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ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Ed Stelmach; Colour Photo: Gen. Rick Hillier ; Colour Photo: Waterton contemplates shedding bison herd ; Colour Photo: Pope Benedict ; Colour Photo: Cristina Quicler, Agence France–Presse, Getty Images / Picture of the Day: Members of the Teatro de Altura perform by the cathedral in Seville, Spain, on Tuesday, part of the international theatre festival that takes place in the city from April 15 to 27. ; Colour Photo: Lowly spud could save world hunger ; Colour Photo: Don't fall prey to energy drinks ; Photo: (See hard copy for description). ; Colour Photo: The Wiggles ;

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Top Stories

Stelmach Government Rolls Out Throne Speech

Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach's government rolled out a long-term vision for his province Tuesday that heavily concentrated on diversifying the economy, with most government policy — including environmental initiatives — influenced by that goal. The Tory government's second throne speech in just over two months pledged to expand the economy and create a new Premier's Council for Economic Strategy.

Page A1

Hillier Stepping Down as Canada's Top Soldier

His personal military mission accomplished, Gen. Rick Hillier will step aside as Canada's top soldier this summer.

Known for speaking his mind, Hillier said his departure from the post of chief of defence staff is entirely voluntary. "If anything, the pressure was the other way to keep me around," he said in an exclusive interview.

Page A3

News sections — A and B

City & Region

City Council Sends Budget Back to Drawing Board

City council has sent its budget back to the drawing board to pare a growing wish list that would have required a 14 per cent tax increase next year.

Page B1

Waterton contemplates shedding bison herd

Waterton Lakes National Park is contemplating shedding the small bison herd that's been stationed in the park for more than five decades.

If the herd is removed, the animals will likely be donated to a First Nation reserve, or sent to auction to be sold for breeding and meat, park superintendent Rod Blair said Tuesday.

Page B1

Canada

Two Charged in Drive-By Shooting of Toddler

RCMP have charged two suspects — including a 15-year-old boy — in a weekend drive-by shooting that left a toddler in critical condition in an Alberta hospital.

Page A10

World

Pope 'Deeply Ashamed' by Sex Abuse by Priests

Pope Benedict opened a six-day visit to the United States on Tuesday by telling Roman Catholics in America he was "deeply ashamed" over sexual abuse scandals that have badly damaged the church's reputation over the past decade.

Page A8

Coral Flourishes at Atomic Bomb Site

Coral is again flourishing in the crater left by the largest nuclear weapon ever detonated by the United States, 54 years after the blast on Bikini Atoll, marine scientists said on Tuesday.

Page A15

Car Bombs Kill More Than 50 People in Iraq

Car bombs on crowded streets killed more than 50 people in Sunni Arab areas of Iraq on Tuesday, a sudden spasm of violence in regions which had been comparatively quiet while battles raged in the Shi'ite south.

Page A17

Traffic

— Lane closure: On 2nd Street between 4th Avenue and 3rd Avenue S.W., the road is reduced to one lane in both directions until April 26.

— Lane closure: On westbound 1st Avenue at Edmonton Trail N.E., the right lane is closed starting at 8 a.m. today until Saturday about 5 p.m.

– Road closure: On eastbound 90th Avenue between 40th Street and 44th Street S.E., the road is closed starting 6 a.m. today until May 1.

– Lane closure: 16th Avenue from Centre Street N. to 6th Street N.W., left lane closed until Thursday at about 3 p.m.

Commuter Weather

6 A.M. Off to Work: Sunny.

Temperature: 0 C

12 Noon Lunch: Mainly sunny.

Temperature: 7 C

5 P.M. Heading Home: Mainly clear.

Temperature: 10 C

Overnight: Mainly clear. Low: 1 C

Thursday: Sunny. High: 13 C Low: –2 C

Tuesday: High: 5.8 C Low: –2 C

Online Features

CalgaryHerald.com

News: Dark, edgy dreamlike sequences, similar to the opening scenes on trendy TV shows, set the backdrop for a series of new TV ads for the Canadian Armed Forces.

News: Jail sentence helps ease Peruvian town's suffering.

Quote of the Day

"I love talking to people, enjoy wearing cute costumes and get a kick out of it when people tell me I'm pretty"

Miyuu Kurusu, one of the cross-dressing maids working at the dozens of maid cafes dotting Tokyo's Akihabara electronics district.

See story, Page A18.

Calgary Business -- D1

Markets

– TSX Composite 112.35 13850.95

– Dow Jones 60.41 12362.47

– Nasdaq 10.22 2286.04

– TSX Venture 0.29 2547.37

New Offices Ease Suburban Squeeze

Calgary companies continue to look for office space in the suburban market as booming construction activity takes place throughout the city, says a report by CB Richard Ellis. The commercial real estate firm says 2.1 million square feet of new suburban office space should be completed by the end of 2008 with 71 per cent of that already pre-leased.

Page D1

Lowly Spud Could Save World Hunger

As wheat and rice prices surge, the humble potato — long derided as a boring tuber prone to making you fat — is being rediscovered as a nutritious crop that could cheaply feed an increasingly hungry world.

Page D3

Editorial — A20

Right Goal, Wrong Prescription

It will take next week's budget to see what Tuesday's throne speech really means. Meanwhile, there's as much to be learned from what this cocktail of platitudes and buzzwords did not say, as what it did. Page A20

Letter of the Day

I have to tell you that my heart skipped a beat when I turned on the TV Sunday night to watch the San Jose/Flames game. The sea of red was amazing.

Cindy Karpiak, Page A21

Herald Hockey — E1

Flames, Sharks Play Mind Games With Media

It goes by many names.

Mind games. Gamesmanship. Chicanery. Subterfuge. Psychology.

Tuesday's pre-game events at the Pengrowth Saddledome were just another reminder that truth is a relative concept at National Hockey League playoff time.

Page E5

Sports — E6

Higgins Takes on CFL's Director of Officiating Role

Tom Higgins is a patient man, so if anybody is well-suited to dealing with complaints about Canadian

Football League officiating, it's him. And with 26 years of CFL experience as a player and coach, he finally will get a look at the zebras from the other side after being introduced on Tuesday as the league's new director of officiating. Page E6

Real Life — C5

Shop if You Love to Eat

If you're a fan of dee Hobsbawn-Smith's work, you've probably noticed that the Calgary chef and cookbook author spells her first name with a lower-case d.

There's a reason for that.

Page C5

Don't Fall Prey to Energy Drinks

Energy drinks are flooding the market. They've become so popular that sales at convenience stores are surpassing those of soft drinks. It's common now to see coolers by checkouts containing only energy drinks.

Page C7

Sudoku

World's Hottest Puzzle Craze

How to Play:

Complete this grid by placing the digits 1 to 9 exactly once, and only once, in each horizontal row and in each column. Also, each digit should only appear once in every 3x3 shaded or white mini-grid in the puzzle. Sudoku appears on the 5 Minute Herald page Monday to Friday and on the Saturday and Sunday puzzle pages.

Entertainment — C1

Wiggles' Worth

As one of the Wiggles — the third from the top, for those whose homes don't include toddling Treehouse addicts — Anthony Field is popular with millions of kids around the world. He also tends to be a big hit with their mommies.

Page C1

Tonight's TV Picks:

– CSI: NY: 8 p.m. on CTV (Ch. 3).

It's An Odd World

Thief Deposits Loot With Victim

Three days after stealing a rare collection of coins, a thief in Germany took them to the bank for safekeeping

— and delivered them into the hands of the man he had robbed.

Soon after the thief made the deposit, a bank worker handling the coins recognized them as the set worth some \$80,000 that had been stolen from his house. Police tracked down the 36-year-old suspect and arrested him, securing other stolen goods in the process.

Canada's defence chief Hillier: The defender of truth; The troops loved him for his obvious concern for them

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In one week in February last year, I went twice to hear the Chief of the Defence Staff, Gen. Rick Hillier, speak. The first time, he talked to a large military audience in Ottawa and had the officers, serving and retired, junior and senior, on their feet cheering. The second address was in Toronto, and a collection of bankers and industrialists laughed at his jokes, cheered him to the echo, and leapt from their chairs applauding when he finished.

There has not been a Canadian general officer with that kind of powerful charisma for decades, likely not since Gen. Jacques Dextraze in the 1970s or Gen. Andrew McNaughton in the early days of the Second World War.

How did Gen. Hillier do it? First, he was funny, patriotic, and transparently sincere in the way he singled out soldiers, sailors, and airmen in the audience who had been decorated for meritorious service. Wars to Gen. Hillier were not fought only for generals. It was the soldiers who did the hard, dirty work, and the chief wanted Canadians to know this. The troops loved him for his obvious concern for them, and so did the people. With his speeches and presence, he made sure that everyone understood that war was a costly business, and the extraordinary outpouring of respect and patriotism when the remains of those killed in Afghanistan return home is clear evidence that he succeeded.

But it was not only the military and the public that Gen. Hillier affected. He moved governments as no other soldier in our time has. Former defence minister Bill Graham jumped him over the heads of more senior officers to be chief of the defence staff — and will still say how proud he is of his choice. Graham and Gen. Hillier together then moved prime minister Paul Martin, hitherto no special fan of the Canadian Forces, to adopt a new International Security Policy in 2005, the first defence statement in years to make sense, with its new vigorous approach. Martin and Graham's approbation might not have been an automatic guarantee the new government of Stephen Harper would approve of Gen. Hillier, but the chief made the turn seamlessly, and Harper's hard line on the need for Canada to carry its full share of the Afghanistan burden fit perfectly with the Hillier approach.

And the General's approach was tough indeed. Gen. Hillier clearly believed that the idea that Canada's natural role — for some Canadians, the only role — was peacekeeping had gone too far in capturing the public mind. Putting Canadian soldiers into Kandahar helped begin knocking the powerful peacekeeping mythology right between the eyes.

Canada's defence chief Hillier: The defender of truth; The troops loved him for his obvious concern for them

Gen. Hillier didn't succeed completely — to listen to the New Democratic Party's MPs and the twaddle peddled by some "defence" institutes is to be certain of that. But at the very least, large segments of public opinion and the government now understand that sometimes only the careful application of force can work to achieve Canadian interests.

It was not that Gen. Hillier opposed peacekeeping in principle or that he was averse to seeing Canadians serve the United Nations. Instead, it was simply that he understood that wearing a blue beret could not be the only role for the Canadian Forces. To him, Canada had international responsibilities to its neighbours, friends, and allies. Our soldiers, sailors, and airmen had to be ready for operations that ranged from traditional peacekeeping to war fighting, along with everything in between, and Gen. Hillier also set out to remind the Canadian Forces of this. No serviceman or woman any longer could assume that military service was simply a pleasant job. Now the unlimited liability of the soldier is once again at the forefront of the military mind.

But if a soldier is asked to risk his life for Canada, the government and people must accept their obligations as well. If Canada sends its men and women to fight, it must give them the tools they need to do the job. Here, Gen. Hillier had extraordinary success. As the mission in Afghanistan altered, as the Taliban changed its tactics, the Canadians serving in Kandahar received the tools to do their jobs. New long-range transport aircraft, vehicles, tanks, artillery, better personal equipment, and devices that could begin to sniff out the Improvised Explosive Devices that have killed and wounded so many — whatever they required, the troops received.

Now with new helicopters expected by the autumn and with unmanned aerial vehicles on the way, Gen. Hillier has done his best for his soldiers overseas. Yes, Gen. Hillier had his difficulties with his political masters. Calling the Taliban "detestable murderers and scumbags" was not tactful in our so polite nation, even if they were. Labelling the Jean Chretien era "a decade of darkness" for the Canadian Forces might have seemed a politically loaded remark to Liberal defence critics, although it was absolutely correct.

But telling the truth was Gen. Hillier's forte. It was why his troops loved him. It was why the public responded, and it is why Gen. Rick Hillier will be almost impossible to replace with anyone of similar ability and charisma.

