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Top Taliban military commander reported killed

IDNUMBER 200705130093
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.05.13
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A6
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse
WORD COUNT: 195

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AFP) — Taliban commander Mullah Dadullah, known as the brains behind the extremist group's military operations, was killed in southern Afghanistan, the government said today.

"Dadullah and his brother have been killed during an operation in Helmand province," the ministry of interior press office said.

"Dadullah has been killed and his body is in Kandahar," provincial governor Asadullah Khalid told reporters in Kandahar city.

The government would not immediately release details on how he was killed.

The one-legged militant was known as a key military strategist behind the insurgent Taliban and was said to be close to the fugitive Taliban supreme commander, Mullah Mohammad Omar.

He has bragged to the media about having hundreds of men at his command, including hundreds of suicide bombers, and was based in the south which sees the most insurgency-linked violence.

Dadullah was also involved in the kidnapping in March of an Italian journalist and the beheading of the foreigner's two Afghan colleagues.

The Italian was released in exchange for five Taliban.

It was not immediately clear if the commander was killed as part of a major operation in Helmand province launched in early March by NATO's International Security Assistance Force, which includes 2,500 Canadians, and Afghan troops.

Operations Achilles, involving about 5,500 troops, has killed many insurgents but the military forces have not given a toll. The U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan is also involved in separate operations against the Taliban.

Man arrested in Kabul told not to fight, imam says

IDNUMBER 200705130092
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.05.13
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A6
DATELINE: CALGARY
BYLINE: Jamie Komarnicki
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 158

CALGARY— A Calgary imam says he recently counselled a young man not to fight in Afghanistan, advising him to "return to the correct path."

But Imam Alaa Elsayed said he feared the young man, whom he did not name, went ahead with his plans when their weekly talks "fizzled" after two months.

Sohail Qureshi, 24, a University of Calgary computer science graduate, was arrested in Kabul last week and is under investigation for possible ties to terrorism.

He was taken into custody because of suspicions he had attended terrorist training camps in Pakistan, said Omar Samad, Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada.

Authorities haven't confirmed Qureshi's identity, though Elsayed said the description matches that of the man he counselled.

Elsayed said he received a frantic phone call from the young man's father in November.

After that, the three men met in person, at which time, Elsayed said, the young man insisted he wanted to help his "brothers and sisters in Afghanistan."

The three spoke for about two hours.

"We talked about what his train of thought was, what he believed in and what he was willing to do, and it was obviously out of line," Elsayed said.

"We tried as much as we could to get him on track.

French hostage returns home, Sarkozy vows to free Afghans

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PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.05.13
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A6

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Michel Euler, Associated Press / Former Afghanhostage Eric Damfrevill, an aid worker who was released by his Taliban abductors, is helped by a medic as he speaks to the media yesterday. He was greeted by French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy, left, at an airport west of Paris. ;

DATELINE: PARIS
SOURCE: Reuters
WORD COUNT: 149

PARIS (Reuters) — A French aid worker freed by the Taliban returned home yesterday, while Paris pledged to seek the release of three Afghan colleagues still held by the rebel group.

The Taliban, which had threatened to kill Eric Damfreville of the children's aid group Terre d'Enfance, want France to withdraw its 1,100 troops from Afghanistan and release Taliban prisoners held by the Afghan government.

"Nicolas Sarkozy hopes for the rapid release of the remaining hostages. He will put everything in place to this end," a statement from France's president-elect said. After 38 days in captivity, blindfolded and chained, Damfreville was released on Friday and landed yesterday at a military airport outside Paris.

A gaunt-looking Damfreville arrived wrapped in a survival blanket, wearing an eye patch and a neck brace.

"My condition comes mainly from the roughness and toughness of my captivity in south Afghanistan, which is a bit rustic," he said after landing.

"I have been well treated."

Fight on in Iraq, Churchill's grandson urges; If Americans pull out, ex-British MP says he sees 'the writing on the wall'

IDNUMBER 200705130077
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.05.13
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: (Sir Winston Churchill); Photo: Winston Churchill, grandson of Sir Winston Churchill, is speaking in the Centre Block on Parliament Hill tonight. For 27 years, Mr. Churchill was a British member of Parliament, and as a 26-year-old journalist, covered the Six-Day War. ;
BYLINE: Charles Enman
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 572

The grandson of Sir Winston Churchill will tell an Ottawa audience tonight that a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq would be disastrous for the Middle East and for western nations.

That grandson, also named Winston Churchill, will deliver his address, titled "Democracy and Freedom Under Threat," at the annual forum of Kolloid of Ottawa, a centre for advanced Torah study.

"If the Americans admit failure and withdraw soon from Iraq, I see the writing on the wall," Mr. Churchill told the Citizen in a phone call from Britain. "Our friends and allies in the region, as well as nations throughout the western world, including North America, will end up paying a terrible price."

People mistakenly equate a U.S. exit from Iraq with the withdrawal from Vietnam in 1975.

"There is an essential difference that people forget," Mr. Churchill said.

"The United States was able to walk away from Vietnam in the sure knowledge that the Vietnamese were not about to follow them — but no such knowledge is available to the Americans in this current situation."

He went on to say that the insurgent forces now fighting in Iraq would "establish in that country the base that they've been denied in Afghanistan, with an additional advantage in having access to one of the largest oil reserves in the world, easily able to fund bigger and better acts of terror across the world."

Like his grandfather, Mr. Churchill has been a politician and journalist. For 27 years, he was a British MP, and as a 26-year-old journalist, covered the 1967 Six-Day War in which Israel defeated its Arab neighbours, Egypt, Jordan and Syria.

Though he believes that U.S. forces must remain for the time being in Iraq, Mr. Churchill has severe criticisms of how the country has conducted its war.

"The Bush administration certainly never had a coherent plan for what to do when they got to Baghdad, and as a result have not had enough troops. And this is what has allowed the insurgency to get under way big time."

Fight on in Iraq, Churchill's grandson urges; If Americans pull out, ex-British MP says he sees 'the writing on

The real problem, he said, is that western powers, whatever the strengths of their military arsenals, have allowed the number of soldiers in their armies to fall disastrously since the end of the Cold War.

He also criticized the disbanding of the Iraqi army and police forces, and the decision to deny all former members of the Baathist party any role in government. Many members of the army and police forces were no doubt honest people, he said.

And the Baathist party, which governed Iraq under Saddam Hussein, included many of the most competent people in the country.

"If you look at the Iraq of Saddam Hussein, or the totalitarian regimes in Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union, you see the same story repeatedly -- it was impossible to get an education, become a teacher or doctor, have any real professional employment, without a party card.

"And to assume after the liberation of such countries that all those who carried a party card are one's enemy is incredibly naive and stupid."

Mr. Churchill did not want to give away all the points he intends to make in his speech, but he did have a piece of advice for the Americans: "Train your troops for peacekeeping work. Your army and Marine Corps are excellent at making war, but when it comes to running a peacekeeping operation, they are well below the level of events.

"That's something we Brits learned the hard way over 40 years in Northern Ireland. Ultimately, you only win when you get the civilian population overwhelmingly on your side."

If You Go

The forum will be held in the Centre Block on Parliament Hill at 7:45 tonight. There are still some tickets available, which may be reserved by calling

613-729-4368. For the \$200 cover charge, a \$100 tax receipt will be issued.

Karachi smoulders after political killings; Musharraf appeals for calm as dozens die while protesting top judge's dismissal

IDNUMBER 200705130074

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen

DATE: 2007.05.13

EDITION: Early

SECTION: News

PAGE: A5

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Rizwan Tabassum/Afp/Getty Images / Dozens have been killed and scores injured as violence erupted ahead of an appearance by Pakistan's suspended Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhry at a rally in the country's largest city, Karachi. ; Photo: Mian Khursheed, Reuters / Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhry was to address a huge gathering of lawyers in Karachi, but was trapped at the airport by government supporters. ;

DATELINE: KARACHI, Pakistan

BYLINE: Isambard Wilkinson and Zarar Khan

SOURCE: The Daily Telegraph and Agence France–Presse, with files from Reuters

WORD COUNT: 656

KARACHI, Pakistan * Chaos gripped the streets of Karachi yesterday as gun battles left at least 34 people dead and hundreds more injured, threatening a complete breakdown of law and order in Pakistan's largest and most volatile city.

The strife in the port city of 15 million people, which has a long history of political violence, was the worst yet during a crisis that erupted two months ago when President Pervez Musharraf suspended the country's top judge, Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhry.

Mr. Chaudhry, who had flown in to address a rally, was trapped at Karachi Jinnah International Airport by roadblocks set up by Musharraf supporters, who appeared to be the driving force behind the fighting.

Pakistan is an important American ally in the fight against al–Qaeda and the Taliban, which have been using the frontier between Afghanistan and Pakistan as a base for planning attacks on western targets, including the NATO–led force in Afghanistan.

In a Karachi neighbourhood close to the airport, smoke billowed from burning barricades, panicky motorists abandoned their vehicles and apartment building residents rushed for cover in inner rooms as the fighting continued through much of the day. Mobs armed with assault rifles and shotguns fought pitched battles in the streets, opened fire on a private television studio and torched dozens of buses and cars.

"At least 34 people died and more than 100 were injured in the violence in Karachi," a senior security official told Agence France–Presse on condition of anonymity. Two other officials confirmed the death toll.

The official said most of the dead were from the Pakistan People's Party of exiled former premier Benazir Bhutto. Other officials said a police officer and a paramedic were among the victims.

Gen. Musharraf, speaking at a rally in Islamabad, appealed for calm, but stopped short of declaring martial law in Karachi.

Karachi smoulders after political killings; Musharraf appeals for calm as dozens die while protesting top judge's dismissal

"If you are unhappy about what has happened ... halt these protests," the president, who took power in a bloodless coup in 1999, told nearly 50,000 supporters in the capital. "There is no need for an emergency -- the people are with me."

The political confrontation began March 9, when Gen. Musharraf accused Mr. Chaudhry of misconduct and suspended him. But many people believed the president was seeking to push aside the Supreme Court chief justice to preclude a challenge to the validity of elections later this year.

A judicial panel is examining Mr. Chaudhry's suspension, but it could take months to reach a conclusion.

The fighting between pro- and anti-government forces broke out just before Mr. Chaudhry was to address a large gathering of lawyers, who have rallied to his cause in nationwide gatherings. He was expected to call for his reinstatement, and to urge Gen. Musharraf to either step down or give up his military role -- a stance that his backers believe was the reason he was suspended from his post.

Opposition parties said the violence was orchestrated by the pro-government Mutahida Qami Movement, or MQM, which controls the municipality. Leaders of the opposition, who had planned to greet Mr. Chaudhry at the airport, said police stood idly by as they were beaten and intimidated at the airport, and during violence that subsequently spilled over into large areas of the sprawling city.

In Pakistan, a presidential vote and parliamentary elections are to take place later this year. Opponents of Gen. Musharraf have accused him of engineering the parliamentary elections in a way that will ensure his continuing grip on power.

The violence threatened to put a damper on the Pakistani leader's recent reported overtures to Ms. Bhutto. News reports have said Ms. Bhutto is willing to give Gen. Musharraf political support in exchange for some undefined role in government and the dropping of corruption charges against her.

The New York-based Human Rights Watch condemned the unrest and called on the government to take stronger steps to protect civilians.

"The sequence of events leading up to this violence ... indicates that the government, acting through its coalition partners, has deliberately sought to foment violence in Karachi," said Ali Dayan Hasan, a researcher for the group.

Human Rights Watch called it a "dark day for civil and political liberties in Pakistan."

Top Taliban chief killed in fighting

IDNUMBER 200705130073
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.05.13
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Reuters; Handout / Mullah Dadullah is the highest-ranking Taliban leader to be killed since the fall of the hardline regime in 2001. ;
DATELINE: KANDAHAR Afghanistan
SOURCE: The Associated Press, with files from Citizen newsservices
WORD COUNT: 260

KANDAHAR Afghanistan – Mullah Dadullah, the Taliban's most prominent military commander, was killed in fighting in southern Afghanistan with Afghan and NATO troops, officials said today.

Mr. Dadullah was killed yesterday in the southern province of Helmand, said Said Ansari, the spokesman for Afghanistan's intelligence service. A government official in Kandahar province who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to media said he had seen Mr. Dadullah's body.

NATO's International Security Assistance Force did not confirm the death.

"It certainly is an issue that we're tracking," said spokesman Maj. John Thomas.

Mr. Dadullah would be one of the highest-ranking Taliban leaders to be killed since the fall of the hardline regime following the U.S.-led invasion in 2001, and his death would represent a major victory for the Afghan government and U.S. and NATO troops.

He is considered one of Taliban leader Mullah Omar's top lieutenants in southern Afghanistan.

A second intelligence service official said Mr. Dadullah was killed near the Sangin and Nahri Sarraj districts of Helmand province, which have seen heavy fighting involving British and Afghan troops and U.S. Special Forces. The official was not authorized to give his name.

Earlier, Mr. Omar had called on Muslims to unite against international forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In a rare statement, a copy of which was sent to Agence France-Press in southern Afghanistan, the fugitive Mr. Omar called on insurgents in both countries to put aside sectarian disputes.

