec-born Michel de Salaberry, Canada's new senior civilian co-ordinator for Kandahar. In a rare interview since the Foreign Affairs Department appointed him Canada's top diplomat in Kandahar, de Salaberry says he's proud of his Quebec roots and the opportunity to serve alongside his home province's Royal 22nd Regiment, the Van Doos.

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Any noticeable increase in support in Quebec for Canada's military mission in Afghanistan would be welcome news to a minority Conservative government determined to carry on with the NATO mission in the face of an increasingly skeptical public -- especially in Quebec -- and an emboldened political opposition posturing to topple the government, perhaps in a matter of weeks.

At 61, de Salaberry wasn't coaxed out of retirement last summer to do the Conservatives any political favours. After a distinguished string of ambassadorships in Iran, Jordan and Egypt, he says he was flattered, but also bound by a deeply held conviction to fight the roots of fanaticism that threaten the world.

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The diplomat refuses to speculate on what will happen after February 2009, when Canada's military commitment is set to expire. All he'll say is that "a military presence" of some sort will be required for some time to come.

Afghan mission fosters respect for Quebec, says Canadian envoy; Francophones playing greater military role

Karzai calls for talks with leading Taliban Strongest peace overture follows deadly bombing

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.09.30

PAGE: A7

SECTION: World Wire

WORD COUNT: 477

CP Wire Jason Straziuso KABUL — In his most dramatic peace overture yet, Afghan President Hamid Karzai on Saturday offered to meet Taliban leader Mullah Omar and give militants a position in government.

Karzai's offer came hours after a suicide bomber in army disguise attacked a military bus in Kabul, killing 30 people.

Strengthening a call for negotiations he has made with increasing frequency in recent weeks, Karzai said he was willing to meet the reclusive Omar and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former prime minister and warlord leader.

"If I find their address, there is no need for them to come to me, I'll personally go there and get in touch with them," Karzai said. "Esteemed Mullah, sir, and esteemed Hekmatyar, sir, why are you destroying the country?" Karzai said he has contacts with Taliban militants through tribal elders but that there are no direct and open government communication channels with the fighters. Omar's whereabouts are not known, though Karzai has claimed he is in Quetta, Pakistan.

"If a group of Taliban or a number of Taliban come to me and say, 'President, we want a department in this or in that ministry or we want a position as deputy minister... and we don't want to fight anymore... If there will be a demand and a request like that to me, I will accept it because I want conflicts and fighting to end in Afghanistan,' Karzai said.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul has said it does not support negotiations with Taliban fighters, the United Nations and NATO have said a number of Taliban are interested in laying down their arms. NATO's ambassador to Afghanistan, Daan Everts, said this month NATO would look into the possibility of talks.

U.S. President George W. Bush met Karzai on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York on Wednesday where the two discussed the battle against al-Qaida and the Taliban, though it has not been made public whether the two talked about the possibility of peace talks with militants.

Canada's defence minister said the Taliban would have to renounce violence and accept the NATO mission if it wants to work with the Afghan government.

"There must be a renouncing of the violence, there must be an acceptance that NATO forces are not going to leave the country, that these preconditions that the Taliban have laid out in the past will not be part of the occasion," said Peter MacKay. He also said that any co-operation must lead to peace in the war-torn country.

Saturday's explosion — the second-deadliest since the fall of the Taliban in 2001 — ripped off the roof of the bus and tore out its sides, leaving a charred hull of burnt metal. It was reminiscent of the deadliest-ever attack, when a bomber boarded a police academy bus at Kabul's busiest transportation hub in June, killing 35 people.

Karzai said 30 people were killed — 28 soldiers and two civilians.

The Health Ministry said another 30 were wounded.

— The Associated Press