J.L. Granatstein is a senior research fellow at the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute.

'We are one of the big boys now'; Pride in Forces restored says retiring Hillier

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His personal military mission accomplished, Gen. Rick Hillier will step aside as Canada's top soldier this summer.

Known for speaking his mind, Hillier said his departure from the post of chief of defence staff is entirely voluntary. "If anything, the pressure was the other way to keep me around," he said in an exclusive interview.

With the Kandahar mission extended until 2011 and the purchase of heavy-lift planes, upgraded tanks and helicopters, Hillier says it was a good time to go because it allows him to claim a legacy of reinforced pride inside the military.

"We've achieved the irreversible momentum that I wanted to have," Hillier told Canwest News Service. "It's a transition to a whole different mode and I'm quite comfortable that I can leave on a high and leave hopefully enabling Canadian Forces to carry on to much greater things."

In the House of Commons on Tuesday afternoon, Prime Minister Stephen Harper called Hillier "a great Canadian," even though the Conservative government was never fully comfortable with Hillier's outspoken nature.

"Gen. Hillier has worked very well with the government, he has done an excellent job in rebuilding Canada's Armed Forces. He is a great Canadian and we are very proud to have worked with him."

Hillier said he never aspired to the military's top job, and that he had been planning his departure since last fall. He said he was waiting for the fate of the Afghanistan mission to be determined and that he only planned to stay in the job for two years.

He finally delivered the news to Harper on Tuesday, and the prime minister accepted his resignation, which Hillier said he would formalize in a letter later. The two men shook hands. "His last words were thank you for what you've done," Hillier said.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion also praised Hillier's dedication.

"His influence far exceeds our own armed forces," Dion said in a written statement. "As a commander of NATO forces in both Bosnia–Herzegovina, as well as in Afghanistan, he demonstrated a level of professionalism that won him praise from soldiers and leaders of all our country's military allies."

Even NDP Leader Jack Layton, whose party opposes Canada's military mission in Afghanistan and has called for the immediate withdrawal of the country's 2,500 troops there, had praise for Hillier.

"There's no question that he was very controversial and direct at times," Layton said. "I always felt it came from the heart and we might not have agreed with absolutely everything he recommended, but I never doubted this man's sincerity or his commitment to the country and I think all Canadians thank him for his service. It's certainly not an easy job that he's performed."

The general, appointed by Liberal prime minister Paul Martin in 2005, says recent governments have refunded the military government adequately and put Canada on the road to serving as a global power.

"I can only repeat what one of my commanders once said when he noted we're not trying to be one of the big boys, we are one of the big boys and we have to start acting like it," Hillier recalled. "That's a very good comment because that reflects our place in the world. Canada has had a significant re–profiling in the world. We're one of the big boys now."

Hillier insisted he has no political ambitions.

"I have no idea what I'll do, but I'm sure I'll work for another 10, 15 years," Hillier said. "I don't want to sit on the couch scratching my belly in my underwear watching the soaps."

In recent years, Hillier's post has become increasingly politicized. He incurred the wrath of the Liberal opposition by referring to the preceding

15 years of budget cuts that started under the Mulroney Conservatives as a "decade of darkness."

His take–no–prisoners, straight–talking style also irked the Conservatives, who were uncomfortable with Hillier speaking his mind on Afghanistan.

"He has a very outgoing and gregarious personality that was embraced wholeheartedly by the men and women in uniform and he provided a great deal of inspiration and was a very hands–on chief of defence staff," Defence Minister Peter MacKay said Tuesday.

"He'll be sorely missed."

– – –

Rick Hillier's file

– Born in Campbellton, N.L., in 1955.

– Joined the Canadian Forces in 1973 through the Regular Officer Training Plan, graduating in 1975 with a bachelor of science degree from Memorial University.

– Married with two sons.

– Official biography reports that Hillier runs slowly, plays hockey poorly and golfs not well at all.

Compiled by Karen Crosby, Calgary Herald

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CalgaryHerald.com

For more on Gen. Rick Hillier and his career, log on to: Calgaryherald.com

General put strength back in the military

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Soldiers are trained to follow orders and, when their chain of command reaches the top, direction comes from the reigning political masters.

But retiring Gen. Rick Hillier . . . not so much.

Canada's first chief of defence staff superstar will step down this summer after three years as a defining force of military personality, a general who worried less about the lofty views of prime ministers than the battlefield grievances of a lowly private.

His considerable mouth was a formidable weapon, letting fly opinions like laser-guided missiles that could penetrate any political flak jacket. He didn't fear the politicians. They feared him.

And with reason. Taking on Hillier quickly became an unfair fight. It started the day of his appointment in early 2005 with a demand for more federal funding — a boost promptly dropped into the budget.

Former defence minister Gordon O'Connor paid the ultimate price for losing a popularity contest against Hillier. With that relationship poisoned by friction between former general O'Connor and his once junior officer, one of the pair had to go. The unhappy loser of that showdown is now the revenue minister.

After that, all talk of Hillier being dumped was CTV pulp fiction. He would go at a time and on terms of his choosing.

On the eve of his retirement announcement over beer Monday night, Hillier nicely framed his military legacy in a single sentence: "We're one of the big boys now."

With air, ground and naval equipment upgrades on order or delivered to bolster an extended Afghanistan mission fortified with 1,000 fresh American troops, Hillier has put the force back into the military.

That's why it was the perfect time to retire. The mission may be entering a more aggressive phase as the killing season arrives in Kandahar to coincide with the testosterone release accompanying an influx of American troops.

But more than re-arming Canada as a middle power player, the success secret has been Hillier's public relations acumen, talent rarely seen in brass spending too long collecting stripes while climbing through the

ranks.

With carefully timed speeches and politically incorrect outbursts defending the needs of the soldier, Hillier dwarfed queasy voter opinion about the Afghanistan mission by focusing on strong public support for the military and its too many sacrifices.

It's not that Hillier shoots from the lip before his brain is loaded. He knows his limits.

When pushed for any parting opinions on his political masters, he laughs. "Note to your tape recorder, I'm shaking my head in the negative."

It should also be noted the pride of Campbellton, N.L., who tried to enlist as an eight-year-old before successfully signing up at 17 to begin a 35-year rise up the ranks, had plenty of luck on his side.

His commands were the mixture of white knight rescues and black ops. He commanded military efforts during the Red River floods of 1997 and the 1998 ice storm that blanketed Ottawa and Montreal. He commanded the 6,000-strong International Security Assistance Force as Canada prepared to shift south into Kandahar. Then came his greatest challenge: selling a casualty-plagued peacemaking mission to a nation accustomed to blue-helmeted peacekeepers.

Perhaps one name best defines the Hillier phenomenon: Ray Henault.

The pre-Hillier chief of defence staff accepted his posting as a political puppet with nary a discouraging word. He came and left — and nobody knew his name.

Hillier shrugs off legacy talk, but there's been a profoundly positive shift in military perception since the disgrace of the Somalia scandal in the mid-1990s.

"I can't go anywhere these days or anybody else in uniform without somebody patting you on the head or shaking your hand and saying thank you very much," Hillier says.

Even the most colourful old soldiers have to fade away eventually. But only a very few — perhaps just this one — get to stake a legacy of their own and cash in on their four-star reputation with lucrative speaking engagements or consulting contracts.

Hillier dismisses talk of a political career, preferring to think in terms of golf or hockey. But he insists he won't be idle. "I don't want to sit on the couch scratching my belly in my underwear watching the soaps," he smirks. "At most I'll take two or three days off."

While he doesn't get to choose his successor, Hillier has strong views on the type of person who should become his replacement.

He leans over his beer, his face suddenly dead serious. "You're dealing with issues that cost men and women their lives. If you're not prepared to argue your case eloquently, articulately, occasionally aggressively, but always clearly, you can't be a chief of defence staff."

That's the trouble, as you scan the lineup of heirs. None of them appears to have what it takes to meet Hillier's self-styled criteria. That suggests we may not see the likes of him again.

"POURQUOI SI VITE?"

SOURCETAG 0804160232

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PAGE: 9

BYLINE: VALÉRIE DUFOUR LE JOURNAL DE MONTRÉAL

WORD COUNT: 274

Surprise et confusion dans le milieu militaire

Surprise et confusion. Les observateurs du milieu militaire s'attendaient au départ du chef d'état-major Rick Hillier, mais pas aussi tôt.

" Pourquoi si vite ? Les choses ne sont pas terminées et il aurait pu en abattre, du travail, en un an. Sa fougue et sa détermination auraient servi la cause des Forces armées canadiennes ", croit le lieutenant-colonel à la retraite Rémi Landry.

" Comme une vedette de hockey, il se retire au sommet de sa gloire. [...] C'est un homme d'action. Il avait peut-être accompli ce qu'il voulait accomplir ", indique le colonel à la retraite Michel Drapeau.

" C'est un grand communicateur, un gars qui a son franc-parler, un chef charismatique. Il est populaire au sein des Forces armées. Il ne laisse personne indifférent. Cela a créé des situations difficiles pour certains politiciens ", ajoute l'ancien officier.

Paix et guerre

" Il était très apprécié de ses officiers et de ses soldats. Il contrôlait bien les forces armées. [...] Mais c'est sous sa gouverne que nous sommes passés des missions de paix à des missions de guerre ", a souligné le député libéral Bernard Patry.

" Avec le départ de Hillier, il y aura un politicien de moins et un ministre de la Défense de moins à Ottawa. C'était un homme qui défendait ses troupes, mais il a souvent fait des déclarations politiques et des commentaires à l'emportepièce ", note son collègue Denis Coderre.

Il fait également un lien entre son départ et les commentaires embarrassants du ministre des Affaires étrangères, Maxime Bernier, qui a suggéré que l'on remplace le gouverneur de la région de Kandahar. " Après la distribution de Jos Louis, c'était la deuxième fois que le ministre nous faisait honte en Afghanistan. Ça a peut-être précipité sa décision ", analyse M. Coderre. !@MOTSCLES=FORCES CANADIENNES – DÉMISSION

HILLIER REND LES ARMES IL QUITTE SON POSTE DE CHEF D'ÉTAT-MAJOR APRÈS TROIS ANS

SOURCETAG: 0804160231

PUBLICATION: Le Journal de Montréal

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EDITION: Final

SECTION: Nouvelles

PAGE: 9

ILLUSTRATION: 1. PHOTO PC Le général Rick Hillier s'était fait un devoir de poser avec la coupe Stanley le mois dernier à Kandahar, en Afghanistan. Le ministre de la Défense, Peter MacKay, l'accompagnait.

BYLINE: PC

WORD COUNT: 424

OTTAWA -- (PC) Le général Rick Hillier, le chef d'état-major de l'armée canadienne et son porte-parole le plus éloquent de la guerre en Afghanistan, a remis sa démission au premier ministre Stephen Harper, hier. La démission entrera en vigueur le 1er juillet, jour de la Fête du Canada.

M. Harper a rendu hommage au général Hillier à la Chambre des communes, hier, soulignant la qualité de son travail avec le gouvernement. " C'est un grand Canadien, et nous sommes très fiers d'avoir eu l'opportunité de travailler avec lui ", a déclaré M. Harper pendant la période de questions. Mais le premier ministre n'en a pas dit davantage.

Dans une déclaration écrite rendue publique hier après-midi, le général Hillier a dressé un bilan de son travail et a affirmé avoir atteint les principaux objectifs qu'il s'était fixés.

Hommage

" Mon but était de mettre en place les éléments requis pour que nous, hommes et femmes de l'armée, de la marine et de l'aviation réussissent toutes les tâches reliées à la défense du Canada, aux valeurs et aux intérêts du Canada. Nous avons atteint ces objectifs-clés, ainsi que toutes les étapes critiques que j'avais prévues avant la fin de mon mandat ", a déclaré le général démissionnaire.