"I call upon all jihadi (holy warrior) leaders, national figures and politicians to join hands and free their beloved countries from the hands of infidel Americans," Mr. Omar said.

Afghan authorities said yesterday they had killed 70 insurgents in a week-long push by dozens of Afghan soldiers supported by NATO-led forces.

Unite against U.S., Taliban chief tells Afghanistan, Iraq

IDNUMBER 200705130072
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.05.13
EDITION: Early
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse, with files from Citizen newsservices
WORD COUNT: 358

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan * Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar called on Muslims yesterday to unite against international forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In a rare statement, a copy of which was sent to Agence France–Presse in southern Afghanistan, the fugitive Mr. Omar called on insurgents in both countries to put aside sectarian disputes.

"While the oppressor Americans are pounding bombs on innocent people ... they are meanwhile attempting to separate Muslims by ethnic, religion and tribal (differences)," the statement quoted Mr. Omar as saying.

"I call upon all jihadi (holy warrior) leaders, national figures and politicians to join hands and free their beloved countries from the hands of infidel Americans," Mr. Omar said.

He called on the same groups to form a "pure Islamic government" once international troops are ousted.

Mr. Omar, who has a \$10–million bounty on his head, led the 1996–2001 Taliban regime that sheltered al–Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and his followers.

In the southern Afghan province of Helmand, eight Afghan police officers were killed when a roadside bomb tore through their vehicle in the latest violence linked to the Taliban insurgency, officials said.

Provincial police chief Esmatullah Alizai blamed the attack on the "enemies of Afghanistan," a phrase used by many officials to refer to Taliban rebels.

Afghan authorities said yesterday they had killed 70 insurgents in a week–long push to drive the Taliban from a district in Helmand.

Dozens of Afghan soldiers supported by NATO–led forces launched the hunt a week ago in the province's Nari Saraj district, an intelligence department statement said.

Taliban militants "are now cleared" from the area, the statement said. It did not say when the district was overrun by the rebels.

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) headquarters in Kabul was not immediately able to confirm the statement.

Separately, an air attack by western forces killed at least seven civilians, including women and children, in Marja district of Helmand early on Friday, witnesses said yesterday.

In Iraq, attackers ambushed a U.S. military patrol near Mahmoudiya, about 30 kilometres south of Baghdad, early yesterday in an area known as the "triangle of death," killing at least five people and leaving three missing.

It was not immediately clear if the dead were all American troops or if they included the Iraqi interpreter, who was the eighth person in the convoy. A statement from the U.S. military spokesman, Maj. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, said a massive aerial search was under way for the missing.

Air India inquiry reveals that Canada not immune to terrorism

IDNUMBER 200705130058
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
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EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A11
PNAME: Letters
BYLINE: Asoka Weerasinghe
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 289

The Air India Flight 182 inquiry revelations are stunning and embarrassing for Canada. To hear that this tragedy could have been averted, if only there had been some intelligent decisions made by the RCMP and other airport security officers, is unconscionable.

There is no doubt that Canadian authorities were naive in 1985 about the possibility of international terrorist acts happening in Canada, and we are still naive about this after 22 years.

The federal opposition parties wanting to pull out our troops fighting Taliban terrorists out of Afghanistan, because 59 of our brave men and a woman died in action, is proof of our naivete.

What we do not understand, or want to understand, is that international terrorism is like a deadly octopus with tentacles that could reach anywhere in the world, and that Canada is not immune to its reach.

President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan couldn't have expressed it better when he said: "If the greatness of a life is measured in deeds done for others, then Canada's sons and daughters who have made the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan stand among the greatest of their generation ... They have sacrificed to ensure the continued safety of their fellow Canadians from terrorism."

To dismiss international terrorism -- such as Sikh or Tamil Tiger extremism, which have nests in Canada well-insulated by some federal parties -- as strife restricted to ethnic groups is stupid. Supporting organizations that serve as their fronts with charitable status and with federal grants should be questioned. Such groups should be audited to find out whether the funds they receive are used to support acts of terrorism in their "home" countries.

The revelations at the inquiry are proof positive that Canada is not immune to international terrorism.

Asoka Weerasinghe,

Gloucester

Violent political clash leaves 28 Pakistanis dead, 100 injured; Government forces prevent deposed top judge from addressing supporters

IDNUMBER 200705130133

PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal

DATE: 2007.05.13

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A4

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: The Associated Press / Supporters of a Pakistani opposition party run after setting on fire a vehicle during a gun battle between two rival groups in Karachi on Saturday. ;

KEYWORDS: TERRORISM; TERRITORIAL ISSUES; FOREIGN RELATIONS; NUCLEARWEAPONS; PRESIDENTS; ARMAMENTS

DATELINE: ISLAMABAD, Pakistan

SOURCE: Los Angeles Times

WORD COUNT: 512

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan – Men armed with assault rifles battled for hours Saturday in a confrontation between pro- and anti-government forces that raged through residential neighbourhoods in Karachi, the country's largest city, killing at least 28 people and injuring more than 100 others.

The strife in the volatile port city of 15 million people, which has a long history of political violence, was the worst yet during a crisis that erupted two months ago when President Pervez Musharraf suspended the country's top judge. Backers of Musharraf appeared to be the driving force behind the violence in Karachi.

Pakistan is an important American ally in the fight against al-Qaida and the Taliban, both of which have been using the wild frontier between Afghanistan and Pakistan as a base for planning new attacks against western targets, including the NATO-led force in Afghanistan.

In a Karachi neighbourhood close to the international airport, smoke billowed from burning barricades, panicky motorists abandoned their vehicles and residents of high-rise apartment buildings rushed for cover as chaotic fighting continued through much of the day.

Musharraf, speaking at a rally in the capital, Islamabad, appealed for calm, but stopped short of declaring martial law in Karachi.

"If you are unhappy about what has happened . . . halt these protests," the president, who took power in a bloodless coup in 1999, told nearly 50,000 supporters in the capital. "There is no need for an emergency — the people are with me."

The political confrontation began March 9, when Musharraf suspended the country's most senior jurist, Iftikhar Chaudhry, accusing him of misconduct. But many people believed the president was seeking to push aside the Supreme Court chief justice to preclude a challenge to the validity of elections to be held later this year.

A judicial panel is examining Chaudhry's suspension, but it could take months to reach a conclusion.

Violent political clash leaves 28 Pakistanis dead, 100 injured; Government forces prevent deposed top judge

The fighting between pro- and anti-government forces broke out just before Chaudhry was to address a large gathering of lawyers, who have rallied to his cause in nationwide gatherings. He was expected to call for his reinstatement, and to urge Musharraf to either step down or give up his military role — a stance that his backers believe was the reason he was suspended from his post.

Opposition parties said the violence was orchestrated by the pro-government Mutahida Qami Movement, which controls the municipality. Leaders of the opposition, who had planned to greet Chaudhry, said police stood idly by as they were beaten and intimidated at the airport.

In Pakistan, a presidential vote and parliamentary elections will take place later this year. Opponents of Musharraf have accused him of engineering the parliamentary elections to ensure his continuing grip on power.

The current crisis is the most serious of Musharraf's tenure. The violence threatened to put a damper on the Pakistani leader's recent reported overtures to former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, now in exile. News reports have said Bhutto is willing to give Musharraf political support in exchange for some undefined role in government and the dropping of corruption charges against her.

Backers of Bhutto's People's Party were among those clashing with pro-government supporters in Karachi.

Top Taliban killed government says

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SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse
WORD COUNT: 170

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Mullah Dadullah, the Taliban's top military commander, was killed in southern Afghanistan, the government said Sunday, while the extremist movement denied he was dead.

Dadullah is the most important rebel commander to be killed since the Taliban was driven from government by a US–led coalition in late 2001, the Afghan intelligence department said.

"Dadullah and his brother have been killed during an operation in Helmand province," the ministry of interior press office said.

His body was shown to reporters in the southern city of Kandahar.

Kandahar provincial governor Asadullah Khalid said the militant was killed "in an operation carried out based on very accurate information." He would not give out the date and exact place of the operation.

NATO and US–led military forces refused to comment and referred all queries to the Afghan government.

Television stations interrupted routine broadcasting to give breaking news of the killing.

Intelligence agency spokesman Sayed Ansari described him as "the commander of commanders."

But a Taliban spokesman rejected the government's claim. "This is nothing more than propaganda," said spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid.

"They claim they will show the body of Mullah Dadullah to media — we are waiting to see that. We also promise to present to the media a fresh voice recording of Mullah Dadullah."

Imam says Calgary man spoke of jihad

IDNUMBER 200705130125
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.05.13
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
KEYWORDS: WAR
DATELINE: TORONTO
BYLINE: Pat Hewitt
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
WORD COUNT: 424

TORONTO – An Alberta imam says he spoke several months ago with a Calgary man he believes is the Canadian detained in Afghanistan, and says the man talked about "helping his brothers and sisters in Afghanistan" by fighting the jihad, but didn't mention a suicide bombing.

In a report from Kandahar, CTV Newsnet quoted a written statement from Afghan authorities that alleged the Canadian admitted to planning to carry out a suicide bombing in Kabul. The statement also allegedly claimed the man's brother was the suicide bomber behind a Sept. 30, 2006, attack near the security gate of the Interior Ministry in Kabul that killed 12 people and injured at least 42. Foreign Affairs spokesman Rejean Beaulieu said Saturday he could not confirm any Canadian had been involved in the 2006 bombing in Kabul and added he was "not aware of this."

Sheikh Alaa Elsayed said in Toronto on Saturday he met with the man six months ago but he wouldn't name him out of respect for the family and the fact authorities haven't identified him officially. Elsayed, who is with the Muslim Council of Calgary, said the man's

worried father had phoned him and asked for an immediate meeting last November.

"I received a basically frantic phone call regarding his son. And what happened is he said, 'I need your help with my son.' " Elsayed said when he met with the son, the young man didn't mention anything specific and didn't show irrational behaviour but did mention the word "jihad," which he had read on the Internet.

Elsayed said at the end of the two-hour meeting, he asked the man if he was going to do what he wanted anyway, and the man nodded his head and was adamant about his obligation. The imam said he gave the man an ultimatum and said he would go to the authorities if he didn't relent, "because we will not tolerate it, nor do we accept anything for one person to put 65,000 Muslims in Calgary in a tight spot, or Canada at large," Elsayed said.

The man appeared to back down, but Elsayed said he may have been trying to buy himself time.

The Canadian citizen, reportedly of Pakistani origin, was detained by Afghan police at a Kabul bus station on Tuesday and accused of attending a militant training camp in Pakistan along the border with Afghanistan. Canadian officials have visited the man, who is being held for investigation in Kabul. The National Post has identified the man detained in Kabul as Sohail Qureshi, 24.

Churchill's grandson says troops should remain in Iraq; Also advises more peacekeeping efforts

IDNUMBER 200705130118
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.05.13
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A6
KEYWORDS: WAR; IRAQ; ARMED FORCES; UNITED STATES
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Charles Enman
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 424

OTTAWA – The grandson of Sir Winston Churchill will tell an Ottawa audience today that an American withdrawal from Iraq would be disastrous for the Middle East and for Western nations.

That grandson, also named Winston Churchill, is scheduled to speak at the annual forum of Kollof of Ottawa, a centre for advanced Torah study.

"If the Americans admit failure and withdraw soon from Iraq, I see the writing on the wall," Churchill told CanWest News Service in a phone call from Britain. "Our friends and allies in the region, as well as nations throughout the Western world, including North America, will end up paying a terrible price."

People mistakenly equate an American exit from Iraq with the American withdrawal from Vietnam in 1975, he said.

He predicts the insurgent forces, now fighting in Iraq, would establish a base "that they've been denied in Afghanistan, with an additional advantage in having access to one of the largest oil reserves in the world, easily able to fund bigger and better acts of terror across the world."

Like his grandfather, Churchill has been both a politician and journalist. For 27 years, he was a British MP. As a 26-year-old journalist, he covered the Six Day War in which Israel defeated its Arab neighbours, Egypt, Jordan and Syria.

Though he believes that American forces must remain in Iraq at the moment, Churchill has severe criticisms of how the United States has conducted its war.

"The Bush administration never had a coherent plan for what to do when they got to Baghdad, and as a result have not had enough troops. And this is what has allowed the insurgency to get underway big time."

The real problem, he suggests, is that Western powers, whatever the strengths of their military arsenals, have allowed the number of soldiers in their armies to fall disastrously since the end of the Cold War.

He also criticized the disbanding of the Iraqi army and police forces, and the decision to deny all former members of the Baathist party any role in government.

Many members of the army and police forces were undoubtedly honest.

"If you look at the Iraq of Saddam Hussein, or the totalitarian regimes in Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union, you see the same story repeatedly -- it was impossible to get an education, become a teacher or doctor, have any real professional employment, without a party card.

"And to assume after the liberation of such countries that all those who carried a party card are one's enemy is incredibly naive and stupid."

Churchill did not want to give away all the points he intends to make in his speech, but he did have advice for Americans: "Train your troops for peacekeeping work. Ultimately, you only win when you get the civilian population overwhelmingly on your side."