M. Hillier n'a pas manqué de rendre hommage à tous ceux et à toutes celles qui avaient laissé leur vie sur les champs de bataille.

" Nous avons pleuré ceux qui nous ont quittés; nous devons nous souvenir de tous ceux qui ont fait le sacrifice ultime au service de notre pays. Leurs sacrifices, et celui de leurs familles, méritent notre reconnaissance entière ", a-t-il tenu à mentionner.

Nommé il y a un peu plus de trois ans, le général Hillier, âgé de 52 ans, aura été le plus visible chef d'état-major de sa génération, mais aussi une source de controverses en raison de ses analyses, souvent très directes, des ennemis du Canada et des politiques du pays en matière de défense.

Pour le gouvernement conservateur, le général Hillier aura été, à la fois, un atout et un boulet, insistant sur l'importance de la mission de combat à Kandahar alors que les leaders politiques semblaient incapables, ou peu intéressés, de la défendre. Mais sa popularité a maintes fois relégué à l'arrière-plan ses qualités de politicien, et elle s'est transformée en handicap l'été dernier.

HILLIER REND LES ARMES IL QUITTE SON POSTE DE CHEF D'ÉTAT-MAJOR APRÈS TROIS ANS

M. Hillier a été au centre d'un litige public qui aurait coûté le poste de l'ancien ministre de la Défense Gordon O'Connor.

" NOUS AVONS ATTEINT NOS OBJECTIFS-CLÉS, AINSI QUE TOUTES LES ÉTAPES CRITIQUES QUE J'AVAIS PRÉVUES AVANT LA FIN DE MON MANDAT "

– Rick Hillier

* * *

LES SUCCESSEURS POSSIBLES

Lieutenant-général Walter Natynczyk

Il est le bras droit de Rick Hillier.> Lieutenant-général Andrew Leslie

Il est le grand patron de l'armée de terre.

Lieutenant-général Michel Gauthier

Il est le commandant de la Force expéditionnaire du Canada.

Vice-amiral Drew Robertson

Il est le chef de la Marine.

Lieutenant-général Angus Watt

Il est le chef de la force aérienne. !@MOTSCLES=FORCES CANADIENNES – DÉMISSION

HILLIER REND LES ARMES IL QUITTE SON POSTE DE CHEF D'ÉTAT-MAJOR APRÈS TROIS ANS

LE TOFFE REND LES ARMES

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PUBLICATION: Le Journal de Montréal
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PAGE: 27
BYLINE: MARCO FORTIER
WORD COUNT: 556

En apparence, la démission de l'homme fort des Forces armées, le général Rick Hillier, représente un coup dur pour le gouvernement Harper. Le Canada perd son soldat le plus toffe en pleine guerre qui ne veut plus finir.

Avec le recul, on verra peut-être le départ de ce guerrier comme une bonne nouvelle pour les conservateurs. Le gouvernement Harper tient une chance inespérée de se rapprocher des bonnes vieilles " valeurs canadiennes " de maintien de la paix.

Le départ du général Hillier paraissait inévitable. Plus le temps passait, plus le haut gradé se comportait comme s'il était premier ministre. Il jouait avec les nerfs de Stephen Harper et de ses ministres. En démocratie, ce n'est pas l'armée qui mène !

Rick Hillier s'est révélé un leader incomparable à la tête des Forces armées. Les soldats l'adoraient. C'était un gars de terrain, qui n'a jamais eu peur d'aller au front. Ses troupes le respectaient. Il le leur rendait bien.

C'est le général Hillier qui a convaincu le gouvernement libéral de Paul Martin de déployer les militaires canadiens dans la zone chaude de Kandahar, château fort des talibans. Sous son impulsion, le gouvernement Martin, puis celui de Stephen Harper, ont investi des dizaines de milliards de dollars en machines de guerre de toutes sortes.

Le général de 52 ans, originaire de Terre-Neuve, avait d'ailleurs donné le ton de la nouvelle attitude canadienne en qualifiant les talibans " d'ordures " et de " meurtriers détestables " dans une de ses premières entrevues, en 2005.

Casques bleus, vous dites ? Maintien de la paix ? C'est quoi ça ? Désormais, on est là pour tuer les méchants. Les critiques du général Hillier affirment que le Canada a tourné le dos à son héritage de gardien de la paix sous son leadership.

RECONSTRUCTION D'ABORD

Le gouvernement Harper était plutôt content. Le débat déchirant sur la suite de la mission en Afghanistan, cet hiver, a marqué un point tournant. Politiquement, le ton belliqueux de l'ami Hillier devenait intolérable pour Stephen Harper.

Dès février, le général avait poussé sa chance en insistant pour que le Canada continue de se battre le temps qu'il faudra contre les talibans. La reconstruction, ce n'était pas sa tasse de thé. Remarquez, il n'avait pas tort : impossible de " reconstruire " des routes et des écoles si on se fait tirer dessus à longueur de journée.

Comme par hasard, Hillier était absent du sommet de l'OTAN à Bucarest, au début d'avril. Les conservateurs ont réalisé que le discours de toffes sur la chasse aux terroristes laisse les Canadiens – et les Québécois –

complètement indifférents. À partir de maintenant, on est en Afghanistan pour les routes, les puits, les petites écolières, la libération des Afghanes. Pas pour la cueillette des " ordures ".

Préparez-vous quand même à entendre parler de Rick Hillier dans les prochains mois. Ce bonhomme-là est un leader naturel, comme on en voit rarement en politique ou ailleurs.

Il dégage une énergie et une assurance qui font cruellement défaut à la Chambre des communes. Rick Hillier sait parler pour se faire comprendre. Il n'a pas la langue dans sa poche. Qu'on soit d'accord ou non avec lui, il faut reconnaître qu'il a de la drive.

Hillier occuperait sans aucun doute une place de choix dans n'importe quel gouvernement. On le croirait conservateur, mais il a tellement fait suer le gouvernement Harper qu'on ne peut l'imaginer avec les bleus pour l'instant.

Avec les rouges ? On ne sait jamais. Après tout, c'est Paul Martin qui l'avait nommé chef des Forces armées. Chose certaine, où qu'il aille, ça va brasser.

The text of a statement from Gen. Rick Hillier

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

DATE: 2008.04.16

SECTION: National/World

PAGE: 12

ILLUSTRATION: hillier

WORD COUNT: 457

I have chosen to retire from the Canadian Forces and end my tenure as your chief of the defence staff in July of this year.

I accepted the leadership of the Canadian Forces in February 2005. My goal was to set the conditions for our sailors, soldiers, airmen and airwomen to succeed in our critical and often dangerous tasks in defence of Canada, Canadians, and Canadian interests and values.

We have achieved those key objectives, and reached the critical milestones I originally set out for us to reach by the end of my time as CDS. We have moulded our culture to one which recognizes that operations are our *raison d'être*; that our efforts, all of them, must concentrate on achieving the missions and tasks given to us by the government of Canada, on behalf of all Canadians.

We have transformed how we recruit, train, equip, command, deploy, employ, bring home, recognize and care for our operational forces and our families, focused on achieving a strategic effect for Canada. We have done so while growing the Canadian Forces, re–equipping it, and while carrying out intense combat and peace support operations overseas and demanding, essential security tasks here at home.

We have remembered how to grieve; to never forget our comrades and dear friends who have died in the service of Canada. Their sacrifice, and that of their families, deserves our unwavering commitment to ensure their loss is not in vain.

We have been strengthened, immensely, by the vocal and visible support of millions of Canadians who have demonstrated that they recognize, understand and honour your service, and the sacrifice of your families.

Leadership in the Canadian Forces is not the role of one single person; it is the responsibility of all who wear the Canadian Forces uniform. I believe you will now be best served by the invigoration of new leadership, with the vision, energy, and strength to lead you through the challenges that will lie ahead. For we have not finished evolving. We must continue to adapt, and improve our Forces to accomplish the tasks Canadians need us to perform in the complex, dangerous security environment before us.

It is with great confidence that I await the selection of the senior leader who will take my place. I will continue to serve as your CDS until relieved of my duties by my successor, to be named in due course by our prime minister.

My wife Joyce and I thank you for the rewarding years we have shared with you, and look forward to many years ahead as part of the Canadian Forces family.

You are Canada's greatest credentials, our national treasures, and I am so very proud of you. It has been my honour and privilege to be your chief of the defence staff.

Hillier hangs up helmet; Canada's top military boss steps down

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

DATE: 2008.04.16

SECTION: National/World

PAGE: 9

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Murray Brewster

PHOTO: The Canadian Press

DATELINE: OTTAWA

ILLUSTRATION: Canada's Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier arrives at the Provincial Reconstruction Team base in Kandahar, Afghanistan, in this file photo. Hillier has announced he will step down from the post this summer, after more than three years as the country's top military commander.

WORD COUNT: 715

Gen. Rick Hillier, the country's top military commander and most passionate spokesman for the war in Afghanistan, is stepping down in July after more than three years as chief of defence staff.

Hillier, 52, has been the most visible military leader in a generation and a political lightning rod over his often blunt assessments of Canada's enemies and defence policy.

He has been both a blessing and a curse for the Conservative government, making a case for the combat mission in Kandahar when political leaders seemed unable to articulate it.

The job of top military commander generally lasts about three years and there were persistent rumours that Hillier – who celebrated that third anniversary on Feb. 5 – would soon be leaving.

Hillier said he was under no pressure from Prime Minister Stephen Harper to retire.

"He and I have had a discussion in the past – several times – about when it was appropriate and certainly he indicated that there was no hurry for me to go and he was very comfortable with me as chief of the defence staff.

"I felt that now, coming to the summer, was the appropriate time to hand off to somebody else."

Hillier issued a statement on his departure, saying the military has "reached the critical milestones I originally set out for us to reach."

"We have transformed how we recruit, train, equip, command, deploy, employ, bring home, recognize and care for our operational forces and our families, focused on achieving a strategic effect for Canada.

"We have been strengthened, immensely, by the vocal and visible support of millions of Canadians who have demonstrated that they recognize, understand and honour your service, and the sacrifice of your families."

Harper praised Hillier in the House of Commons, saying he has worked well with the government.

"He is a great Canadian and we are very proud to have worked with him," Harper said.

Hillier's popularity has often overshadowed his political masters and became a liability last summer.

He wound up in a public tussle with former defence minister Gordon O'Connor over how long it would take for Canadian troops to train their Afghan counterparts – key to Canada's exit strategy.

The contradiction between the two that was widely believed to have led to O'Connor's shuffle out of the defence portfolio.

Harper and his Liberal predecessor, Paul Martin, have said they relied heavily on Hillier's military advice.

It was Martin who appointed him to the top defence job and the former prime minister said Hillier was the man for the Canadian military at the right time.

"I think he'll be remembered as the man who took office at the time when the rebuilding of the Canadian military was a priority for the government and he fulfilled every expectation," Martin told The Canadian Press.

The timing of his departure was deliberate, Hillier said, coming after months of consideration and following Parliament's extension of the mission in Kandahar by three years.

Seeing the mission through to 2011 was an additional time commitment he said he wasn't prepared to make, having initially planned to stay in the chief's job for only two years.

Ordinary soldiers, sailors and aircrew worshipped Hillier and his loss will be felt keenly, many of them said yesterday.

"The care of the soldiers was his primary goal and we really, really feel it," said Warrant Officer Daniel Demers, a recruiter.

"For us, everyone was ready to step forward with this man."

The woman who is, technically speaking, Hillier's boss, said he informed her of the decision a while ago.

Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean has spent plenty of time with him. When she took on her post as commander-in-chief of the Canadian Forces, she said Hillier was extremely helpful in sharing his military knowledge, and to this day they console grieving families together at repatriation ceremonies whenever a Canadian soldier is killed in Afghanistan.

"He always had the right word and the right thing to say to the military – and also to their families," Jean told reporters during a trip to the Arctic.

"He always paid tribute to their many sacrifices. I have the highest respect for him and I wish him the best."