Heavy Afghan civilian casualties undermine support for allied troops; Deaths increase tensions between U.S. and NATO commanders

IDNUMBER 200705130023
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.05.13
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: D13

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: The Associated Press / An Afghan woman, left, sits surrounded by neighbours in Parmakan on May 9 as she mourns the death of four of her relatives, which she said were killed in an American-led attack on her village. ;

KEYWORDS: ORGANIZATIONS; PROPAGANDA; DEFENCE; WAR; FOREIGN RELATIONS; AFGHANISTAN

DATELINE: ZERKOH, Afghanistan

SOURCE: New York Times

WORD COUNT: 886

ZERKOH, Afghanistan – Scores of civilian deaths over the past months from heavy U.S. and allied reliance on air strikes to battle Taliban insurgents are threatening popular support for the Afghan government and creating severe strains within the NATO alliance.

Afghan, U.S. and other foreign officials say they worry about the political toll the civilian deaths are exacting on President Hamid Karzai, who the week before last issued another harsh condemnation of the U.S. and NATO tactics, and even of the entire international effort here.

What angers Afghans are not just the bombings, but also the raids of homes, the shootings of civilians in the streets and at checkpoints, and the failure to address those issues over the five years of war. Afghan patience is wearing dangerously thin, officials warn.

The civilian deaths are also exposing tensions between U.S. commanders and commanders from other NATO countries, who have never fully agreed on the strategy to fight the war in a country where there are no clear battle lines between civilians and Taliban insurgents.

At NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, military commanders and diplomats alike fear that divisions within the coalition and the loss of support among Afghans could undermine what until now was considered a successful spring, one in which NATO launched a broad offensive but the Taliban did not.

"There is absolutely no question that the will and support of the Afghan people is vitally important to what we do here," said Gen. Dan K. McNeill, the U.S. commander of the International Security Assistance Force, in an interview. "We are their guests, they are the hosts. We have to be mindful of their culture, we have to operate in the context of their culture, and we have to take every possible precaution to not cause undue risk to those around us, and to their property."

But U.S. officials say that they have been forced to use air power more intensively as they have spread their reach throughout Afghanistan, raiding Taliban strongholds that have gone untouched for six years. One senior

Heavy Afghan civilian casualties undermine support for allied troops; Deaths increase tensions between U.S. and NATO commanders

NATO official said that "without air, we'd need hundreds of thousands of troops" in the country. They also contend that the key to reducing casualties is training more Afghan army soldiers and police officers.

The anger is visible in this farming village in the largely peaceful western province of Herat, where U.S. air strikes left 57 villagers dead, nearly half of them women and children, on April 27 and 29.

The accounts of villagers bore little resemblance to those of NATO and U.S. officials — and suggested just how badly things could go astray in an unfamiliar land where cultural misunderstandings quickly turn violent. The U.S. military says it came under heavy fire from insurgents as it searched for a local tribal commander and weapons caches and called in air strikes, killing 136 Taliban fighters. But the villagers denied that any Taliban were in the area. Instead, they said, they rose up and fought the Americans themselves, after the soldiers raided several houses, arrested two men and shot dead two old men on a village road.

After burying the dead, the tribe's elders met with their chief, Hajji Arbab Daulat Khan, and resolved to fight U.S. forces if they returned. "If they come again, we will stand against them, and we will raise the whole area against them," Hajji Daulat Khan warned. Or, in the words of one foreign official in Afghanistan, the Americans went after one guerrilla commander and created a hundred more.

On Tuesday, barely 24 hours after U.S. officials apologized publicly to President Karzai for a previous incident in which 19 civilians were shot by Marines in eastern Afghanistan, reports surfaced of at least 21 civilians killed in an air strike in Helmand province, though residents reached by phone said the toll could be as high as 80.

While NATO is now in overall command of the military operations in the country, many of the most serious episodes of civilian deaths have involved U.S. counterterrorism and Special Operations forces that operate separately from the NATO command.

NATO, which now has 35,000 soldiers across the country, has emphasized its concern about keeping civilian casualties to a minimum. Yet NATO, too, has been responsible for civilian casualties over the past year, as it has relied on air power to compensate for a shortage of troops, said a U.S. military official who has served in Afghanistan, in a recent interview.

The subject of civilian casualties was the source of intense discussion on Wednesday in Brussels when the secretary-general of NATO, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, met with the North Atlantic Council, the top representatives of the coalition. But the conversation was less about how to reduce casualties, according to participants, than about how to explain them to European governments, who say their troops are there for reconstruction, not hunting the Taliban or terrorists.

"The Europeans are worried about a lack of clarity about who is responsible for the counterterror mission," said one participant in the debate. "They are worried that if NATO appears responsible for these casualties, it will result in a loss of support" for keeping forces in Afghanistan.

Imam tried to dissuade city man

IDNUMBER 200705130156
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.05.13
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Alaa Elsayed;
KEYWORDS: WAR; CRIME; AFGHANISTAN
BYLINE: Jamie Komarnicki
SOURCE: Calgary Herald; With files from The Canadian Press
WORD COUNT: 529

A Calgary imam says he fears his efforts to counsel a Calgarian to "return to the correct path" — and not fight in Afghanistan — failed.

Sohail Qureshi, a University of Calgary computer science graduate, was arrested in Kabul and is under investigation for possible ties to terrorism.

The 24-year-old Calgarian of Pakistani heritage was taken into custody this week.

Imam Alaa Elsayed began counselling a young Calgarian, whom he would not name, about six months ago after receiving a frantic phone call from the man's father.

Authorities haven't confirmed Qureshi's identity, though Elsayed has said the man's description matches that of the person he counselled.

"I presume it would be him. I still cannot confirm that nor deny it but it is a very good chance it is him," he said.

Elsayed said when he met with the son, the young man didn't mention anything specific and didn't show irrational behaviour, but did mention the word "jihad," which he had read on the Internet.

"He did mention something that 'it's an obligation upon me to defend my brothers and sisters, which pretty much is putting me shoulder to shoulder . . . maybe fighting back.' Nothing in the connotation or indication of anything to do with suicide bombing," Elsayed said.

The imam said the man didn't talk about any connections, anybody he had listened to specifically, with whom he was dealing or any network or organization to which he wanted to belong.

"There was a red flag, but it wasn't a red flag that was a 9/11 right away," said Elsayed. "We talked about what his train of thought was, what he believed in and what he was willing to do and it was obviously out of line. We tried as much as we could to get him on track.

"I asked if he was still adamant about what he was going to do. He had a look on his face and he nodded."

Elsayed contacted police, asking them to try and dissuade the young man from his plans in Afghanistan. He talked with the young man weekly before their meetings "fizzled," about two months later.

In a report from Kandahar, CTV Newsnet quoted a written statement from Afghan authorities that alleged the Canadian, who was detained because of suspicions he had attended terrorist training camps in Pakistan, admitted to planning to carry out a suicide bombing in Kabul.

The statement also allegedly claimed the man's brother was the suicide bomber behind a Sept. 30, 2006, attack near the security gate of the Interior Ministry in Kabul that killed 12 people and injured at least 42.

In Ottawa, Foreign Affairs spokesman Rejean Beaulieu said Saturday he could not confirm any Canadian had been involved in the 2006 bombing in Kabul.

Elsayed also could not confirm the CTV report that the detained man's brother had been a suicide bomber. He said the man and the man's father didn't tell him anything about that.

Greg Harris, a media relations adviser at the U of C, said Saturday that Qureshi graduated with a bachelor of science degree majoring in computer science in June 2006. But citing privacy concerns, he said the university is not commenting on the case.

The man was carrying a Canadian passport at the time of his arrest.

Calgary East MP Deepak Obhrai confirmed that the young man being held in Kabul is receiving consular services in Afghanistan, ensuring he gets help from the Canadian Embassy while he's in custody.

"He has received a consular visit, as is normal when a Canadian overseas is arrested; we ensure, first, access for consular service," said Obhrai, who is the parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs.

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Taliban strategist killed, Afghan government says

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DATE: 2007.05.13
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SECTION: News
PAGE: A11
KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM; BOMBINGS
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse
WORD COUNT: 168

Taliban commander Mullah Dadullah, known as the brains behind the extremist group's military operations, was killed in southern Afghanistan, the government said this morning.

"Dadullah and his brother have been killed during an operation in Helmand province," the ministry of interior press office said.

"Dadullah has been killed and his body is in Kandahar," provincial governor Asadullah Khalid told reporters in Kandahar city.

The government would not immediately release details of the how he was killed.

The one-legged terrorist was known as a key military strategist behind the insurgent Taliban and was said to be close to the fugitive Taliban supreme commander, Mullah Mohammad Omar.

He has bragged to the media about having hundreds of men at his command, including hundreds of suicide bombers, and was based in the south which sees the most terrorist-linked violence.

Dadullah was also involved in the kidnapping in March of an Italian journalist and the beheading of the foreigner's two Afghan colleagues.

The Italian was released in exchange for five Taliban members.

It was not immediately clear if the commander was killed as part a major operation in Helmand province launched in early March by NATO's International Security Assistance Force and Afghan troops.

Operations Achilles, involving about 5,500 troops, has killed scores of terrorists but the military forces have not given a toll.

No holiday for Canada's soldiers in Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: The Sunday Herald

DATE: 2007.05.13

SECTION: World

PAGE: A10

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: James McCarten

WORD COUNT: 542

SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan – Sean Boak's parents would be proud.

A day before Mother's Day, the 26-year-old Royal Canadian Dragoon was promoted to the rank of captain at the base of a jagged mountain range before embarking on a bone-jarring and at times nerve-rattling patrol of remote villages in southeastern Afghanistan, pledging to keep farmers and their families safe.

Two separate troops of soldiers were readying for an early-morning patrol Saturday when Boak stepped briskly forward to receive a new epaulet from Col. Steve Cadden, the commanding officer of the Dragoons.

"I can't think of a better place to do this, under the sun" Cadden smiled as the morning light broke and he fixed the new decoration on Boak's combat shirt.

"Sure beats a field parade."

Even though he dismissed the morning's promotion as routine, Boak said he planned to call his parents as soon as his shift ended.

"They would have liked to have seen it," he said of the impromptu ceremony.

"They're typical parents; they're proud of any accomplishment, whether it's routine or not."

After a round of back-slaps, handshakes and good-natured ribbing – Boak apparently has a lot of beer to buy when the Dragoons get back to their base in Petawawa, Ont. – the soldiers of 2 Troop, Reconnaissance Squadron climbed into their Coyote armoured vehicles and fanned out across the rock-dotted moonscape at the edge of the steamy Registan desert, just a few scant kilometres from the Pakistan border.

Soon, Boak was shaking hands with local men gathered with their sons in the shade of mud-walled huts or tending to their grape fields as the show of Canadian military muscle attracted crowds of children in a region that hasn't seen much of a coalition presence in months, if at all.

At another stop, a crowd of about a dozen men and boys of varied ages crowded around the soldiers, some chuckling at the sight of Cpl. Rich Fagan, 40, of Shediac, N.B., who was coated in a thick layer of Afghanistan's infamous, powder-fine dust after several hours with his head poked out the hatch of his Coyote.

"They were laughing at him, telling him to go wash," one of the soldiers grinned later. "That's pretty bad, when the locals are telling you to go wash."

Boak, however, was thinking about Capt. Trevor Greene – who attended the University of King's College in Halifax –and who suffered a serious head injury when he was attacked with an axe during an identical fact-finding mission in March 2006.

"He got attacked from behind doing exactly what I was doing," Boak said.

"It can get a little nervous – I got a little nervous this afternoon. All of them today were really, really nice, so it wasn't too bad – but it just takes that one to make you have a really bad day, so to speak."

As night fell, sentries on an all-night security vigil slowly circled the observation post while some of the soldiers reflected on their experience in Afghanistan and on their plans to call home Sunday on Mother's Day.

To a man – especially the young ones – the soldiers describe Afghanistan and meeting its people as a life-changing experience that the average Canadian simply can't grasp without having experienced it.

"Canadians are so insulated," said Trooper Steve Davidson, 20, from Winnipeg. "They have grocery stores where they can go and buy fresh celery and carrots and stuff. These people have nothing . . . It changes your perspective."

Trooper Zak Wilson, 22, of New Glasgow put it best.

"I never told my mom I loved her until I came here," he said quietly. "Now it's always, 'OK, bye, Mom, I love you.'"

High-tech help hard to find, Navy says

PUBLICATION: The Sunday Herald

DATE: 2007.05.13

SECTION: NovaScotia

PAGE: A4

BYLINE: Michael Lightstone Staff Reporter

ILLUSTRATION: Rear Admiral Tyrone Pile: 'The navy right now is hurtingbadly for a lot of our technical occupations.' (Peter Parsons / Staff)

WORD COUNT: 546

Canada's navy is having a tough time finding good help in the high-tech fields, says the military's top recruiter.

Rear Admiral Tyrone Pile said in Halifax that part of the problem is Alberta's vigorous economy – many potential military recruits are taking private-sector jobs in that province instead of choosing military careers.