Hillier's outspoken comments have fuelled speculation that he could be considering a political career – an assertion Hillier has consistently dismissed.

He was asked of a potential political career and said: "No. Is that clear?"

Some have credited him with being the architect of Canada's military mission in Kandahar, the most intense conflict the country has been involved in since the Korean War.

A recent book, co-authored by a former Liberal insider, claimed Hillier's persuasive arguments persuaded an uncertain Paul Martin to approve the deployment in 2005.

The man who recommended Hillier's appointment to Martin said the general is a forceful personality.

"He brought a combination of drive, intelligence and experience ... that made him, in the end, the logical choice," said former Liberal defence minister Bill Graham.

His replacement is widely expected to come from the army even though the top defence job, by custom, usually rotates between services.

One of the names often mentioned is Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie, the current head of the army.

Also mentioned is Lt.-Gen. Walter Natynczyk, vice-chief of defence staff since 2006. He was on exchange with U.S. Army III Corps in Texas during the invasion of Iraq, went with the III Corps to Iraq and became deputy commanding general of the Multi-National Corps.

General was a 'huge inspiration to his troops'; Army chief captured the attention of the public and the hearts of his soldiers, observers say

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

DATE: 2008.04.16

SECTION: National/World

PAGE: 9

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: John Ward

PHOTO: Canadian Press file photo The Canadian Press

DATELINE: OTTAWA

ILLUSTRATION: Gen. Rick Hillier addresses the troops in Kabul, Afghanistan.; Canada's Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier speaks about his retirement announcement during a press conference yesterday.

WORD COUNT: 659

Perhaps no Canadian soldier in a generation or more captured the public's attention and the hearts of his soldiers as did Rick Hillier.

Bill Graham, the former Liberal defence minister who recommended him to then–prime minister Paul Martin as chief of defence staff, called Hillier "one of the most charismatic figures around Ottawa generally ... and a huge inspiration to his troops."

Historians Jack Granatstein and David Bercuson, and retired general Lew MacKenzie, said there hasn't been a general so admired by the troops since Jacques Dextraze in the 1970s. Dextraze was a legendary soldier who fought in two wars and rose from private to general.

"For whatever reason, the perception was that Hillier put the interest of the troops, rather than the government, first," said Granatstein.

The historian said he wasn't denigrating Hillier's predecessors as people who ignored the rank–and–file.

"It's just that Hillier had that personality that the troops loved. I don't think we've had a CDS that the troops loved since Dextraze." Hillier also likely did more than anyone to promote support for the Afghanistan war, decrying Afghan insurgents in blunt terms – including "murderers" and "scumbags" – and praising his soldiers to the skies.

The general, who retires July 1, was a bluff, blunt, colourful leader who captivated privates, politicians and the public alike.

He enlisted as an armour officer and rose through the ranks. He served with NATO in Germany, filled staff jobs in Ottawa and commanded a brigade group. He commanded the military relief efforts when the 1998 ice storm lashed eastern Ontario and western Quebec in 1998.

He also served as deputy commanding general of American armoured corps. He also commanded the Canadian army and multinational forces in Bosnia and Afghanistan.

General was a 'huge inspiration to his troops'; Army chief captured the attention of the public and the hearts

Born in Newfoundland in 1955, he never lost the distinctive Newfoundland lilt in his voice, nor did he shed the quirky sense of humour instinctive in so many of those who hail from The Rock.

Comedian Rick Mercer, himself a Newfoundlander and a quipster of note, once wrote of Hillier:

"He is funny as hell and inspiring as anyone I have ever seen speak. He makes soldiers laugh and then he makes them cry. He thanks them all in a way that makes everyone grow inches."

But there was more to the general than an infectious grin, flashing eyes and a lifelong, unrequited love affair with the Toronto Maple Leafs.

He also presided over a turbulent time of renewal and reorganization within the Canadian Forces.

"He had the intellectual capacity to see what the problems were ... and the need for changing the way in which the Canadian Forces trained themselves, equipped themselves and organized themselves." said Graham.

"And then he implemented that at the same time keeping the loyalty of his troops. Change is always bloody in big institutions."

He was the architect of a defence policy that reorganized the Forces and established new commands to deal with the dangerous 21st century.

"He was a very fortunate combination of circumstances," said Bercuson. "He came along just at the time when the Martin government was starting to pay attention to the military, wanted to start rejuvenating the military ... and here was the perfect candidate to do it.

"He not only raised the profile of the military throughout the country, but he had tremendous support within the military."

It seemed, to some, that Hillier far outshone the defence ministers and the governments he served, but Graham disagreed.

"He spoke truth to power and gave his best shot at advice about what we should be doing," Graham said. "Sometimes it wasn't 100 per cent on page with what the government of the day was doing, but governments are big enough to be able to understand that.

"I think he was saying what he had to say about the business."

And he would say it anyone. He crisscrossed the country for three years, speaking to conferences and service clubs and community groups, hotel meeting rooms and town halls and hockey arenas.

He would usually show up with a couple of bemedalled corporals or junior officers, recount their exploits, express his pride.

His message was always the same: My troops are your sons and daughters and husbands and wives and fathers and mothers; they are everyday Canadians and they deserve and need your support.

That, a joke or two and a tongue-in-cheek lament about the Leafs and their moribund playoff prospects, constituted his standard performance.

In his final message to the troops, he again expressed his pride in them.

General was a 'huge inspiration to his troops'; Army chief captured the attention of the public and ~~124~~ hearts

"You are Canada's greatest credentials, our national treasures, and I am so very proud of you."

He also reminded them of "the vocal and visible support of millions of Canadians who have demonstrated that they recognize, understand and honour your service, and the sacrifice of your families."

General was a 'huge inspiration to his troops'; Army chief captured the attention of the public and 125 hearts

Let's be frank on Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

DATE: 2008.04.16

SECTION: Editorial page

PAGE: 4

COLUMN: Our View

WORD COUNT: 500

As diplomatic protocol goes, Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier slipped up big time on Monday when he openly questioned the future of the governor of Kandahar.

It turns out that Bernier revealed publicly what has been happening behind closed doors for weeks: that is, a concerted effort to convince Afghan President Hamid Karzai that Asadullah Khalid must go.

Khalid has been an embarrassment, a former Afghan warlord linked to recurring reports that he has been directly involved in torturing prisoners. Canada also has grave concerns about the level of corruption related to Khalid's governance.

"There is the question to maybe have a new governor," Bernier told reporters in a rare moment of high-level government candour.

Bernier's staff immediately tried to convince reporters not to run his comments. But the cat was out of the bag. It looked and sounded like Canada was meddling in Afghanistan's internal political affairs.

The fact is, without the presence of Canadian and other NATO troops, Karzai's government would fail. And if democracy is going to gain a foothold in the region, we can't be propping up corrupt leaders.

But none of this should come as a surprise. In fact, Canadians could use more frankness like Bernier's on the Afghanistan file than the Conservative government has provided. This is especially true where issues of torture are concerned.

For example, last Friday, the Conservatives filed a legal action to stop the Military Police Complaints Commission, an independent body, from investigating whether Canadian soldiers had ever turned over prisoners to Afghan authorities knowing they would be tortured. Prime Minister Stephen Harper said it was his government's position that the commission was acting "outside of its jurisdiction, so we are going to court on that jurisdictional question."

The panel is looking into complaints filed by Amnesty International Canada and the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association. Instead of the hearings starting May 1, they could be delayed until next year. More and more, the government's actions are looking like a coverup, and that's bad for public relations here at home.

The seriousness of these allegations reinforces the point that Canadian soldiers and diplomats are involved in a dirty, dangerous war in Afghanistan. At the same time, Canadians want assurance that this mission, approved by Parliament to 2011, is legitimate in all respects – that our hands are clean. Our soldiers, many of whom are from from Kingston, are putting their lives on the line and should not be compromised by corrupt governments or human rights abuses or our own government's knowledge of them.

Yesterday's sudden announcement of the resignation of Chief of Defence Gen. Rick Hillier as of July 1 throws more uncertainty into the Afghanistan equation. Hillier has provided the military backbone to push the

mission onward.

On the ground, the soldiers felt he had their backs covered. He got the equipment they needed to do their jobs.

The government's selection of his replacement will be crucial. As the Americans are learning in Iraq, as the public tolerance for war and death wears thin, and the mission nears its end, the decisions – political and military – get more difficult.

City to host security conference in June

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

DATE: 2008.04.16

SECTION: Local news

PAGE: 3

COLUMN: In brief

WORD COUNT: 112

Military officers, academics, diplomats, government officials and representatives of non–governmental organizations and international institutions will gather at the Four Points Sheraton in June for the 2008 Kingston Conference on International Security entitled "War Without Borders."

Topics to be discussed at the two–day conference include: Afghanistan and Iraq; understanding the new wars; adapting to the new wars; the Africa experience; and the Western hemisphere: Latin America and the Caribbean.

Guest speakers include: Gen. Rick Hillier, who is stepping down as chief of defence staff for the Canadian Forces; Cynthia Efird, former U.S. ambassador to Angola; and John Schram, former Canadian ambassador to Ghana.

The conference takes place from June 17 to 19.

Top soldier Hillier to step down July 1; Chief of defence staff will call it quits July 1

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle–Herald

DATE: 2008.04.16

SECTION: Front

PAGE: A1

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Murray Brewster

ILLUSTRATION: Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier said the military has 'reached the critical milestones I originally set out for us to reach.' (Tom Hanson / CP)

WORD COUNT: 768

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He has been both a blessing and a curse for the Conservative government, making a case for the combat mission in Kandahar when political leaders seemed unable to articulate it.

The job of top military commander generally lasts about three years and there were persistent rumours that Hillier, who celebrated that third anniversary on Feb. 5, would soon be leaving.

Hillier said he was under no pressure from Prime Minister Stephen Harper to retire.

"He and I have had a discussion in the past – several times – about when it was appropriate and certainly he indicated that there was no hurry for me to go and he was very comfortable with me as chief of the defence staff.

"I felt that now, coming to the summer, was the appropriate time to hand off to somebody else."

Hillier issued a statement on his departure, saying the military has "reached the critical milestones I originally set out for us to reach."

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Harper and his Liberal predecessor, Paul Martin, have said they relied heavily on Hillier's military advice.

The timing of his departure appears deliberate, coming just after Parliament extended the mission in Kandahar by three years and when the threat of a federal election is at a low ebb, said a defence analyst.

"He didn't want to leave too close to an election because his departure would have become a political issue," said Alex Morrison, president of the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies.

"And then there's the extension of the Afghan mission. In the normal course of events, he wouldn't be chief of defence staff until the end of the mission. So it's good to get a new person in there now." Hillier's outspoken comments have fuelled speculation that he could be considering a political career – an assertion Hillier has consistently dismissed.

Some have credited him with being the architect of Canada's military mission in Kandahar, the most intense conflict the country has been involved in since the Korean War.

A recent book, co-authored by a former Liberal insider, claimed Hillier's arguments persuaded an uncertain Paul Martin to approve the deployment in 2005.

The man who recommended Hillier's appointment to Martin said the general is a forceful personality.

"He brought a combination of drive, intelligence and experience . . . that made him in the end the logical choice," said former Liberal defence minister Bill Graham.

His replacement is widely expected to come from the army even though the top defence job, by custom, usually rotates among services.

One of the names often mentioned is Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie, the head of the army.

Also mentioned is Lt.-Gen. Walter Natynczyk, vice-chief of defence staff since 2006. He was on exchange with U.S. Army III Corps in Texas during the invasion of Iraq, went with the III Corps to Iraq and became deputy commanding general of the Multi-National Corps.

NDP Leader Jack Layton, who has often been critical of Hillier, was full of praise Tuesday.

"Here's someone who has given many years of service to our country," Layton said.

"We always have to be thankful that people are willing to do these kinds of difficult jobs and when they decide to move on and take their retirement, I think all Canadians would want to wish the general well and certainly I would add my name to that list of Canadians."