"The navy right now is hurting badly for a lot of our technical occupations," Rear Admiral Pile told a public forum held Saturday. "A lot of these young people are being scooped up by . . . Alberta, and there's a huge vacuum for technical talent. Other companies are competing with us for the same talent."

He said veterans of Canada's mission in Afghanistan are not having much trouble finding work in the oilpatch after they finish their military service.

"A lot of our soldiers returning from Afghanistan in the Edmonton area are being highly sought after by local recruiters."

Rear Admiral Pile was commenting while visiting black communities in metro Halifax in an attempt to persuade young people in a traditionally marginalized group to consider a career in the Armed Forces. He met with about a dozen people, mainly middle-aged residents who were to spread the word to youth in their communities about considering a military career.

Rear Admiral Pileacknowledged that racism in the Forces has convinced potential recruits to look elsewhere for work and blocked some blacks in the military from advancement.

"My dream, of course, is I would much rather see a black Canadian admiral up here talking to you about the fact that there are no barriers," he told one group at a local school. "But to say that today" would be inaccurate.

"I know (bigotry) exists throughout Canadian society," Rear Admiral Pile said, adding Canada remains "a heck of a lot more" tolerant than "most other societies that I've had to experience in my career."

Irvine Carvery, president of the Africville Genealogy Society, told the admiral that his experience as a former high school basketball coach showed him that students in Grade 11 or 12 are too old to be successfully recruited into the military. Mr. Carvery said by the time young people reach age 17, they're well aware they could be killed while in the Forces.

Rear Admiral Pile agreed, saying recruiting must start earlier, probably before the end of high school.

The Defence Department has for years tried to create a more diverse military. Last year, a recruiting event at a high school in British Columbia's Lower Mainland targeted the district's large Asian community.

Though the military is encouraging African-Canadians to sign up, its history of recruiting wasn't always so inclusive.

"Like thousands of other Canadians during the First World War, young black soldiers were eager to serve their country. But at the time, informal segregation made it difficult for blacks to join the Canadian Army," says a Veterans Affairs Canada website.

The website says that in July 1916 the Second Construction Battalion based in Pictou was formed – Canada's first black battalion.

But times have changed, and Canada's military is more integrated than it used to be. As well, visible minorities are showing up in the military's recruiting publicity. For example, an ad shown on TV, in theatres and on a DND website – one that has stark images of military personnel in combat or doing rescues – has imagery at the end showing black soldiers in uniform.

Blacks have made the ultimate sacrifice in the conflict in Afghanistan. Of the 54 Canadian soldiers killed since 2002, two were black.()

Visit to Kandahar prison reveals no evidence of torture

PUBLICATION: The Sunday Herald

DATE: 2007.05.13

SECTION: Front

PAGE: A1

BYLINE: Scott Taylor

ILLUSTRATION: A prisoner's feet are chained together. (SCOTT TAYLOR); Scott Taylor (third from right) inspects the prison grounds with senior guards. The Canadian journalist was given a tour of the detention centre in Kandahar. (SASHA UZUNOV); Scott Taylor (third from right) inspects the prison grounds with senior guards. The Canadian journalist was given a tour of the detention centre in Kandahar. (SASHA UZUNOV)

WORD COUNT: 801

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – For weeks now the Canadian media have been portraying the Afghan National Directorate of Security as "evil torturers" and their detainee prison as a "living hell."

Anxious to set the record straight and to improve its tarnished image, the directorate provided me with a three-hour unrestricted access to its infamous detention centre in Kandahar.

"Many of the stories broadcast in Canada are lies or fabrications," said Col. Noor Mohammed Balak Karzai, deputy director of the directorate in Kandahar. "When I saw these reports I was very angry, and it made the people of Kandahar very angry as well."

One reason the directorate took such unprecedented measures to open its facilities was a desire to maintain good relations with the Canadian battle group in Kandahar.

"The Canadian (soldiers) have a better attitude than some other NATO troops, including the Americans, and people will pass along advance warnings to the NDS if they suspect Canadians are being targeted," said Karzai.

"That is why we are angry that the Canadian media did not observe the reality before publishing their negative stories."

To get to the detention centre we were met by a plainclothes escort at the governor's guesthouse and driven to an unmarked prison just a few blocks away.

Although there is a series of road barricades to negotiate before the main vehicle gate, the detention centre is surprisingly void of heavy security. There are no guard towers or bunkers, just a walled compound topped with razor wire, not unlike any other government building in Afghanistan.

While discreet in appearance, the detention centre's location is certainly no secret. The families of suspected Taliban detainees are allowed to visit prisoners and bring them food once a week and a number of these visitors were at the compound when we arrived.

Centre officials said they can hold suspects for 72 hours. If they believe a case warrants further investigation, the suspect can remain at the facility for 15 days. Any incarceration beyond that point requires a court-ordered extension.

"If we (directorate) have made the arrest, the processing procedure is usually quite quick as we make sure we have sufficient evidence prior to apprehending them," said Karzai.

"The delays occur when we receive prisoners from other agencies such as NATO troops, and we have to begin an investigation with very little information."

The tour began in the basement cells where eight shackled men sat or reclined on their dirty bedding. This was the "general population" area and while it was evident the facility had been recently cleaned, there was no lingering odour of human excrement or filth, which would have been difficult to mask for the benefit of our tour. Some prisoners seemed amused at the intrusion while others stared blankly at us as we filmed them.

On the other side of the basement were the solitary cells. Narrow enough for each occupant to barely lie down on his grubby mat, all inmates in this section were shackled at the feet and kept behind locked doors.

All the doors were opened for us to inspect conditions and examine the state of the prisoners.

In all cells the prisoner had reading material – usually a copy of the Koran – water bottles and a few personal items.

While some of the solitary cells were kept darkened, we were allowed to light these in order to view them and photograph them.

Nowhere in the entire complex was there any sign of the cages in which detainees were allegedly confined.

Following the prisoner inspection we were shown the guards' quarters on the second floor. Here the security force lives eight to a room, sleeping in bunks lined with bedding equally filthy to that of the prisoners.

The interrogation room was a spartan office with a couple of desks, like any police station interview room, only with more battered furniture.

While the security directorate denied they beat or tortured suspects to extract confessions and intelligence, they did not divulge what they did to coerce prisoners.

The prisoner in the interrogation room during our visit was a suspect in a kidnapping.

As the night watchman at a school where the kidnap victim was held, the prisoner was believed to be implicated in the crime. Through an interpreter he told us his family was aware of his situation and had visited him in the prison.

Not evident were any of the alleged ceiling chains from which prisoners claim to have been suspended during interrogations.

In fact, the cracked plaster ceiling looked barely capable of supporting the weight of the flimsy light fixture, never mind the weight of a man.

Every office, cupboard and toilet facility was opened for our inspection, including a visit to the roof and the dining facility.

Huge chunks of a freshly slaughtered sheep were being boiled in an immense cauldron over an open fire.

"The prisoners receive the same food as the guards and prison staff," said Karzai.

"They receive bread and tea for breakfast, meat and rice for lunch and dinner."

The yogurt for prisoner consumption was heavily watered down in a large pot. Admittedly, the food appeared to be unappetizingly thin fare, but the prisoners' family and friends supplement the daily ration.

At the conclusion of the tour Karzai again pointed out the importance of maintaining good relations with Canadians.

He said he would also be willing to negotiate a new arrangement whereby the Canadian military could routinely access the facility to monitor the prisoners they hand over.

"The detention centre is not a nice place to be," said a senior security directorate official.

"It's not supposed to be. But we do not do those things which (Canadian) media have accused us of having done."

()

Former Canadian soldier Scott Taylor is the publisher of the Esprit de Corps military magazine. He is on his second trip to Afghanistan.

Without her, Idol wouldn't have a face; Makeup artist to the (future) stars. 'Their comfort level is the most important thing'

IDNUMBER 200705130027
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.05.13
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Arts & Life
PAGE: A25
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: ALEX GALLARDO, LOS ANGELES TIMES / Mezghan Hussainy: Fashion Paramedic. ;
DATELINE: HOLLYWOOD
BYLINE: RICHARD RUSHFIELD
SOURCE: Los Angeles Times
WORD COUNT: 491

As the civilized world reads significance into the American Idol contestants' every hand gesture and raised eyebrow, there is one member of the Idol family who lives as close to the contestants as it is possible to get without actually inhabiting their skin.

Walking the floor of the Idoldome at every show is the contestants' (and the judges') most important ally, the keeper of their faces – the American Idol makeup artist, Mezghan Hussainy, with whom I spoke after Wednesday night's show.

For scholars searching for keys to the mysteries of Idol, a find of Dead Sea scrolls–level significance is the beauty–secrets blog Hussainy keeps on www.americanidol.com, in which she reveals the backstory behind every splash of glitter and bronzing lotion.

There you can find out that, in Week 1, Blake Lewis's "lashes are curled to open up his eyes and his brows were brushed," and that, in Week 3, rocker Gina Glocksen accepted a splash of colour that was dubbed "the Posh Spice look."

On the floor each results night, the striking former model functions as the show's fashion paramedic, rushing to the death couch when contestants' waterworks endanger their foundations.

"Nobody on the staff likes Wednesdays," she said of the feeling backstage on results day.

Emigrating at age 8 from Afghanistan to Los Angeles, Hussainy grew up dreaming of a career in entertainment.

While pursuing an acting and modelling career, she attended dental school to keep her worried parents at bay, knowing that she "couldn't imagine cleaning teeth for the rest of my life."

Eventually Hussainy found her calling via a part–time job at a makeup counter, which led to her first TV job, which led to the call from a new talent competition called American Idol.

Without her, Idol wouldn't have a face; Makeup artist to the (future) stars. 'Their comfort level is the most important thing'

"Unfortunately, I passed it up (for) Season 1. I was doing Family Feud," she said. "I watched and was just kicking myself, but I got lucky: They called me again for Season 2."

Asked how she takes these diamonds in the rough who have never tasted the joys of professional makeovers and creates appealing looks for them, Hussainy explained, "I just get to them and their personality. I don't want to change their look too much. I want them to be them, and I want them to be happy with it; it's a give and take. I'll suggest certain things and tell them how to groom themselves and clean up and how to work with their eyebrows. Their comfort level is the most important thing to me. If I want to put red lips on somebody and they're thinking more natural, then I'll go with natural."

Hussainy is currently working with a chemist to develop a makeup line (Me), and has a website (www.mezhgan.com) with a veritable gallery of Idol contestants who have been in her chair.

"I work with so many other celebrities, but the contestants always remember me. I was the first makeup artist they ever worked with. When they come back, they're so excited and they remember how hard it was. They can't believe they went through all that process. But they remember – and I will always remember every single one of them."

Without her, Idol wouldn't have a face; Makeup artist to the (future) stars. 'Their comfort level is the most imp

Just another day for Dragoon

PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)
DATE: 2007.05.13
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
BYLINE: James McCarten
DATELINE: Spin Boldak, Afghanistan
ILLUSTRATION: Cpl. Rick Gero from Halifax, N.S., an engineer with the Royal Canadian Dragoons, probes for mines by the side of the road near the Forward Operating Base in Spin Boldak, Afghanistan. – Photo by The Canadian Press
WORD COUNT: 708

Sean Boak's parents would be proud. A day before Mother's Day, the 26-year-old Royal Canadian Dragoon was promoted to the rank of captain at the base of a jagged mountain range before embarking on a bone-jarring and at times nerve-rattling patrol of remote villages in southeastern Afghanistan, pledging to keep farmers and their families safe.

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"Sure beats a field parade."

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"They're typical parents; they're proud of any accomplishment, whether it's routine or not."

After a round of back-slaps and handshakes, the soldiers of 2 Troop, Reconnaissance Squadron climbed into their Coyote armoured vehicles and fanned out across the rock-dotted moonscape at the edge of the steamy Registan desert, just a few scant kilometres from the Pakistan border.

Soon, Boak was shaking hands with local men gathered with their sons in the shade of mud-walled huts or tending to their grape fields as the show of Canadian military muscle attracted crowds of children in a region that hasn't seen much of a coalition presence in months, if at all.

Abdul Whab, a wizened farmer in his 60s, stabbed the parched earth with a spade as he lamented the Russian invasion of nearly three decades ago.

"The Russians, they come and they were disturbing the people," an interpreter said as he translated Whab's lispy words. "The Russians, they were very bad guys."

"We are Canada," Boak replied. "We're not Russians, and we're not going to be like the Russians."

At another stop, a crowd of about a dozen men and boys of varied ages crowded around the soldiers, some chuckling at the sight of Cpl. Rich Fagan, 40, of Shediac, N.B., who was coated in a thick layer of Afghanistan's infamous, powder-fine dust after several hours with his head poked out the hatch of his Coyote.

"They were laughing at him, telling him to go wash," one of the soldiers grinned later. "That's pretty bad, when the locals are telling you to go wash."

Boak, however, was thinking about Capt. Trevor Greene, who suffered a serious head injury when he was attacked with an axe during an identical fact-finding mission in March 2006.

"He got attacked from behind doing exactly what I was doing," Boak said.