Hillier was known as the soldiers' soldier, an outspoken advocate who put the welfare of his troops before all else.

His legacy will be a renewed military, equipped with new aircraft, vehicles and other equipment depleted by years of budget cuts and neglect.

Having earned a science degree from Memorial University in his native Newfoundland, Hillier joined the army 36 years ago and trained as an armoured officer.

He said when he joined, he had no ambitions to be a general: "I just wanted to be a soldier."

Hillier's career took him from regimental duties in a tank unit to staff jobs in Montreal and Defence Department headquarters in Ottawa, where he eventually became army and then defence chief.

He has served across Canada, twice in Europe and the United States, and did a term as the senior NATO officer in Afghanistan.

His predecessor, air force Gen. Ray Henault, served five years in the job, while Gen. John de Chastelain served two separate appointments – from 1989 until 1993, and again in 1994–95.

Soldiers' soldier Hillier retiring; Chief of defence staff will call it quits July 1

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle–Herald

DATE: 2008.04.16

SECTION: Front

PAGE: A1

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Murray Brewster

ILLUSTRATION: Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier said the military has 'reached the critical milestones I originally set out for us to reach.' (Tom Hanson / CP)

WORD COUNT: 768

OTTAWA – Gen. Rick Hillier, the country's top military commander and most passionate spokesman for the war in Afghanistan, is stepping down in July after more than three years as chief of defence staff.

Hillier, 52, has been the most visible military leader in a generation and a political lightning rod over his often blunt assessments of Canada's enemies and defence policy.

He has been both a blessing and a curse for the Conservative government, making a case for the combat mission in Kandahar when political leaders seemed unable to articulate it.

The job of top military commander generally lasts about three years and there were persistent rumours that Hillier, who celebrated that third anniversary on Feb. 5, would soon be leaving.

Hillier said he was under no pressure from Prime Minister Stephen Harper to retire.

"He and I have had a discussion in the past – several times – about when it was appropriate and certainly he indicated that there was no hurry for me to go and he was very comfortable with me as chief of the defence staff.

"I felt that now, coming to the summer, was the appropriate time to hand off to somebody else."

Hillier issued a statement on his departure, saying the military has "reached the critical milestones I originally set out for us to reach."

"We have transformed how we recruit, train, equip, command, deploy, employ, bring home, recognize and care for our operational forces and our families, focused on achieving a strategic effect for Canada.

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Harper praised Hillier in the House of Commons, saying he has worked well with the government.

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Champion of Canadian soldiers steps down as chief of defence; Outspoken Rick Hillier was often at odds with Tories on how to proceed in Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2008.04.16

SECTION: Canada

PAGE: A9

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

DATELINE: OTTAWA

ILLUSTRATION: Canada's Chief of Defence Staff General Rick Hillier speaks in regards to his retirement announcement during a press conference at DND headquarters in Ottawa on Tuesday.
Canadian Press photo

WORD COUNT: 354

Gen. Rick Hillier, the country's top military commander and most passionate spokesman for the war in Afghanistan, is stepping down in July after more than three years as chief of defence staff.

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hillier fact sheet

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– Family – Wife, Joyce; two sons, Chris and Steven; grandson, Jack. – Quote – "These are detestable murderers and scumbags. They detest our freedoms, they detest our society, they detest our liberties." – July 14, 2005, on Osama bin Laden and his ilk.

Top soldier says it's time to go; Hillier says there's no pressure for him to step down as defence chief

PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)

DATE: 2008.04.16

SECTION: Provincial

PAGE: A3

SOURCE: the Canadian Press

BYLINE: Murray Brewster

ILLUSTRATION: Canada's Chief of the Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier talks about his retirement announcement during a news conference at DND headquarters in Ottawa Tuesday. – Photo by The Canadian Press

WORD COUNT: 555

Gen. Rick Hillier, the country's top military commander and most passionate spokesman for the war in Afghanistan, is stepping down in July after more than three years as chief of the defence staff.

Hillier, a native Newfoundlander, has been the most visible military leader in a generation and a political lightning rod over his often blunt assessments of Canada's enemies and defence policy.

The 52-year-old has been both a blessing and a curse for the Conservative government, making a case for the combat mission in Kandahar when political leaders seemed unable to articulate it.

The job of top military commander generally lasts about three years and there were persistent rumours that Hillier – who celebrated that third anniversary on Feb. 5 – would soon be leaving.

Hillier said he was under no pressure from Prime Minister Stephen Harper to retire.

"He and I have had a discussion in the past – several times – about when it was appropriate, and certainly, he indicated that there was no hurry for me to go and he was very comfortable with me as chief of the defence staff.

"I felt that now, coming to the summer, was the appropriate time to hand off to somebody else."

On Tuesday, while talking to reporters at the House of Assembly, Premier Danny Williams said Hillier had done an "outstanding job."

Williams called Hillier a "great individual, great Canadian."

While the premier said it would be improper to speculate why Hillier was stepping down, he used the opportunity to get a dig in at the prime minister.

"Well, I wouldn't be able to work for Steve either, I can tell you that much," said Williams.

Hillier issued a statement on his departure, saying the military has "reached the critical milestones I originally set out for us to reach."

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"He didn't want to leave too close to an election because his departure would have become a political issue," said Alex Morrison, president of the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies.

"And then there's the extension of the Afghan mission. In the normal course of events, he wouldn't be chief of defence staff until the end of the mission. So it's good to get a new person in there now." Hillier's outspoken comments have fuelled speculation that he could be considering a political career – an assertion Hillier has consistently dismissed.

One of the names often mentioned to succeed Hillier is Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie, the current head of the army. Also mentioned is Lt.-Gen. Walter Natynczyk, vice-chief of defence staff since 2006. He was on exchange with U.S. Army III Corps in Texas during the invasion of Iraq, went with the III Corps to Iraq and became deputy commanding general of the Multi-National Corps.

Iraq War vet tops list to replace Hillier

IDNUMBER 200804160031
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2008.04.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A7
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: ...Lt.-Gen. Angus Watt.; Colour Photo: Lt.-Gen. Walt Natynczyk and ... ;
Colour Photo: ...Lt.-Gen. Michel Gauthier. ; Colour Photo: Lt.-Gen Andrew Leslie and ... ;
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 432

OTTAWA — It was May 2007, and the affable general with the Popeye forearms met Prime Minister Stephen Harper with a warm handshake at the bottom of the staircase of his government jet. Harper was on his way to Afghanistan for the second time, but the general greeting him at this military base deep in the Persian Gulf desert was not a household name.

Now suddenly that man is the leading contender to succeed Gen. Rick Hillier as chief of the defence staff.

Lt.-Gen. Walt Natynczyk, vice-chief of defence staff, is one of a handful of candidates on the shortlist to take over the job as Canada's military chief.

Natynczyk has the experience; he is one of the few Canadian soldiers to have served in Iraq. He also shares Hillier's ability to communicate; as a colonel, Natynczyk was given the job in 1999 as the chief Canadian Forces spokesman for the NATO-led air war in Kosovo.

"Life was good (as) a colonel," Natynczyk joked in an interview with Canwest News last year. "I dream of those days."

While many are betting that Natynczyk might be poised to take the top job, he will have some serious competition. The other leading contenders for Hillier's post are Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie, commander of the army, and Lt.-Gen. Michel Gauthier, chief of the Forces overseas deployments.

Like Hillier, both Leslie and Gauthier are well versed on Afghanistan. But with the United States poised to become Canada's main military partner in Kandahar, Natynczyk's experience with U.S. forces — something Hillier had more than any other Canadian soldier — makes him the odds-on favourite.

In his current post, Natynczyk has been charged with implementing the Forces ambitious restructuring plans, the so-called "transformation" that Hillier began.

The Conservative government's long-awaited Canada First defence plan has yet to be formally released, but Natynczyk has been busy behind the scenes trying to persuade the government to boost defence spending enough to support the plan.

Among the other leadership hopefuls, Leslie is an eloquent and educated soldier who also has considerable battlefield experience as a former commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

Gauthier, a former head of military intelligence, is less flamboyant but is highly respected as the commander of Canada's overseas operations, and has over the course of his 20 trips to Afghanistan developed into a knowledgeable strategist on the Forces' most important mission.

Lt.-Gen. Angus Watt, commander of the air force and Vice-Admiral Drew Robertson, head of the navy, are also top contenders for the chief of the defence staff.

The one factor in their favour is the past practice of rotating the CDS among the Force's three branches — but that practice is far from firm, especially with the army's premier role in landlocked Afghanistan.

Canada's top soldier to step down; Blunt-spoken Gen. Rick Hillier says Forces have 'irreversible momentum'

IDNUMBER 200804160030
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2008.04.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A7
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Chris Wattie, Reuters / Canada's Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier pauses while announcing his retirement during a news conference yesterday in Ottawa. ;
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Don Martin and Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
NOTE: Profile of Gen. Rick Hillier.
WORD COUNT: 613

OTTAWA — His personal military mission accomplished, Gen. Rick Hillier will step aside as Canada's top soldier this summer.

Known for speaking his mind, Hillier said his departure from the post of chief of defence staff is entirely voluntary. "If anything, the pressure was the other way to keep me around," he said in an exclusive interview.

With the Kandahar mission extended until 2011 and the purchase of heavy-lift planes, upgraded tanks and helicopters, Hillier says it was a good time to go because it allows him to claim a legacy of reinforced pride inside the military.

"We've achieved the irreversible momentum that I wanted to have," Hillier told Canwest News Service. "It's a transition to a whole different mode and I'm quite comfortable that I can leave on a high and leave hopefully enabling Canadian Forces to carry on to much greater things."

In the House of Commons yesterday afternoon, Prime Minister Stephen Harper called Hillier "a great Canadian," even though the Conservative government was never fully comfortable with Hillier's outspoken nature.

"Gen. Hillier has worked very well with the government, he has done an excellent job in rebuilding Canada's Armed Forces. He is a great Canadian and we are very proud to have worked with him."

Hillier said he never aspired to the military's top job, and that he had been planning his departure since last fall. He said he was waiting for the fate of the Afghanistan mission to be determined and that he only planned to stay in the job for two years.

He finally delivered the news to Harper yesterday, and the prime minister accepted his resignation, which Hillier said he would formalize in a letter later.

The two men shook hands. "His last words were thank you for what you've done," Hillier said.

Canada's top soldier to step down; Blunt-spoken Gen. Rick Hillier says Forces have 'irreversible momentum'

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion also praised Hillier's dedication.

"... his influence far exceeds our own Armed Forces," Dion said in a written statement. "As a commander of NATO forces in both Bosnia–Herzegovina, as well as in Afghanistan, he demonstrated a level of professionalism that won him praise from soldiers and leaders of all our country's military allies."

Even NDP Leader Jack Layton, whose party opposes Canada's military mission in Afghanistan and has called for the immediate withdrawal of the country's 2,500 troops stationed there, had praise for Hillier.

"There's no question that he was very controversial and direct at times," Layton said.

"I always felt it came from the heart and we might not have agreed with absolutely everything he recommended, but I never doubted this man's sincerity or his commitment to the country and I think all Canadians thank him for his service. It's certainly not an easy job that he's performed."

The general, appointed by Liberal prime minister Paul Martin in 2005, says recent governments have refunded the military government adequately and put Canada on the road to serving as a global power.

"I can only repeat what one of my commanders once said when he noted we're not trying to be one of the big boys, we are one of the big boys and we have to start acting like it," Hillier recalled. "That's a very good comment because that reflects our place in the world. Canada has had a significant re–profiling in the world. We're one of the big boys now."

In recent years, Hillier's post has become increasingly politicized. He incurred the wrath of the Liberal opposition by referring to the preceding 15 years of budget cuts that started under the Mulroney Conservatives as a "decade of darkness."

Hillier became the most eloquent spokesman for Canada's military mission in Afghanistan. Evoking his own experience of going off on missions — being dropped off by his wife at an empty airport and being picked up with similar lack of fanfare — he instituted the mass sendoffs and homecomings for departing and returning troops in order to build morale and reassure the troops that their sacrifice was worthy and appreciated.

A brief look at the life and career of Gen. Rick Hillier, retiring defence chief

DATE: 2008.04.15
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 160

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Education _ Bachelor of Science from Memorial University of Newfoundland (1975); honorary member, Royal Military College of Canada.

Career _ Regimental duties in a tank unit; staff jobs in Montreal and National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa; appointed army chief in 2003; became defence chief in 2005; has served across Canada, twice each in Europe and the United States, where he was the first Canadian to serve as deputy commanding general of III Corps, U.S. Army, in Fort Hood, Texas; appointed one term as senior NATO commander in Afghanistan.

Hobbies _ Enjoys many recreational pursuits, in particular ``runs slowly, plays hockey poorly and golfs not well at all."

Family _ Wife, Joyce; two sons, Chris and Steven; grandson, Jack.

Quote _ ``These are detestable murderers and scumbags. They detest our freedoms, they detest our society, they detest our liberties." _ July 14, 2005, on Osama bin Laden and his ilk.

Outgoing defence chief Hillier known for colourful, no-nonsense comments

DATE: 2008.04.15
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 549

Some notable quotes from the outgoing chief of defence staff and ``soldiers' soldier," Gen. Rick Hillier:

``Any commander who would stand up here and say that we didn't need more soldiers should be tarred and feathered and rode out of town on a rail." _ May 30, 2003, at the ceremony marking his appointment as army chief.

``In this country, we could probably not give enough resources to the men and women to do all the things that we ask them to do. But we can give them too little, and that is what we are now doing. Remember them in your budgets." _ Feb. 4, 2005, in his first speech after his appointment as defence chief.

``These are detestable murderers and scumbags. They detest our freedoms, they detest our society, they detest our liberties." _ July 14, 2005, on Osama bin Laden and his ilk.

``We can't let up. There are those who might say that by doing that we make ourselves a target in Canada here for terrorists. I would come at it this way ... We need to take a stand." _ July 14, 2005.

``We're not going to let those radical murderers and killers rob from others and certainly we're not going to let them rob from Canada." _ July 14, 2005.

``We are not the Public Service of Canada. We are not just another department. We are the Canadian Forces and our job is to be able to kill people." _ July 14, 2005.

``An army is what's required to allow them to keep their security, so that's a long-term project. It's going to take 10 years or so just to work through and build an army to whatever the final number that Afghanistan will have, and make them professional and let them meet their security demands here". _ Oct. 25, 2007, on Canada's role in Afghanistan.

``I've talked to the prime minister. I'm absolutely clear where he wants to go and on what he needs and I'm absolutely in line with that; otherwise I wouldn't be his chief of defence staff." _ Oct. 26, 2007, on suggestions he was at odds with Stephen Harper over the Conservative government's Afghanistan policy.

``I will be the public champion of those brave men and women. They are Canada's sons and daughters, ladies and gentlemen. If we can't market Canada's sons and daughters back to Canada's moms and dads, we need to find somebody to replace us to do the job. Because that's what needs to be done." _ Nov. 6, 2007, in response to suggestions he'd been muzzled.

``I admit I am no politician. And I don't think I'm very wise. But I represent the 87,000 Forces members and their families." _ Nov. 6, 2007.

``The Taliban gave al-Qaida the training camps and the ability to plan and recruit and finance and get people ready. You want to remove that Petri dish so you can't grow that kind of violence and the capabilities to project that violence around the world." _ Dec. 30, 2007, in an interview with The Canadian Press.

“In the war against terror, there is no such thing as a doorstep defence. You cannot be, as a nation _ any nation _ an oasis unto yourself. You've got to be part of an international dynamic that is more stable, less chaotic and not the fertile garden for growing terrorists.” _ April 7, 2008, in an interview with the Globe and Mail.

The Canadian Press News Budget for Tuesday, April 15, 2008

DATE: 2008.04.15
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 1179

Here are final coverage plans for top Canadian news as of 22:30 ET. Please note plans may change as circumstances warrant. The next coverage advisory will move about 13:00 ET Wednesday. If you have any questions, contact CP's National Desk at 416-507-2150.

Copy moves by 18:00 ET unless otherwise noted; all times ET.

For queries about non-Canadian Press syndicated copy, call the Specials Desk at 416-507-2152.

HILLIER LEAVING

OTTAWA _ Gen. Rick Hillier, the country's top military commander and most passionate spokesman for the war in Afghanistan, is stepping down in July after more than three years as chief of defence staff. Hillier, 52, has been the most visible military leader in a generation and a political lightning rod over his often blunt assessments of Canada's enemies and defence policy. 948 words. By Murray Brewster. See Photos. With vars BC-Hillier. BC-Hillier-Retires. Moved.

See also:

- BC-Hillier-Newsmaker
- BC-Hillier-QuickSketch
- BC-Hillier-Chronology
- BC-Hillier-QuickQuotes

OTHER CANADIAN

OTTAWA _ The Conservatives' claim to clean and transparent governance suffered an embarrassing blow Tuesday when the RCMP raided the governing party's national headquarters at the request of Canada's elections commissioner. Prime Minister Stephen Harper confirmed the raid was connected to a protracted legal battle between the Conservative party and Canada's elections watchdog over alleged spending irregularities during the 2006 election campaign, but he insisted his party had done nothing wrong. 1179 words. By Joan Bryden. See Photos. BC-Tories-RCMP-Raid. Moved.

OTTAWA _ The head of the RCMP says the force stumbled by keeping too many secrets on Taser use. Commissioner William Elliott says the Mounties must do a better job of telling Canadians about what they do. 500 words. By Jim Bronskill. BC-Taser-Secrecy. Moved.

ST. JOHN'S, N.L. _ The premiers of Newfoundland and Nunavut say they want to improve the image of Canada's embattled seal hunt by banning one of its bloodiest symbols _ the spiked hakapik. But foes of the annual East Coast hunt scoffed at the idea Tuesday, insisting that rifles are just as cruel and possibly more so

than the hakapik, which is used to club seals and drag their bodies across the ice. 940 words. See Photo CPT102. With QuickFacts. BC–Seal–Hunt–Hakapik. Moved.

HOBBEEMA, Alta. _ Two teens have been charged after a two-year-old girl was hit in the torso with a bullet during a drive-by shooting on a central Alberta reserve with a long history of drug-related violence. RCMP investigators suspect 12 gun-related incidents in the last three weeks on the Samson Cree First Nation are related to drug gang turf wars. 650 words. By John Cotter. BC–CRIME–Toddler–Shot. Moved.

OTTAWA _ The man who led the native protest that helped shut down a stretch of Ontario's busiest highway last June says Canadians can expect more of the same on May 29. Mohawk activist Shawn Brant says more First Nations are set to send a loud and clear message on the next national Day of Action as relations with Ottawa corrode. 600 words. By Sue Bailey. See Photo. BC–Native–Protest. Moved.

ST. JOHN'S, N.L. _ The man at the centre of Newfoundland's botched breast-cancer testing scandal said Tuesday he decided not to tell patients their crucial diagnostic tests were being reviewed because he was advised that doing so would alarm them unnecessarily. For the first time since he resigned as CEO of the Eastern Health authority last year, George Tilley offered his version of what happened from the moment he heard of the testing errors in July 2005. 900 words. By Tara Brautigam. BC–Breast–Cancer–Inquiry. Moved.

VANCOUVER _ Two of Canada's major retailers said Tuesday they are pulling plastic water and baby bottles that contain the controversial chemical bisphenol A, in anticipation of Health Canada labelling it a dangerous substance. The Forzani Group Ltd. (TSX:FGL), Canada's largest sporting goods retailer, and Hudson's Bay Co., which includes the Bay and Zellers stores, said Tuesday they are removing BPA products and will refund customers who bought the bottles at their stores. 727 words. By Brenda Bouw. Moved Business (B) and General (G). BC–Bisphenol–Bottle–Recall. Moved.

VICTORIA _ Four children who died in northern B.C. in separate incidents will form the focus of a highly anticipated review by the province's independent children's representative Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, who was appointed after the B.C. government admitted it mismanaged the process it developed to review child deaths. The four children, ranging in age from three years old to seven months, were all known to the government and the report is expected to examine the role government played in their lives. 700 words. By Dirk Meissner. BC–Child–Death–Review. Moved.

INUVIK, N.W.T. _ Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean was set to deliver a speech Tuesday at a conference challenging young Inuit to dream big and prepare to profit from some of the economic opportunities on the Arctic horizon. 550 words. By Alexander Panetta. See Photos. BC–Inuit–Dream–Big. Moved.

MONTREAL _ A Parti Quebecois member of the provincial legislature who wants to create a distinct Quebec identity on the World Wide Web will first have to get the nod from a United Nations agency. Daniel Turp, a longtime sovereigntist, has started a petition to convince the international authority responsible for Internet domain names to create the .qc ``national" extension, similar to Canada's .ca. 520 words. By Peter Rakobowchuk. BC–Internet–Dot–Quebec. Moved.

BRAMPTON, Ont. _ Four men rounded up in an anti-terrorism operation that captured headlines around the world emerged from court Tuesday with all charges against them essentially dropped, further diminishing a prosecution that has seen the so-called Toronto 18 whittled down to 11. With charges also stayed against three youth suspects, defence lawyers questioned the strength of the Crown's case against the remaining suspects. 658 words. By Tobi Cohen. Member photo requested. BC–Terror–Arrests. Moved.

TORONTO _ Two new studies about the medical research conducted on the painkiller Vioxx shine a light on how the pharmaceutical industry generates scientific studies on new drugs. The view is disturbing. 750 words. By Helen Branswell. BC–Drug–Research–Ethics. Moved.

TORONTO _ Rural landowners are threatening to clear-cut a huge swath of land in eastern Ontario _ leaving an endangered bird homeless _ to protest the lack of compensation in the province's new endangered species law, the Ontario Landowners' Association said Tuesday. Association president Jack MacLaren said the Liberals are forcing landowners to take drastic action by refusing to compensate people whose property values plummet and whose farming activity is curtailed to protect the habitat of endangered species. 550 words. By Chinta Puxley. BC-Endangered-Species-Clear-Cut. Moved Regional (C).

EDMONTON _ With an even bigger majority than what they had before the provincial election in March, Alberta's governing Progressive Conservatives opened the 27th session of the legislature Tuesday with a throne speech outlining their priorities for the spring sitting. 600 words. By Dean Bennett. BC-Alta-Throne-Speech. Moved Regional (D).

GRAPHICS ADVISORY

DATE: 2008.04.15
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 1645

GRAPHICS ADVISORY

3:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 15, 2008

Following is a list of graphics moving today. In this menu each graphic's file name is followed by a brief description, column size and time of input. For questions or retransmission requests please call The Canadian Press Graphics Desk in Toronto at 416-507-2172.

THE CANADIAN PRESS GRAPHICS

National/Business/Sports

MARKET WATCH: Graphic shows closing figures for markets with charts for S&P/TSX and Canadian Dollar; 4x1c; ETA 6 p.m.

HILLIER SKETCH: Quicks on Gen. Rick Hillier; 3c; MOVED 2:00 p.m.

ONT FLOODING: Map to go with Ontario flooding stories, 2c; MOVED 1 p.m.

Weekly

DVD RENTALS: Graphic lists Rogers Video's top 10 DVD rentals for the week; 1c; MOVED Tuesday, April 15.

MUSIC CHARTS: Graphic lists HMV's top 10 pop and country CD sales for the week; 2c; ETA Thursday, April 17.

BEST SELLING BOOKS: Graphic lists the Macleans top 10 fiction and non-fiction books for the week; 1c; ETA Thursday, April 17.