"It can get a little nervous – I got a little nervous this afternoon. All of them today were really, really nice, so it wasn't too bad – but it just takes that one to make you have a really bad day, so to speak."

One of the questions that's frequently asked of local residents is how they feel about the fledgling Afghan government and the presence of coalition forces.

The locals here are so dirt poor that anyone who can offer them help will win their support, whether it be the Afghan government, coalition forces or the Taliban, Boak said.

"If they don't feel the government is supporting their needs, they're more likely to sway and support the Taliban, either passively or actively, in some form or another, and that's just survival, I think," he said.

By sundown, 2 Troop had established a makeshift camp in the middle of a spacious, rocky plain – a perch from which they will watch and observe for the next several days to determine the region's patterns of life.

That information will help to determine whether Taliban insurgents coming from nearby Pakistan are able to find refuge from coalition forces by bypassing the main highway to avoid border checkpoints and moving surreptitiously through the area in order to make their way north.

As night fell, sentries on an all-night security vigil slowly circled the observation post while some of the soldiers reflected on their experience in Afghanistan and on their plans to call home Sunday on Mother's Day.

To a man – especially the young ones – the soldiers describe Afghanistan and meeting its people as a life-changing experience that the average Canadian simply can't grasp without having experienced it.

"Canadians are so insulated," said Trooper Steve Davidson, 20, from Winnipeg. "They have grocery stores where they can go and buy fresh celery and carrots and stuff. These people have nothing ... It changes your perspective."

Trooper Zak Wilson, 22, of New Glasgow, N.S., put it best.

"I never told my mom I loved her until I came here," he said quietly. "Now it's always, 'OK, bye, Mom, I love you.'"

When robots rule the skies

PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)

DATE: 2007.05.13

SECTION: Provincial/National

PAGE: A4

BYLINE: Johansen, Michael

WORD COUNT: 617

Quite a lot was riding on a small airplane that flew in the skies over Labrador a week ago. Although the craft – jury-rigged, weather-beaten and looking something like a Lancaster bomber – could easily have been mistaken for a toy model, it was definitely not a mere plaything.

The first clue was the flight was not launched by hobbyists in some softball field behind a residential neighbourhood. This flight took place in one of the most secure areas in Labrador – in the middle of the Goose Bay airfield, behind chain-link fences and on the other side of doors and gates that require security guards to open them.

Only competition officials, organizers, journalists and the university students who designed and built the aircraft were allowed near the launch site. All others (and everyone was invited) had to watch the action on closed-circuit televisions in a distant hangar. The second clue was that while the students' plane wasn't as large as the professionally made unmanned air vehicles (or UAVs, as they're commonly called) that were on display inside near the TV sets, it was obviously far evolved beyond the little remote-controlled models that fly in circles on strings, or only within range of weak radio signals.

In fact, this plane can do far more than fly aimlessly about. It was made by a team of engineering students from Quebec's Sherbrooke University and was only one of three that were supposed to have competed against each other last weekend in the Labrador skies.

Teams from two other universities (both in Alberta) qualified for the competition in last year's design phase, but they couldn't actually get their complicated aircraft flying in time.

All three teams were building the same thing: a robot plane that can ascend to immense heights, navigate on auto-pilot, look for things on the ground, inform their human controllers about what they find and where they've found it, and then return to home base.

An airplane with skills like that is without doubt a valuable thing to have in Labrador and across northern Canada, where the terrain makes searches so difficult that lost people are sometimes not found until the snow melts away in springtime.

Although those involved in the competition stressed that these students developed their planes for civilian purposes like search and rescue, the military uses are obvious, especially since Canadian forces are increasingly relying on UAVs in Afghanistan.

This school competition put on by UVS Canada (an organization that tries to boost the interests of the Canadian robot plane industry) could have nationwide implications, if only by proving to Prime Minister Stephen Harper that Canadians are capable of designing and building UAVs all by themselves.

Just last month, the Harper government was forced by its own cabinet ministers to back out of a plan to spend as much as \$500 million on UAVs made in the United States, without first seeking competitive bids.

Department of National Defence officials seemed to think only the Americans could give them what they needed, but now they have a chance to look closer to home.

The event could also mean a lot for Labrador, especially if the organizers can be wooed back to Goose Bay for the flight phase of next year's competition – the second of many more, they hope.

It's a small start, but if 5 Wing gets to be known as the place to go to conduct trials and competitions for high-tech aerial equipment – civilian and military – it could lead to bigger things.

It could be used as a test site for larger airplanes, or as a place to launch some of the experimental orbital craft that are being designed by civilian engineering teams around the world.

Who knows? It might even lead to Harper fulfilling his promise to station a squadron of UAVs in Labrador. The sky's the limit.

Michael Johansen is a writer living in Labrador.

Imam says Calgary man arrested in Kabul spoke of jihad, not suicide bombing

DATE: 2007.05.12

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 734

TORONTO (CP) _ An Alberta imam says he spoke several months ago with a Calgary man he believes is the Canadian detained in Afghanistan and says the man talked about "helping his brothers and sisters in Afghanistan" by fighting the jihad but didn't mention a suicide bombing.

In a report from Kandahar, CTV Newsnet quoted a written statement from Afghan authorities that alleged the Canadian admitted to planning to carry out a suicide bombing in Kabul. The statement also allegedly claimed the man's brother was the suicide bomber behind a Sept. 30, 2006 attack near the security gate of the Interior Ministry in Kabul that killed 12 people and injured at least 42.

In Ottawa, Foreign Affairs spokesman Rejean Beaulieu said Saturday he could not confirm any Canadian had been involved in the 2006 bombing in Kabul and added he was "not aware of this."

Sheikh Alaa Elsayed said in Toronto on Saturday he met with the man six months ago but he wouldn't name him out of respect for the family and the fact authorities haven't identified him officially.

Elsayed, who is with the Muslim Council of Calgary, said the man's worried father had phoned him and asked for an immediate meeting last November.

"I received a basically frantic phone call regarding his son. And what happened is he said I need your help with my son."

Elsayed said when he met with the son, the young man didn't mention anything specific and didn't show irrational behaviour but did mention the word "jihad," which he had read on the Internet.

"He did mention something that 'it's an obligation upon me to defend my brothers and sisters, which pretty much is putting me shoulder to shoulder ...maybe fighting back.' Nothing into the connotation or indication of anything to do with suicide bombing," Elsayed said.

The imam said the man didn't talk about any connections, anybody he had listened to specifically, with whom he was dealing or any network or organization to which he wanted to belong.

"There was a red flag, but it wasn't a red flag that was a 9-1-1 right away," said Elsayed.

Elsayed said at the end of the two-hour meeting, he asked the man if he was going to do what he wanted anyway, and the man nodded his head and was adamant about his obligation. The imam said he gave the man an ultimatum and said he would go to the authorities if he didn't relent.

"...because we will not tolerate it, nor do we accept anything for one person to put 65,000 Muslims in Calgary in a tight spot or Canada at large," Elsayed said.

The man appeared to back down, but Elsayed said he may have been trying to buy himself time.

The Canadian citizen, reportedly of Pakistani origin, was detained by Afghan police at a Kabul bus station on Tuesday and accused of attending a militant training camp in Pakistan along the border with Afghanistan.

“The last information I received that he did get caught going to Afghanistan but he did not commit anything or do anything. So obviously he is innocent until proven guilty,” said Elsayed.

Elsayed also could not confirm the CTV report that the detained man's brother had been a suicide bomber. He said the man and the man's father didn't tell him anything about that.

At the time of last September's bombing, Afghan President Hamid Karzai had condemned the blast and said that “suicide attackers come from outside Afghanistan and target the most devoted and the poorest Muslim people of the world.”

Karzai also vowed he and Pakistan's president would lead a series of tribal gatherings along their countries' shared border to quell attacks on Afghanistan by Pakistan-based Taliban rebels.

Canadian officials have visited the man, who is being held for investigation in Kabul.

“He has had contact now with consular officials in Afghanistan. We had people at the embassy that have access to him. For privacy concerns and reasons expressed previously we can't say much more than that,” Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay said Saturday in Pictou, Nova Scotia where he and federal Environment Minister John Baird made the latest in a series of green funding announcements.

The National Post has identified the man detained in Kabul as Sohail Qureshi, 24.

Despite the published report, MacKay also declined to confirm the man's name, saying “that doesn't change anything.”

Beaulieu also would not release the man's name on Saturday, citing the Privacy Act.

Greg Harris, a media relations adviser at the University of Calgary, said Saturday that Qureshi graduated with a bachelor of science degree majoring in computer science from the university in June 2006. But citing privacy concerns, he said the university is not commenting on the case.

The man was carrying a Canadian passport at the time of his arrest.

Canadian officials say they are expecting to have access to the man as long as he remains in custody.

“Afghan authorities have indicated that regular consular access will be granted,” said department spokeswoman Ambra Dickie on Friday.

Canadian soldiers meet locals in southeastern Afghanistan in bid to win trust

DATE: 2007.05.12

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 159

SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan (CP) _ A soldier with the Royal Canadian Dragoons whose morning began with a battlefield promotion spent today greeting Afghan villagers in this barren part of southeastern Afghanistan.

Captain Sean Boak, who began his day as a lieutenant, led a convoy of armoured vehicles over the rocky barrens, stopping to visit local farmers.

As the sun rose, Boak was promoted in an informal ceremony at the base of a jagged mountain range by Col. Steve Cadden, the commanding officer of the Dragoons.

Every time the convoy pulled up to a group of farmers, children would hide at first in the drapes of their father's clothes, then slowly emerge to grin broadly at the soldiers.

The farmers all had kind words for the Canadians, recalling bad experiences with the Afghan National Army and even the Russian invaders of nearly three decades ago.

Despite the friendly banter, safety remains a paramount concern in Afghanistan _ as Boak and the farmers chatted with the help of an interpreter, nearby sentries kept a close eye, rifles at the ready.

Soldier suffering post-traumatic stress won't face charges after standoff

DATE: 2007.05.12

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE HEALTH INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE SOCIAL

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 288

EDMONTON (CP) _ A soldier suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder who held police at bay during a domestic standoff likely won't be charged.

Police said there were never any allegations that weapons were involved in the Friday night standoff, which ended peacefully after two hours.

The man's wife, who identified herself only as Megan to the Edmonton Sun, said her husband has suffered from flashbacks and other problems since returning from a six-month tour of duty in Afghanistan last August.

She said she called 911 at about 9:30 p.m. when her husband wouldn't let her leave an apartment with the couple's three-month-old baby.

The woman and the baby were eventually able to leave the suite, and police negotiated with the soldier with help from a military padre.

"My husband is so severely mentally disturbed from PTSD," the woman said after the incident, adding that the military needs to do more about the disorder.

"(He) can barely walk into a grocery store, he can't pay bills and he can't look after our child," she explained.

The soldier was escorted into an ambulance and taken to hospital.

No charges are expected to be laid, police said.

Vancouver-based psychiatrist Dr. Greg Passey, an expert in post-traumatic stress disorder who retired from the Canadian Forces in 2000 after 22 years of service, said the military has refused to study the effects of the illness for over a decade.

"I've been suggesting they do so since 1993. The military has been running blind on this for nearly 15 years. No Canadian study has been undertaken to look at the true number of soldiers coming back from service with PTSD," Passey said.

Passey said the only scientific research is coming out of the U.S., which estimates that at least six per cent of soldiers are psychologically crippled by the disorder.

Megan said her husband, who also went to Bosnia, has been unable to make the adjustment back to life in Canada, despite the military's efforts to help him and other soldiers like him.

"He's seen a lot. He's been exposed to quite a bit," she said.

"He's very proud of what he does, but it messed him up so bad."

(Edmonton Sun)

Roadside bomb kills eight policemen on the outskirts of Kandahar city

DATE: 2007.05.12

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 38

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP) _ A roadside bomb has killed eight policemen in southern Afghanistan.

Police say the bomb exploded near a vehicle carrying the policemen in an area on the outskirts of Kandahar city.

Provincial police chief Esmatullah Alizai blames the attack on Taliban rebels.

Imam says Calgary man arrested in Kabul spoke of jihad, not suicide bombing

DATE: 2007.05.12

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 734

TORONTO (CP) _ An Alberta imam says he spoke several months ago with a Calgary man he believes is the Canadian detained in Afghanistan and says the man talked about "helping his brothers and sisters in Afghanistan" by fighting the jihad but didn't mention a suicide bombing.

In a report from Kandahar, CTV Newsnet quoted a written statement from Afghan authorities that alleged the Canadian admitted to planning to carry out a suicide bombing in Kabul. The statement also allegedly claimed the man's brother was the suicide bomber behind a Sept. 30, 2006 attack near the security gate of the Interior Ministry in Kabul that killed 12 people and injured at least 42.

In Ottawa, Foreign Affairs spokesman Rejean Beaulieu said Saturday he could not confirm any Canadian had been involved in the 2006 bombing in Kabul and added he was "not aware of this."

Sheikh Alaa Elsayed said in Toronto on Saturday he met with the man six months ago but he wouldn't name him out of respect for the family and the fact authorities haven't identified him officially.