TV RATINGS: Graphic lists the top 10 TV programs in Canada for the week; 1c; ETA Friday, April 18.

AP Graphics Digest 1:33 p.m. Tuesday, April 15.

National/World

CONGO PLANE CRASH: Map locates area in eastern Congo where a plane crashed Tuesday; 1c; 46.5 mm; with BC-Congo-Plane Crash; ETA 5 p.m.

GAY DIVORCE: Graphic shows same-sex relationship laws by state; 2c x 3 3/4 inches; 96.3 mm x 95 mm; with BC-Gay Divorce; ETA 6 p.m.

IRAQ BOMBING: Map locates Baqouba, Iraq, where a car bomb exploded killing at least 20; 1c x 1 5/8

inches; 46.5 mm x 41 mm; with BC–Iraq– Bombing; MOVED Tuesday, April 15.

ETHIOPIA EXPLOSIONS: Map locates Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where explosions at gas stations killed at least two; 1c x 1 7/8 inches; 46.5 mm x 48 mm; with BC–Ethiopia–Explosions; MOVED Tuesday, April 15.

COLOMBIA VOLCANO: Map locates Nevado del Huila volcano in Colombia; 1c x 2 1/8 inches; 46.5 mm x 54 mm; with BC–Colombia–Volcano Erupts; MOVED Tuesday, April 15.

GUATEMALA QUAKE: Map locates epicenter of a magnitude 6.1 earthquake; 1c x 1 1/4 inches; 46.5 mm x 32 mm; with BC–Guatemala–Earthquake; MOVED Tuesday, April 15.

POPE ITINERARY FIX: CHANGES the meeting day at the White House; graphic originally transmitted April 14, 2008; Graphic shows Pope Benedict XVI itinerary while in the U.S. April 15–20; 3c x 3 3/8 inches; 146 mm x 86 mm; with BC–Pope–US; MOVED Monday, April 14.

US IRAQ FREE RIDE: Chart shows money budgeted and spent for Iraq reconstruction by the U.S. and Iraq from 2003 to 2008; 2c x 2 inches; 96.3 mm x 51 mm; with BC–US–Iraq–Free Ride Over; MOVED Monday, April 14.

Business DELTA NORTHWEST DESTINATIONS: Map shows Delta and Northwest destinations by passenger in 2007; 3c; 146 mm; with BC–Delta– Northwest; ETA 7 p.m.

DELTA NORTHWEST TIMELINE: Graphic looks at significant events in the histories of Delta and Northwest airlines; 3c x 3 1/8 inches; 146 mm x 79 mm; with BC–Delta–Northwest; MOVED Tuesday, April 15.

PRODUCER PRICE INDEX: Chart shows the Producer Price Index and monthly percent change; 1c x 2 5/8 inches; 46.5 mm x 67 mm; with BC–Economy; MOVED Tuesday, April 15.

OIL PRICES: Graphic shows the price of crude oil; 1c x 3 1/8 inches; 46.5 mm x 79 mm; with BC–Oil Prices; MOVED Tuesday, April 15.

TOP 10 AIRLINES: Chart ranks airlines in 2007 by passengers and distance; 2c x 3 1/8 inches; 96.3 mm x 79 mm; with BC–Delta–Northwest; MOVED Monday, April 14.

Sports NFL MOCK DRAFT: Graphic lists possible selections in the first round of the 2008 NFL draft; 3c x 9 1/4 inches; 146 mm x 235 mm; with BC– FBN—Mock Draft 2.0; ETA 3 p.m.

BEASLEY DECISION: Graphic looks at freshman season of Kansas States Michael Beasley; includes players drafted after freshman season; 2c x 3 inches; 96.3 mm x 76 mm; with BC–BKC—Kansas St.–Beasley; MOVED Monday, April 14.

KENT DERBY LOGO: 2008 Kentucky Derby logo; 1c; 46.5 mm; with related stories; MOVED Monday, April 14.

Olympics OLY 2008 TORCH RELAY: UPDATES to ADD protest details to map and chatter; map shows the proposed route of the 2008 Olympic torch relay; 3c x 3 1/2 inches; 146 mm x 89 mm; with related stories; MOVED Thursday, April 10.

OLY SWIM RECORDS: RETRANSMISSION; graphic originally moved April 2; graphic shows world record progression of selected swimming events; 2c x 5 inches; 96.3 mm x 127 mm; with OLY–SWM—Speedo Suit–Records; MOVED Thursday, April 3.

OLY BEIJING TORCH: Graphic shows the torch of the Beijing Olympics; 1c x 4 1/8 inches; 46.5 mm x 105 mm; with BC–Olympic Torch; MOVED Monday, March 31.

OLY WATER POLO: Graphic profiles the Olympic event of water polo; two sizes; 2c x 17 1/2 inches; 96.3 mm x 445 mm; 1c x 5 inches; 46.5 mm x 127 mm; with related stories; MOVED Friday, March 28.

OLY BASEBALL: Graphic profiles the Olympic event of baseball; two sizes; 2c x 14 1/2 inches; 96.3 mm x 368 mm; 1c x 4 inches; 46.5 mm x 102 mm; with related stories; MOVED Friday, March 28.

OLY DIVING: Graphic profiles the Olympic event of diving; two sizes; 2c x 22 inches; 96.3 mm x 559 mm; 1c x 5 inches; 46.5 mm x 127 mm; with related stories; MOVED Friday, March 28.

OLY PENTATHLON: Graphic profiles the Olympic event of modern pentathlon; two sizes; 2c x 22 inches; 96.3 mm x 559 mm; 1c x 5 inches; 46.5 mm x 127 mm; with related stories; MOVED Friday, March 21.

OLY BOXING: Graphic profiles the Olympic event of boxing; 2c x 16 inches; 96.3 mm x 406 mm; with related stories; MOVED Friday, March 21.

OLY BASKETBALL: Graphic highlights Olympic event basketball; three sizes; 2c x 22 inches; 96.3 mm x 559 mm; 2c x 4 1/4 inches; 96.3 mm x 108 mm; 1c x 5 inches; 46.5 mm x 127 mm; with related stories; MOVED Friday, March 21.

OLY DIGEST 2: Digest for 2008 Beijing Olympics graphics; size pending; stand-alone; MOVED Friday, March 21.

Election ELN PA IRAQ WAR: Graphic shows U.S. military casualties in Iraq, by county in Pennsylvania and U.S. military casualty rate, by state, per 100,000; 2c x 7 inches; 96.3 mm x 178 mm; with BC–Pennsylvania–Iraq War; MOVED Saturday, April 12.

ELN PA YOUNG VOTERS: Map shows percentage of registered Democratic voters ages 18 to 24 and percentage of voters ages 17 to 29 who voted in 2008 Democratic primaries, by state; two sizes; 2c x 4 inches; 96.3 mm x 102 mm; 2c x 7 3/4 inches; 96.3 mm x 197 mm; with BC–Pennsylvania– Young Voters; MOVED Sunday, April 6.

ELN CAMPAIGN RACIAL VOTING: Chart shows exit poll results of how whites voted when considering race as a factor; 1c x 2 3/4 inches; 46.5 mm x 70 mm; with BC–Campaign–Racial Voting; MOVED Friday, April 4.

ELN CAMPAIGN MONEY: Chart shows contributions for Sens. Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama from January through March; 2c x 1 3/4 inches; 96.3 mm x 44 mm; with BC–Campaign Money; MOVED Thursday, April 3.

ELN EXTRA SUPERDELEGATES: Chart shows breakdown of Democratic superdelegates; 1c x 1 1/4 inches; 46.5 mm x 32 mm; with BC–Extra Superdelegates; MOVED Thursday, April 3.

ELN DEM DELEGATES: Graphic shows Democratic delegate count and margin of victory by state/territory; 2c x 5 1/2 inches; 96.3 mm x 140 mm; with related election stories; MOVED Tuesday, April 1.

ELN REGISTERING DEMS: Map shows party affiliation for registered voters in Pennsylvania, by county and black population in Pennsylvania as a percentage of the total, by county in 2006; 2c x 4 1/4 inches; 96.3 mm x 108 mm; with BC–Registering Democrats; MOVED Thursday, March 20.

CONGRESSIONAL RACES 2: UPDATES open seats in the House as Rep. Tom Reynolds of New York announced his retirement Thursday; chart shows current breakdown of open House and Senate seats; 2c x 2 1/2 inches; 96.3 mm x 64 mm; with BC–GOP Woes; MOVED Thursday, March 20.

Advances and Features DRINKING AGE: ADVANCE FOR APRIL 20; world map shows minimum drinking age by country; 3c; 146 mm; with BC–Young Boozers; ETA 6 p.m.

BABY GIZMOS: Graphic shows necessary newborn baby items; 4c x 5 inches; 195.7 mm x 127 mm; with BC–Baby Gizmo–Must–Haves; MOVED Monday, April 14.

COOKING DEADLINE LOGO: Logo for cooking on a deadline; 1/2c; 20 mm; with BC–Food—Deadline stories; MOVED Monday, April 14.

ASK A DESIGNER LOGO: Logo to accompany Ask Designers series; 1c x 2 1/4 inches; 46.5 mm x 57 mm; with any related BC–FEA—Homes–Ask Designers story; MOVED Monday, April 14.

IONIC POWER: Graphic shows and talks about products that use ionic technology; 3c x 3 1/2 inches; 146 mm x 89 mm; with BC–FEA—The Power of Ions; MOVED Monday, April 7.

MEASURE LOGO: Graphic originally moved Jan. 29; logo to accompany any BC–Measure of a Nation story; 1c; 46.5 mm; with BC–Measure of a Nation package or related stories; MOVED Monday, March 31.

TAX EARNED INCOME: Chart shows earned income tax credits by returns and amount; 1c x 4 1/4 inches; 46.5 mm x 108 mm; with BC–SPE—Taxes– Earned Income; MOVED Tuesday, Jan. 15.

TAX MORTGAGE: Chart show mortgage insurance as a share of total new mortgage originations; 1c x 3 1/2 inches; 46.5 mm x 89 mm; with BC– SPE—Taxes–Mortgages; MOVED Tuesday, Jan. 15.

TAX LOGO: Logo to accompany tax package; various sizes; with related tax package stories; MOVED Tuesday, Jan. 15.

Weekly BOX OFFICE: Graphic shows U.S. box office sales for the past weekend; two sizes; 1c x 4 3/4 inches; 46.5 mm x 121 mm; 3c x 1 5/8 inches; 146 mm x 41 mm; with related stories; MOVED Monday, April 14.

ASK AP LOGO: Logo to accompany Ask AP; 1c x 1 inches; 46.5 mm x 25 mm; with BC–Ask AP; MOVED Monday, April 14.

ON THE NET LOGO: Logo for placement with weekly On the Net column; multiple sizes; 1c x 1 inch; 46.5 mm x 18 mm; half–column x 1.25 inches; 17 mm x 33 mm; with BC–On the Net; MOVED Monday, April 14.

CYBERTRIPS LOGO: Logo for use with BC–TRV—Travel–CyberTrips; 1c; 46.5 mm; MOVED Monday, April 14.

NIELSENS: Graphic shows the top 10 weekly television shows for the week; 1c x 5 inches; 46.5 mm x 127 mm; with BC–Nielsen; ETA Tuesday, April 15.

FANTASY BASEBALL LOGO: Logo for placement with weekly Fantasy Baseball column; 1c x 1 inches; 46.5 mm x 25 mm; with Fantasy Baseball; ETA Friday, April 18.

NOTES: ILLUSTRATOR NOTICE (UPDATED JAN. 14): The Canadian Press graphics are now being sent

Illustrator CS2 PDF format. Graphics are fully editable in Illustrator CS2 and above. (Note: We have adjusted the format to CS2 for greater compatibility) For members who have not switched over to Illustrator, the PDFs can be opened in Photoshop.

The upgrade from FreeHand to Illustrator is available from www.adobe.com for US\$199.