Elsayed, who is with the Muslim Council of Calgary, said the man's worried father had phoned him and asked for an immediate meeting last November.

"I received a basically frantic phone call regarding his son. And what happened is he said I need your help with my son."

Elsayed said when he met with the son, the young man didn't mention anything specific and didn't show irrational behaviour but did mention the word "jihad," which he had read on the Internet.

"He did mention something that 'it's an obligation upon me to defend my brothers and sisters, which pretty much is putting me shoulder to shoulder ...maybe fighting back.' Nothing into the connotation or indication of anything to do with suicide bombing," Elsayed said.

The imam said the man didn't talk about any connections, anybody he had listened to specifically, with whom he was dealing or any network or organization to which he wanted to belong.

"There was a red flag, but it wasn't a red flag that was a 9-1-1 right away," said Elsayed.

Elsayed said at the end of the two-hour meeting, he asked the man if he was going to do what he wanted anyway, and the man nodded his head and was adamant about his obligation. The imam said he gave the man an ultimatum and said he would go to the authorities if he didn't relent.

"...because we will not tolerate it, nor do we accept anything for one person to put 65,000 Muslims in Calgary in a tight spot or Canada at large," Elsayed said.

The man appeared to back down, but Elsayed said he may have been trying to buy himself time.

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Despite the published report, MacKay also declined to confirm the man's name, saying “that doesn't change anything.”

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Greg Harris, a media relations adviser at the University of Calgary, said Saturday that Qureshi graduated with a bachelor of science degree majoring in computer science from the university in June 2006. But citing privacy concerns, he said the university is not commenting on the case.

The man was carrying a Canadian passport at the time of his arrest.

Canadian officials say they are expecting to have access to the man as long as he remains in custody.

“Afghan authorities have indicated that regular consular access will be granted,” said department spokeswoman Ambra Dickie on Friday.

Afghan–Cda–Patrol–Update (adds details)

DATE: 2007.05.12

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 102

SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan – A newly–promoted Canadian soldier has spent the day greeting villagers in southeastern Afghanistan.

Captain Sean Boak, who began his day as a lieutenant, led a convoy of armoured vehicles stopping to visit local farmers near Spin Boldak, near the Afghan–Pakistani border.

Boak was promoted in an informal sunrise ceremony by the commanding officer of the Royal Canadian Dragoons.

As the convoy pulled up to the farmers, children would hide at first then slowly emerge to grin broadly at the soldiers.

The farmers all had kind words for the Canadians, recalling bad experiences with the Afghan National Army and even Russian invaders of the 1980's.

One even mustered up the courage to ask if the convoy could spare any diesel fuel.

Despite the friendly banter, safety remains a paramount concern in Afghanistan.

(BN)

Detainee in Kabul spoke of jihad; Calgary imam says he tried to talk man, 24, out of going to Afghanistan

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BYLINE: Pat Hewitt
SOURCE: Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 325

An Alberta imam says he spoke several months ago with a Calgary man he believes is the Canadian detained in Afghanistan and says the man talked about "helping his brothers and sisters in Afghanistan" by fighting the jihad but didn't mention a suicide bombing.

In a report from Kandahar, CTV Newsnet quoted a written statement from Afghan authorities that alleged the Canadian admitted to planning to carry out a suicide bombing in Kabul.

The statement also allegedly claimed the man's brother was the suicide bomber behind a Sept. 30, 2006, attack in Kabul that killed 12 people.

In Ottawa, Foreign Affairs spokesperson Rejean Beaulieu said yesterday he could not confirm a Canadian had been involved in the 2006 bombing.

Sheikh Alaa Elsayed of Calgary said in Toronto yesterday he met with the man six months ago but he wouldn't name him out of respect for the family and the fact authorities haven't identified him officially.

Elsayed said the 24-year-old's father asked him for an immediate meeting last November.

"I received a basically frantic phone call regarding his son. And what happened is he said I need your help with my son."

Elsayed said when he met the son, the young man didn't mention anything specific and didn't show irrational behaviour but did mention the word "jihad," which he'd read on the Internet.

"He did mention something that 'it's an obligation upon me to defend my brothers and sisters, which pretty much is putting me shoulder to shoulder ... maybe fighting back.' Nothing into the connotation or indication of anything to do with suicide bombing," Elsayed said.

The imam said the man didn't talk about any connections or group to which he belonged.

Elsayed said at the end of the two-hour meeting, he asked the man if he was going to do what he wanted anyway, and the man was adamant about his obligation. The imam said he gave the man an ultimatum and said he would go to the authorities if he didn't relent.

The man appeared to back down, but Elsayed said he may have been trying to buy time.

The Canadian citizen, reportedly of Pakistani origin, was detained by Afghan police at a Kabul bus station on Tuesday and accused of attending a militant training camp in Pakistan.

Confessions from the combat zone; first person Embedded with Canadian troops in Afghanistan, Star columnist Rosie DiManno reflects on the sights, sounds and bad smells encountered in cramped armoured vehicles and along Panjwaii district's swoon-inducing trails first person

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DATE: 2007.05.13

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PAGE: A10

ILLUSTRATION: Photos courtesy of Rosie Dimanno's front-line friends On patrol with Charlie Company in Panjwaii district on a good day — not the one when Star columnist Rosie DiManno got stuck in a creek and had to be lugged, rolled and heaved onto dry ground. Clockwise from above: Jojo, the best "fixer" in all of Afghan-istan ; a modest shopping trip in Kandahar ; inside a LAV III armoured vehicle ; and under same after an exhausting hike in the heat of Panjwaii district. Clockwise from above: Jojo, the best "fixer" in all of Afghan-istan ; a modest shopping trip in Kandahar ; inside a LAV III armoured vehicle ; and under same after an exhausting hike in the heat of Panjwaii district. ;

BYLINE: Rosie DiManno

SOURCE: KANDAHAR

COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation

WORD COUNT: 1012

The reporter is up to her waist in water and up to her knees in mud.

This embarrassing predicament has halted the progress of the entire Charlie Company platoon.

It wasn't even a river, more like a creek, that should have been easy to traverse with a good running-start leap.

But this is what happens on a 10-kilometre hike in Panjwaii district when a person is suffering from dehydration and it's 55C and the Kevlar vest suddenly feels like a piano strapped around one's shoulders:

Legs cramp, the stomach lurches and every breath is an admonition against that two-packs-a-day smoking habit.

So, the reporter launches off one bank with hope in her heart but plops halfway across with silt seeping into her butt. Repeated attempts to scale the opposite bank, grabbing handfuls of thorn grass – ouch, ouch, ouch – result only in repeated slides back into the creek. Finally, with two infantrymen pushing from the rear and two hauling from the front, the reporter is lugged, rolled and heaved onto dry ground.

She is now some six inches taller, tottering on shoes encased in mud, rather like the Gary Glitter platform heels of the 1970s.

"Just 800 metres to go," the medic, Cpl. Lorne Smith, says encouragingly.

Warrant Officer Marco Favasoli offers a more stimulating comment: "You don't keep walking, Rosie, I'm going to tie a rope around your ankles and drag you back."

Unlike the Afghan National Army platoon that had started out this mission on a joint patrol with Canadians – gagging at the midway point and requiring rescue by pickup truck – the rubbery-legged reporter does finish the hump.

Then collapses beneath a LAV armoured transport vehicle, the only handkerchief of shade in the desert.

From under an ANA truck parked close by, one recovering Afghan soldier whistles: "You want sleep with me?"

Delirious, the aging reporter thinks: I've still got it.

There's a donkey in the middle of the road.

It's not moving. In fact, it's lying down, untroubled by honking traffic. The reporter, standing up in the gunner's hatch of a LAV III, doesn't remember ever seeing a donkey lying down before, much less in the middle of the road.

The other gunner, the real gunner, Warrant Officer Sam Budd, is trying to come up with a punch line for "Why did the donkey cross the road?"

Mostly, he wants the reporter to watch the right while he scans the left. "Roger that?"

Budd points to the spot where an IED killed a couple of Afghan children the previous week, the mud wall pockmarked with shrapnel. And the reporter seriously wonders about the usefulness of a media-embedding program where journalists often take the same risks as troops but do it without ever being issued a weapon. That suddenly seems rather dumb.

The reporter, who also happens to be reading a very funny book called *War Reporting for Cowards*, an account by Times of London correspondent Chris Ayres of his time embedded with a U.S. Marine battery during the 2003 Iraq invasion, recalls how those soldiers took great delight in reading aloud to him the military guidelines entitled "How to deal with a dead media representative."

Budd is not so malicious and simply wants to give a shout-out to his dad and brother in St. Catharines.

His message: "I'm looking forward to coming back for lobster broils and pig roasts."

From inside the LAV, where journalists are usually jammed, the reporter can see gunners only from the waist down, their feet nervously jiggling as they stand on seats or, if up front manning the turret, on swivel pads.

This puts the reporter face-to-crotch with gunners, or face-to-bum. If the latter, the reporter will notice that gunners always have their flies undone. This is not carelessness; they routinely leave their zippers unzipped because the jiggling of the vehicle tends to make them, um, or so the reporter has been told. An unzipped fly allows the gunner freedom of perpendicular movement.

Other way round, though, and for sure the reporter will get frequent blasts of flatulence. Soldiers are all the time farting. They fart percussively. They fart in stereo. They fart with a flourish.

In the back of a Bison now, headed for a forward operating base in the middle of the night, and the only two passengers are journalists.

The crew commander hops down to rattle off the same standing instructions he'd give if there were other soldiers inside. "If I'm wounded, you will pull me down and perform first aid. If I'm killed"

He points to grenades stored in one seat – we're sitting on grenades? – and extra ammo in another. See guns. Grasp guns. Shoot guns.

Oh, and if we have to blow up the Bison – never let a combat vehicle fall into enemy hands – there will be a 60-second warning, then the release of toxic fumes.

The reporter thinks: I could be covering the playoffs.

Fortunately, at the first stop outside the wire, a sergeant hops on board. He's a gregarious Newfoundlander and immediately embarks on a story about the dope-smoking Afghan National Police.

Now, the ANP are notoriously fond of their hashish, particularly when they're stuck at rural checkpoints, where either nothing happens or they're suddenly Taliban fodder. So, yes, drugs are commonly consumed and those in the vicinity will find their nostrils frequently assaulted by the scent of wafting hash smoke.

"Other night, the ANP invite me into their tent, eh?" recalls the sergeant. "And they've got this Afghan whisky, must have been 90 per cent proof, tasted like diesel. But I have a couple of snorts because I don't want to be rude, eh?"

"Then, the guy brings out a brick of hash. And I'm like, uh, no thanks, really. A little booze is one thing, but hash – I'm pretty sure that's a major Canadian military no-no."

Hashish fumes, sometimes so thick a passing reporter can almost get a contact-high, are at least preferable to some other smells in this part of the world.

The desert is clean. The village compounds – not so much.

Yet no village smells as bad as Kandahar Airfield, especially when the wind changes direction and comes across the base sanitation plant known as Emerald Lake.

The reporter madly spritzes Chanel No. 19 around her hooch, to no avail. Nothing cuts through the miasma of Eau de KAF.

The reporter is in the back seat of a civilian sedan. Of course, she's in the back seat. She's a female and this is Kandahar.

Jojo – the best "fixer" in all of Afghanistan – is rhapsodizing over his appointed fiancée, professing his boundless love for a 16-year-old girl he has never actually met, having only seen the photograph of a potential life-mate selected by his mother.

A 20-year-old who may very well some day be president of Afghanistan – such is his cleverness and ingenuity – Jojo draws the line at anything approaching emancipation for females.

He believes Prime Minister Steven Harper should amend the laws so Canadian men can beat their wives as necessary.

The reporter, from the back seat, smacks Jojo across the head.

In Kandahar City, where the reporter – clad in full-body abaya cloak and headscarf – is shopping for a beaded skullcap, a bilious man stops to waggle his finger and shout angrily.

"He's telling you to cover your face," says Jojo.

The reporter likes Afghans, finds them overwhelmingly kind and hospitable. But she doesn't like this fellow.

"Tell him to kiss my ass," says the reporter.

Alas, Jojo won't translate that.

Top Taliban commander said killed

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The Taliban's top operational commander, Mullah Dadullah, has been killed in Afghanistan, security officials said early today.

The officials did not have details of where and when Dadullah was killed.

"Mullah Dadullah has been killed and his body is in Kandahar," one official told reporters.

At Kandahar Airfield, there was speculation that Dadullah might have been a casualty of a cruise missile strike.

Staff; Reuters

Hostage 'well treated' by Taliban

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SECTION: News
PAGE: A12
ILLUSTRATION: BENOIT TESSIER reuters Eric Damfreville arrives at Villacoublaymilitary airport outside Paris yesterday, after being held hostage for 38 days by the Taliban. ;
SOURCE: REUTERS NEWS AGENCY
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 133

Freed children's aid worker Eric Damfreville returned home from Afghanistan yesterday and France said it would seek the release of three Afghan colleagues still held hostage by the Taliban.

A gaunt-looking Damfreville, who'd been held blindfolded and chained for 38 days, arrived at a military airport outside Paris wrapped in a survival blanket and wearing an eye bandage and neck brace.

"My condition comes mainly from the roughness and toughness of my captivity in south Afghanistan, which is a bit rustic," he said after landing. "I have been well treated."

French president-elect Nicolas Sarkozy said he "hopes for the rapid release of the remaining hostages and "will put everything in place to this end."

The foreign ministry declined to comment on speculation the government paid a hefty ransom for Damfreville's release.

Fellow aid worker Celine Cordelier, who was kidnapped with Damfreville and the Afghans, was released on April 28.

Canada should lead call for ban on cluster bombs; Deadly bomblets can kill civilians long after conflict ends, says Haroon Siddiqui

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PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.05.13
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: Opinion
PAGE: A17
BYLINE: Haroon Siddiqui
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 744

Here's an idea for Stephane Dion, Gilles Duceppe or Jack Layton – ideally, all three – to adopt. If they did, they would force Stephen Harper's hand and help us win worldwide kudos.

Canada should lead what is a growing movement to ban cluster bombs.

These Cold War–era weapons burst open in mid–air and scatter smaller sub–munitions over a wide area, killing or maiming civilians in two ways: on impact or, in the case of the "duds" that do not explode, much later when detonated by unsuspecting civilians.

The anti–cluster bomb campaign is a natural for Canada. We helped forge the 1997 anti–land mines treaty, which has since led to the destruction of 40 million stockpiled land mines in about 80 countries.

Cluster bombs can be even more dangerous.

They are inaccurate, making it difficult for those using them to distinguish between military targets and civilians. And given their "dud" rate of about 25 per cent, they create a field of bomblets, which act as land mines.

Cluster bombs have left a trail of death and destruction in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos (1960s and 70s); Lebanon (1982); Kuwait (1991); Kosovo (1999), Afghanistan (2001–02), Iraq (2003), Lebanon (2006), and elsewhere.

Last summer, Israel was estimated to have dropped enough cluster bombs to scatter about 4 million bomblets in southern Lebanon. That prompted an outcry from UN agencies and human rights groups, as well as a complaint in Washington that Israel may have violated bilateral agreements prohibiting the use of U.S.–made bombs in populated areas.

The UN Mine Action Co–ordination Centre, Southern Lebanon has identified 864 cluster bomb locations over 34 million square metres, containing an estimated 1 million unexploded cluster munitions. It reports 30 fatalities and 191 injuries, so far.

Bill Graham, former foreign minister and an authority on international law, said in an interview that cluster bombs, which are "proven sleeper killers of civilians," are objectionable for the same reasons as land mines. "Yet those who deploy them take no responsibility."

Canada should lead call for ban on cluster bombs; Deadly bomblets can kill civilians long after conflict ends,

The UN Convention on Conventional Weapons does not regulate cluster bombs, just as it did not control land mines, which is why Canada helped negotiate the anti-mines treaty.

Human Rights Watch, the highly respected New York-based group which shared the Nobel Peace Prize for leading the anti-land mines initiative, is now campaigning against cluster bombs, along with the London-based Cluster Munitions Coalition. The latter is a group of 200 non-governmental organizations worldwide, including the Ottawa-based Mines Action Canada.

The European Parliament has already called for a moratorium on the use, production and transfer of cluster ammunitions until an international agreement is reached.

Parliamentary initiatives are also underway in Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Britain and even the United States.

Legislation has been introduced in both houses of Congress to prohibit or limit the use of such bombs by the U.S., which has a stockpile of 1 billion submunitions, and deployed 295,000 in Kosovo, 248,000 in Afghanistan and about 2 million in Iraq. Cluster bombs have been the single biggest cause of death and injuries in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

At a meeting Feb. 21 in Oslo of 49 interested countries, 46 signed a declaration calling for a ban by next year. Canada supported that call, and is already destroying some of its stockpile of cluster munitions.

Yet, inexplicably, the Stephen Harper government's position "remains elusive," said Steve Goose, director of the arms division at Human Rights Watch in Washington, over the phone. "They will not support a total ban, even though Canada has never used cluster bombs. But they have not said what they will support."

Ottawa seems to be somewhere in between the American position (no ban at all) and the British position (ban old cluster bombs but not the newer variety, which is said to be more accurate). Both countries also want the issue resolved through the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) process.

Paul Hannon, director of Mines Action Canada (itself a coalition of 38 Canadian NGOs), feels the Harper government – "a lot more cautious in international affairs than the previous government" – is torn between the CCW route or forging a new treaty. "But CCW is of no value. It works by consensus. If one state does not agree, it goes nowhere."

Hannon, however, has found an ally in Alberta Tory MP Brian Storseth, who believes in the need for a new treaty and is hosting a meeting on the issue on Parliament Hill on Tuesday.

"About 50 MPs from all parties have said they'd come," reports Hannon from Ottawa. "That's more MPs than we had when we started the campaign against land mines."

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

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Taliban on run in battle But roadside bomb kills 8

SOURCETAG 0705130718

PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun

DATE: 2007.05.13

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 16

BYLINE: REUTERS

DATELINE: KABUL

WORD COUNT: 201

Western and Afghan troops have driven the Taliban from a southern area after a week-long battle in which more than 70 militants were killed, an Afghan security official said yesterday.

Violence has surged in Afghanistan in recent months after the traditional winter lull and an upsurge of fighting last year, the bloodiest since the Taliban's removal in 2001.

In the latest incident yesterday, a roadside bomb killed at least eight Afghan police outside the southern city of Kandahar, provincial police chief Esmatullah Alizai said.

There were no casualties among Afghan and Western troops in the fighting in Nahri Saraj of neighbouring Helmand province, scene of a series of operations by foreign-led forces in recent weeks, the security official said.

Five Taliban commanders were among those killed, the official said, adding there were no casualties among civilians.

"We have driven out the Taliban from the district and it is under our control," he said.

CIVILIANS KILLED

Nahri Saraj is 25 km from Sangin district, where witnesses said more than 40 civilians were killed last Tuesday in an air strike by U.S.-led coalition troops.

The coalition has confirmed civilian casualties in the battle.

Separately, an air attack by Western forces killed at least seven civilians, including women and children, in Marja district of Helmand early on Friday, witnesses said yesterday.

Seven of the civilians wounded in the attack were brought to a government run hospital in the provincial capital Lashkar Gah.

"I know of six or seven deaths in my village," a wounded woman said at the hospital.

Afghan officials say U.S.-led troops have killed scores of civilians in the past two months in Afghanistan.

KEYWORDS=WORLD

Leafs executive Tom Anselmi experienced a life-changing moment during a recent visit to Afghanistan, where reality was redefined

GEORGE GROSS

SOURCETAG 0705130322

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.05.13

EDITION: Final

SECTION: Sports

PAGE: SP23

ILLUSTRATION: photo courtesy of Sgt. Roxanne Clowe Tom Anselmi is joined by a cadre of Canadian armed forces officials, and the Stanley Cup, in Afghanistan.

BYLINE: GEORGE GROSS, TORONTO SUN

COLUMN: The Last Word

WORD COUNT: 805

"Sometimes, something really surprises you. It rears up like an Afghan dust storm in the oppressive heat of the afternoon and grabs you by the throat because it's so diametrically opposed to your perception — because it's so real, or because it's so important.

"Going into Kandahar, Team Canada's perception was defined by the unknown and the uninformed. It included some obvious misconceptions about our military in general and it was coloured by the general apprehension that comes with flying into a war-torn country. But almost as soon as we landed, our apprehension went away and there was a feeling of calm amidst the danger and chaos of war."

— Tom Anselmi

That's what the executive vice-president and COO of Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment Ltd., wrote upon his return from Afghanistan a few days ago, accompanied by a group of Maple Leafs alumni, other NHL alumni, a couple of media representatives and entertainers, as well as the Stanley Cup in all its glory.

"It was one of the greatest experiences of my life," Anselmi confided in an exclusive interview for Sun Media.

"We (the Maple Leafs) were planning last fall to make such a trip, but it was eventually organized by the Department of National Defence and in particular a trio of hard workers — general Rick Hillier, Lt. Col. and former NHL goalie Ed Staniowski and Louise Desroches."

Anselmi, a robust individual of Italian descent, is not afraid of his shadow, something that comes in handy around the Air Canada Centre in Toronto after 40 years of Leafs futility.

Still, he was asked if there was any apprehension flying into a country where so many people die almost every day.

"At first we thought it will be some sort of a holiday," he admitted. "But we changed our mind when they told us to put on helmets and flapjackets before the tactical landing in Kandahar.

"Being with guys such as ex-Leafs Tiger Williams and Mike Pelyk, Montreal's Mark Napier and Rejean Houle, Boston's Rick Smith and Detroit's Bob Probert and 10,000 troops, it gave us a feeling of safety. This in spite of the fact that there was a rocket attack on the Canadian base, but fortunately it landed short of our area."

The MLSEL chief operating officer is not much for dramatics.

But I noticed him fighting back tears recalling an incident during the visit to the Canadian military hospital that has been treating Afghan victims of rocket attacks just as often as our soldiers.

"It brought me back to reality," said Anselmi. "There was a little girl, perhaps seven years old. She had stepped on a landmine while playing in the fields and her father carried her 25 kilometres on his back to make it to the Canadian hospital where about 150 Canadian doctors, nurses and other medical personnel are stationed.

"The little girl was badly injured. One of her legs was so damaged that it had to be amputated. Her arms, chest and face were a mess and she may never be able to see. Those are the realities in the country of these unfortunate people. It must be the most dangerous and destitute of countries in the world.

"When we got to Afghanistan, the soldiers were thanking us. After a day and a half in 59C heat, we were thanking them for their great job and sacrifice."

Anselmi and the rest of the group of volunteers won't forget the trip in cramped quarters of the Hercules aircraft, the heat and dust, the blood and misery. But all of them can say a prayer of thanks for living in Canada.

GROSSLY ABBREVIATED

Longtime Hockey Night in Canada executive Bob Gordon passed away after a lengthy illness last week ... Ralph Mellanby, five times Emmy Award winning executive producer of HNIC, has written a book entitled: 'Walking With The Legends.' It's about all the famous people in hockey he met during his tenure that spanned more than two decades. The book will be available on Sept. 1 ... Lorne Main and Ken Sinclair, both septuagenarians, were honoured at a fundraiser for young tennis players at the Toronto Cricket Skating Curling Club this week. Main has won 10 singles world titles and the pair captured 11 doubles world championships. The two Canadians are without doubt the best veteran tennis players in the world. Among the celebrities in the packed house was Carling Bassett Seguso, once ranked No. 8 in the world and the most successful Canadian player — man or woman — and Frank Stronach, the billionaire car parts manufacturer and tennis fan ... Ghana is not exactly a hockey country. The African nation certainly doesn't know much about the Stanley Cup. Yet a Toronto couple recently visited Ghana and was fascinated by a young boy holding a book in his hands entitled: The Red Kelly Stories. The boy couldn't speak English, but he loved the pictures and cartoons. Andra Kelly, Red's wife and a former North American speedskating champion, is now collecting books to send to Ghana for other youngsters to enjoy children's books. **KEYWORDS=OTHER SPORTS**

Leafs executive Tom Anselmi experienced a life-changing moment during a recent visit to Afghanistan, where

Taliban on run in battle But roadside bomb kills 8

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PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.05.13

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SECTION: News

PAGE: 9

BYLINE: REUTERS

DATELINE: KABUL

WORD COUNT: 201

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CIVILIANS KILLED

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The coalition has confirmed civilian casualties in the battle.

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"I know of six or seven deaths in my village," a wounded woman said at the hospital.

Afghan officials say U.S.-led troops have killed scores of civilians in the past two months in Afghanistan.

KEYWORDS=WORLD

Nursing under fire In Afghanistan, Canadian nurses are tending to locals, our troops and their own sanity

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PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.05.13

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SECTION: News

PAGE: 8

ILLUSTRATION: 1. photo courtesy of National Defence Photo Naval Lieut. Jeff Lee tends to a local woman with the help of her relative in Afghanistan. Canadian nurses are unsung heroes in the war against the Taliban. 2. photo of CHRISTINE MATTHEWS Non-stop

BYLINE: ALAN FINDLAY, NATIONAL BUREAU

WORD COUNT: 540

Canadian nurses working feverishly at the end of Kandahar's airstrip see just about every kind of patient war has to offer come through their field hospital entrance.

Whether it's a young Canadian soldier torn open by a roadside bomb, an Afghan child caught in the crossfire or even a captured Taliban soldier, nurses like Naval Lieutenant Jeff Lee treat them all the same.

But even Lee has his limits.

"I've had a Taliban (patient) ask me he'd like to take a look at my gun," Lee recalled with a smile this week. "Obviously, I said no. I'll provide you medical care, but there's no way I'm giving you my pistol for the sake of looking at it."

On the more positive side, Lee has accepted the grateful handshake of a healing Taliban soldier who was suspected in planning a rocket attack against the Canadians.

'COULDN'T CARE LESS'

"That I found very rewarding to see that an individual was able to see that, as a nursing officer, I am only there to provide their patient care," said Lee. "Others, they couldn't care less, because ... if they have a chance to escape and return to their former activities, they'd gladly set up more rockets and try to obliterate whatever they can."

Lee and three other Canadian Forces nurses shared their Afghanistan experiences in Ottawa this week after being honoured by the Canadian Nurses Association as part of National Nursing Week.

Having recently returned from their six-month, adrenaline-pumping rotations of the war-torn country, Lee and Capt. Christine Matthews each said the non-stop intensity and blur of incidents make it difficult to isolate one particularly memorable moment.

One patient Matthews will recall with fondness was a fellow Newfoundlander badly injured during a rocket attack. She was able to connect with the frightened young soldier by using a bit of the dry, brusque humour of home: She scolded him for bleeding on her floor.

Nursing under fire In Afghanistan, Canadian nurses are tending to locals, our troops and their own sanity 61

"In the days that followed, we chatted a bit and he said it helped a lot," Matthews recalled.

Another patient Matthews remembers well was a young girl who was brought in with a bullet through her bladder.

The blond-haired, blue-eyed Canadian said she experienced the attitude toward women among Afghan men first-hand, and hoped that the young girl's time among the Canadians impressed upon her what women are capable of.

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Matthews and Lee are among a regular rotation of nurses working up to 18 hours a day as part of the bustling Canadian Forces, Health Services Support Staff.

All told there are 238 regular and 100 reserve nurses in the forces.

Speaking at this week's Ottawa presentation, Brig.- Gen. Dwight Davies described the nursing ranks in Afghanistan as heroes.

"Without them, our mission would fail," Davies said.

Matthews takes such praise with modesty.

"We have soldiers who go outside that wire every single day and put their life on the line for the ideals that Canadians believe in, and the least I can do is be there and smile and give them comfort when they need me to take care of them and put them back together," she said.

Adjusting back to the peace and security of Canada after such an intense journey can also be a challenge.

Witnessing such an impoverished and violent corner of the world leaves a little less tolerance for the common complaints of life in Canada, Matthews said.

"We really appreciate what we have here in Canada, and not everybody does because we take things for granted," she said. "It takes a long time to learn your patience again."

CARE PACKAGES

Canadian and allied nurses working in Afghanistan are getting a little care of their own in a package. Here are the necessities for a war-zone nurse, courtesy of the Canadian Nurses Association and Johnson & Johnson:

- Comfy pillows and blankets.
- High quality stethoscopes.
- Sleeping masks.
- Herbal teas.
- Cheeses.

- Skin care products.
- Toothbrushes, toothpaste and mouthwash.
- Eye drops. KEYWORDS=CANADA

Taliban on run in battle But roadside bomb kills 8

SOURCETAG 0705130602

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun

DATE: 2007.05.13

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 8

BYLINE: REUTERS

DATELINE: KABUL

WORD COUNT: 201

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Afghan officials say U.S.-led troops have killed scores of civilians in the past two months in Afghanistan.

KEYWORDS=WORLD

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SOURCETAG 0705130509

PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun

DATE: 2007.05.13

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 34

BYLINE: REUTERS

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WORD COUNT: 201

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SOURCETAG 0705130484

PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun

DATE: 2007.05.13

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 12

ILLUSTRATION: 2 photos 1. photo by National Defence Naval Lieut. Jeff Lee tends to a local woman with the help of her relative in Afghanistan. Canadian nurses are unsung heroes in the war against the Taliban. 2. photo of CHRISTINE MATTHEWS Non-stop

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Imam's work 'in vain' Muslim leader seemingly unable to convince Calgarian not to join Afghan terrorists

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DATE: 2007.05.13

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SECTION: News

PAGE: 7

ILLUSTRATION: photo of ALAA ELSAYED 'CONCERNED'

BYLINE: TODD SAELHOF AND SARAH KENNEDY, SUN MEDIA

DATELINE: CALGARY

WORD COUNT: 395

Efforts to counsel a Calgary man against allegedly joining terrorist forces in Afghanistan seem to have failed, said a local cleric.

Sohail Qureshi, a 24-year-old graduate of the University of Calgary, was reportedly taken into custody earlier this week and detained in Afghanistan on suspicion of attending a militant training camp in Pakistan.

According to media reports, Afghan officials allege Qureshi wanted to emulate the actions of his brother, who is suspected of carrying out a suicide bombing in Kabul on Sept. 30.

Although he would not confirm the identity of Qureshi out of respect for the family, Calgary imam Sheikh Alaa Elsayed says he met with a University of Calgary computer sciences grad in November to try and talk him out of joining the fight with insurgents in Afghanistan.

"I was deeply concerned because the train of thought and the determination on his face was very evident that he was going to go through with it," Elsayed said.

"Unfortunately ..."

The imam said he was contacted by the Calgarian's father, who was frantic at his son's behaviour and wanted an intervention to help him.

"We talked for two hours trying to convince his son the ideology he has may not be the proper one, but apparently it was in vain," Elsayed said.

"I will not doubt one single second his intention was pure and sincere because according to him, it was the right thing to do to go and defend his brothers --- basically going to stand shoulder to shoulder and fight defending them."

Elsayed added he tried to work with the young man to get him working or teaching in his field of computer science.

"We said, 'Yes, I understand you may want to get martyrdom status ... but you can do more good if you live for the sake of Allah or the God almighty.' "

The imam believes the Calgarian, who he said grew up a quiet, polite well-mannered boy, was "brainwashed" or "manipulated by emotion" by ideas he found on the Internet.

Sources say Qureshi came to Canada in the 1990s with his family, became a Canadian citizen and then was reported missing by loved ones earlier this year.

The federal government has since been checking into his activities by contacting family and friends, said a source.

A U of C student, who is a fellow Muslim, said Qureshi was a typical student who liked to go to clubs and drink but then suddenly became deeply committed to his religion and become an introvert.

"It was a total 180-degree flip," said the student.

"The reports I was getting was that everybody tried to talk him out of it and tell him this was not what the religion is.

"It's unfortunate because it's going to bring disgrace to the community here."

Another university student, who knows Qureshi from prayer groups, said the Calgarian took his religion seriously but didn't peg the computer sciences grad as an extremist.

"He used to talk to imams about defending his brothers and sisters, and he kept talking about it and talking about it," said the student.

"But none of the people around him seemed to agree with his views."

The university had no comment on the arrest, said U of C spokesman Colleen Turner.

KEYWORDS=ALBERTA

Stress sparks standoff Wife says more must be done to help war-weary soldiers

SOURCETAG 0705130470

PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun

DATE: 2007.05.13

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PAGE: 4

BYLINE: CARY CASTAGNA, SUN MEDIA

WORD COUNT: 402

The wife of an Edmonton-based soldier in a two-hour standoff with police Friday night said the military needs to do more to tackle post-traumatic stress disorder.

Megan, who didn't want her last name published, said her husband has been suffering with the disorder since he returned last August from a six-month tour of duty in Afghanistan.

"My husband is so severely mentally disturbed from PTSD," Megan told Sun Media. "Our lives are completely affected by PTSD. It's so sad that this is what my husband has to go through. He just wants to live a normal life."

Officers were called about 9:30 p.m. Friday to an apartment complex at 16221 95 St.

Megan said her husband wouldn't let her leave with the couple's baby, so she called 911 to report the domestic dispute.

The man's wife and baby were eventually able to leave the suite, and police negotiated with the soldier with help from a military padre.

ENDS PEACEFULLY

The standoff ended peacefully around 11:30 p.m., when the soldier was escorted into an ambulance and taken to hospital.

No charges are expected to be laid, police said yesterday.

Megan said her husband, who also went to Bosnia, has been experiencing constant flashbacks and has been unable to make the adjustment back to life in Edmonton.

"My husband can barely walk into a grocery store. He can't pay bills and he can't look after our child," she explained. "It's a scary realization. He's very proud of what he does, but it messed him up so bad.

"He's seen a lot. He's been exposed to quite a bit."

Megan said the military is doing all it can right now, but that isn't enough.

"Families are being severely destroyed and torn apart because of the condition these guys are brought home in," she said.

"I don't think the military has enough support on base to deal with everything." Vancouver-based psychiatrist Dr. Greg Passey, a PTSD specialist who retired from the Canadian Forces in 2000 after 22 years of service, said the military has refused to study the effects of the disorder for over a decade.

"I've been suggesting they do so since 1993. The military has been running blind on this for nearly 15 years. No Canadian study has been undertaken to look at the true number of soldiers coming back from service with PTSD," Passey told Sun Media.

PSYCHOLOGICALLY CRIPPLED

He said the only scientific research on the disorder is coming out of the U.S. and estimates that at least 6% of soldiers are psychologically crippled by the disorder.

"Depending on which study you look at, the numbers are even higher. Front-line infantry in combat outside the wire are far more likely to develop PTSD," he said.

Statistics from Second World War soldiers suggest up to 24% were afflicted with PTSD, he said.

"We know that PTSD is causing a significant number of psychological casualties among soldiers," said Passey.

"Add to that the fact our military members do multiple tours in short periods – take Bosnia or Kosovo for example – and the effects should be obvious.

"Unfortunately no one is looking to quantify them from a scientific perspective. I don't know why (the government) isn't, but it should be." KEYWORDS=EDMONTON

Taliban on run in battle But roadside bomb kills 8

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PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2007.05.13

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PAGE: 10

BYLINE: REUTERS

DATELINE: KABUL

WORD COUNT: 201

Western and Afghan troops have driven the Taliban from a southern area after a week-long battle in which more than 70 militants were killed, an Afghan security official said yesterday.

Violence has surged in Afghanistan in recent months after the traditional winter lull and an upsurge of fighting last year, the bloodiest since the Taliban's removal in 2001.

In the latest incident yesterday, a roadside bomb killed at least eight Afghan police outside the southern city of Kandahar, provincial police chief Esmatullah Alizai said.

There were no casualties among Afghan and Western troops in the fighting in Nahri Saraj of neighbouring Helmand province, scene of a series of operations by foreign-led forces in recent weeks, the security official said.

Five Taliban commanders were among those killed, the official said, adding there were no casualties among civilians.

"We have driven out the Taliban from the district and it is under our control," he said.

CIVILIANS KILLED

Nahri Saraj is 25 km from Sangin district, where witnesses said more than 40 civilians were killed last Tuesday in an air strike by U.S.-led coalition troops.

The coalition has confirmed civilian casualties in the battle.

Separately, an air attack by Western forces killed at least seven civilians, including women and children, in Marja district of Helmand early on Friday, witnesses said yesterday.

Seven of the civilians wounded in the attack were brought to a government run hospital in the provincial capital Lashkar Gah.

"I know of six or seven deaths in my village," a wounded woman said at the hospital.

Afghan officials say U.S.-led troops have killed scores of civilians in the past two months in Afghanistan.

KEYWORDS=WORLD

'Brainwashed' by dark ideas

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ILLUSTRATION: sun file photo A British soldier stands guard next to the site where a suicide bomber blew himself up in Kabul on Sept. 30, 2006, next to the Afghan Interior Ministry. The bomber is alleged to have been the brother of Sohail Qureshi, a former Calgary suspected of being a terrorist.

BYLINE: TODD SAELHOF AND SARAH KENNEDY, SUN MEDIA

WORD COUNT: 411

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"Unfortunately ..."

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"But none of the people around him seemed to agree with his views."

The university had no comment on the arrest, said U of C spokeswoman Colleen Turner.

KEYWORDS=ALBERTA

Arrested man allegedly influenced by suicide–bombing brother

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BYLINE: TODD SAELHOF
WORD COUNT: 214

Following in the footsteps of his brother prompted a Calgarian to want to become a suicide bomber, say media reports.

On suspicion of terrorism, officials in Afghanistan earlier this week arrested 24–year–old University of Calgary graduate Sohail Qureshi, who allegedly confessed his older sibling was responsible for a Sept. 30 attack in Kabul last year, CTV reported yesterday.

"(Afghan authorities) say in a written statement that the Canadian has admitted to planning to carry out a suicide bomb attack in the city," CTV said.

"It also goes on to say that he confessed that his brother was the suicide bomber behind a September 30 attack last year in Kabul that happened in the main gate of the government office."

Reports from the war–torn country allege Qureshi's brother blew himself up outside Afghanistan's Interior Ministry office, killing 12 people and wounding 40 others.

Qureshi, a U of C computer sciences grad, is being detained in Afghanistan on suspicion of attending a terrorist training camp in Pakistan.

A Calgary imam, Sheikh Alaa Elsayed, says he tried to counsel a U of C computer sciences grad in November to keep him from joining the fight with insurgents in Afghanistan.

"I will defend him of doing anything irrational — doing suicide bombing because he knows better than that — however, he thought he was doing the honourable thing," Elsayed said.

"I would think his family is under stress, so I'll give them the respect and time they need for now, but if they wish to contact me, I'll be there for them." **KEYWORDS=ALBERTA**

Frontpage/'I told him not to go' City imam says he counselled young Calgarian against joining Taliban in Afghanistan

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PAGE: 1

ILLUSTRATION: 2 photos 1. photo by Kevin Udahl, Sun Media 2. You're going to Disneyland

WORD COUNT: 0