The Associated Press is also running graphics in Illustrator CS2 PDF format.

Older graphics in Freehand 9 format can be opened in Illustrator CS2 or CS3 by dragging the file onto the Illustrator icon while holding the Command and Option keys in Mac OSX.

If you have any questions please email graphicsthecanadianpress.com or call Sean Vokey at 416 507–2174 or Graeme Roy at 416 507–2167.

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of the art. Graphics are displayed from newest to oldest. There is no

charge for graphics that are less than one week old. If you have any

questions please call The Canadian Press Picture Desk at 416–507–2169.

INDEX:Defence, International, Politics

DATE: 2008.04.15
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 462

OTTAWA _ Text of a statement from Gen. Rick Hillier:

I have chosen to retire from the Canadian Forces and end my tenure as your chief of the defence staff in July of this year.

I accepted the leadership of the Canadian Forces in February 2005. My goal was to set the conditions for our sailors, soldiers, airmen and airwomen to succeed in our critical and often dangerous tasks in defence of Canada, Canadians, and Canadian interests and values.

We have achieved those key objectives, and reached the critical milestones I originally set out for us to reach by the end of my time as CDS. We have moulded our culture to one which recognizes that operations are our *raison d'être*; that our efforts, all of them, must concentrate on achieving the missions and tasks given to us by the government of Canada, on behalf of all Canadians.

We have transformed how we recruit, train, equip, command, deploy, employ, bring home, recognize and care for our operational forces and our families, focused on achieving a strategic effect for Canada. We have done so while growing the Canadian Forces, re-equipping it, and while carrying out intense combat and peace support operations overseas and demanding, essential security tasks here at home.

We have remembered how to grieve; to never forget our comrades and dear friends who have died in the service of Canada. Their sacrifice, and that of their families, deserves our unwavering commitment to ensure their loss is not in vain.

We have been strengthened, immensely, by the vocal and visible support of millions of Canadians who have demonstrated that they recognize, understand and honour your service, and the sacrifice of your families.

Leadership in the Canadian Forces is not the role of one single person; it is the responsibility of all who wear the Canadian Forces uniform. I believe you will now be best served by the invigoration of new leadership, with the vision, energy, and strength to lead you through the challenges that will lie ahead. For we have not finished evolving. We must continue to adapt, and improve our Forces to accomplish the tasks Canadians need us to perform in the complex, dangerous security environment before us.

It is with great confidence that I await the selection of the senior leader who will take my place. I will continue to serve as your CDS until relieved of my duties by my successor, to be named in due course by our prime minister.

My wife Joyce and I thank you for the rewarding years we have shared with you, and look forward to many years ahead as part of the Canadian Forces family.

You are Canada's greatest credentials, our national treasures, and I am so very proud of you. It has been my honour and privilege to be your chief of the defence staff.

BC-Cda-News-Digest

DATE: 2008.04.15
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 847

OTTAWA _ Gen. Rick Hillier, the country's top military commander and most passionate spokesman for the war in Afghanistan, is stepping down in July after more than three years as chief of defence staff.

Hillier, 52, has been the most visible military leader in a generation and a political lightning rod over his often blunt assessments of Canada's enemies and defence policy.

He has been both a blessing and a curse for the Conservative government, making a case for the combat mission in Kandahar when political leaders seemed unable to articulate it.

Hillier issued a statement Tuesday on his departure, saying the military has ``reached the critical milestones I originally set out for us to reach."

``We have transformed how we recruit, train, equip, command, deploy, employ, bring home, recognize and care for our operational forces and our families, focused on achieving a strategic effect for Canada."

Prime Minister Stephen Harper praised Hillier in the House of Commons, saying he has worked well with the government.

Premiers of N.L., Nunavut call for ban on use of special club used in seal hunt

ST. JOHN'S, N.L. _ The premiers of Newfoundland and Nunavut say they want to improve the image of Canada's embattled seal hunt by banning one of its bloodiest symbols _ the spiked hakapik.

But foes of the annual East Coast hunt scoffed at the idea Tuesday, insisting that rifles are just as cruel and possibly more so than the hakapik, which is used to club seals and drag their bodies across the ice.

Even some sealers doubt that getting rid of the hakapik would help the image of the hunt, and it could make the annual slaughter even more dangerous for sealers.

``The clubbing of a seal looks bad, but it is the most efficient and safe way to take those animals," sealer Wayne Dickson said in an interview from his home in Iles-de-la-Madeleine, Que., the thin necklace of islands north of P.E.I.

``Having everyone with a high-powered rifle on the ice doesn't make sense ... You could shoot a man a mile away with one of those if there's a ricochet."

Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Danny Williams and Nunavut Premier Paul Okalik said following a meeting in St. John's they are writing Ottawa to ask for the hakapik ban.

Prepare for road, rail blockades on May 29: Mohawk activist

OTTAWA _ The Mohawk protester who helped shut down a stretch of Ontario's busiest highway last June says Canadians can expect more disruption on May 29.

That's the date chiefs across the country have circled for another day of peaceful demonstration to push for urgent action on native poverty.

Shawn Brant, who led highway and railroad blockades near Kingston, Ont., last June, says placard-waving won't cut it.

If anything, he says, militancy has grown over the last year.

“Now we're in another nose-to-nose situation. What I've been hearing from the communities and leadership is that people who stood relatively quiet last year, like B.C., are committing big-time to this initiative.”

Brant served two months in jail after blocking the main CN rail line and a secondary highway running through Mohawk territory last June 29. Thousands of commuters, trucks and millions of dollars worth of goods were diverted when police shut down several kilometres of Highway 401 for 11 hours.

Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl said Tuesday he has no problem with protest and that it can help educate people.

Senseless broadcasting rules help the strong, punish the weak: Quebecor

GATINEAU, Que. _ Media giant Quebecor Inc. (TSX:QBR.B) says the rules that govern Canadian television no longer make sense and have wildly distorted the market, helping the strong and punishing the weak.

Executives of the Montreal-based conglomerate, whose media holdings include broadcasting, cable TV and newspapers, testified Tuesday before the federal regulator on the future of Canadian television, calling for a relaxation of several hundred rules and regulations they contend were designed for a world that no longer exists.

The previous weak sisters of the TV industry _ specialty channels _ now are in a formidable position because they are allowed both to carry advertisements and to charge cable and satellite operators for their signals, said Quebecor chief executive Pierre Karl Peladeau.

Meanwhile, he said, conventional broadcasters are being squeezed between the fragmentation of advertising spending and regulations that force them to bear the brunt of paying for costly domestic programming, including local news.

Peladeau came down on the side of private broadcasters on the issue of whether conventional networks such as CTV and Quebecor's TVA should be allowed to charge cable operators, such as Quebecor-controlled Videotron, for the right to carry their stations.

Bisphenol A water-bottle removal expanding among Canadian retailers

VANCOUVER _ Two of Canada's major retailers said Tuesday they are pulling plastic water and baby bottles that contain the controversial chemical bisphenol A, in anticipation of a Health Canada labelling it a dangerous substance.

The Forzani Group Ltd. (TSX:FGL), Canada's largest sporting goods retailer, and Hudson's Bay Co., which includes the Bay and Zellers stores, said Tuesday they are removing BPA products and will refund customers who bought the bottles at their stores.

“Pending the government announcement, the company will immediately move to clear all 94 Bay stores and 280 Zellers stores of BPA baby products, and effective immediately, HBC will no longer sell any baby

feeding products that are not BPA-free at any of its stores," the company said in an e-mail to The Canadian Press.

Bob Sartor, chief executive officer of Forzani, which has more than 500 stores across Canada under such banners as Sport Check, Athlete's World and Coast Mountain Sports, said the company began removing the water bottles early Tuesday.

Top stories for Tuesday, April15

DATE: 2008.04.15
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 423

TOP PHOTO:

Andrews Air Force Base, Md., MDPM103, (Horizontal), Pope Benedict XVI walks with President Bush on his arrival for his first papal journey to the U.S.

TOP STORIES:

CANADA'S TOP SOLDIER STEPS DOWN

OTTAWA _ Gen. Rick Hillier, the country's top military commander and most articulate spokesman for the war in Afghanistan, will step down July 1 after three-and-a-half years as chief of the defence staff. Hillier, 52, has been the most visible military leader in a generation and a political lightning rod over his often blunt assessments of both Canada's enemies and the country's defence policy. By Murray Brewster. See Photos, Video. BC-Hillier-Retires.

RCMP RAIDS TORY HEADQUARTERS

OTTAWA _ Stephen Harper's Conservatives faced an embarrassing political spectacle Tuesday as RCMP officers raided the party's headquarters at the request of Elections Canada. Officials wouldn't say why the office was searched, but Elections Canada and the party have been engaged in a protracted legal battle over alleged campaign spending irregularities from the 2006 election known as the ``in-and-out scheme." By Joan Bryden. See Photos, Video. BC-Tories-RCMP-Raid.

WATER BOTTLES PULLED OFF SHELVES

VANCOUVER _ Two of Canada's major retailers said Tuesday they are pulling bottles that contain the controversial chemical bisphenol A, in anticipation of a Health Canada labelling it a dangerous substance. The Forzani Group Ltd. (TSX:FGL), Canada's largest sporting goods retailer, and Hudson's Bay Co., which includes Bay and Zellers stores, said Tuesday they are removing BPA products, including water and baby bottles, from their shelves. By Brenda Bouw. Moved Business and General. BC-Bisphenol-Bottle-Recall.

VANCOUVER _ Canada's largest sporting-goods retailer is pulling all water bottles that contain bisphenol A, a chemical linked to breast and prostate cancer, from its 500-plus stores. Bob Sartor, chief executive officer of Forzani Group Ltd., said the company began removing the bottles early Tuesday, after a published report said Health Canada is about to designate BPA as dangerous. By Brenda Bouw. BC-Bisphenol-Bottle-Recall. Moves Business (B) and General (G).

The Buzz....

CANADIAN SCHOOLS DEVELOP SYSTEMS TO ALERT STUDENTS

UNDATED _ A year after the Virginia Tech massacre, Canadian universities are developing text-messaging systems to quickly alert students and staff in the event of a shooting, fire or other emergency. And some are

going beyond a mass, one-size-fits-all alert. They're developing systems that allow different text messages to be sent to people in different buildings, providing specific advice on how to get to safety. By Steve Lambert. [BC-Cyberfile-Text-Message-Alarms](#). Moved.

General captured the attention of public, the hearts of soldiers

DATE: 2008.04.15
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 1002

OTTAWA _ Perhaps no Canadian soldier in a generation or more captured the public's attention and the hearts of his soldiers as did Rick Hillier.

Bill Graham, the former Liberal defence minister who recommended him to then-prime minister Paul Martin as chief of defence staff, called Hillier ``one of the most charismatic figures around Ottawa generally ... and a huge inspiration to his troops."

Historians Jack Granatstein and David Bercuson, and retired general Lew MacKenzie, said there hasn't been a general so admired by the troops since Jacques Dextraze in the 1970s. Dextraze was a legendary soldier who fought in two wars and rose from private to general.

``For whatever reason, the perception was that Hillier put the interest of the troops rather than the government first," said Granatstein.

The historian said he wasn't denigrating Hillier's predecessors as people who ignored the rank-and-file.

``It's just that Hillier had that personality that the troops loved. I don't think we've had a CDS that the troops loved since Dextraze."

Hillier also likely did more than anyone to promote support for the Afghanistan war, decrying Afghan insurgents in blunt terms _ including ``murderers" and ``scumbags" _ and praising his soldiers to the skies.

The general, who retires July 1 after more than three years on the job, was a bluff, blunt, colourful leader who captivated privates, politicians and the public alike.

He enlisted as an armour officer and rose through the ranks. He served with NATO in Germany, filled staff jobs in Ottawa and commanded a brigade group. He commanded the military relief efforts when the 1998 ice storm lashed eastern Ontario and western Quebec in 1998.

He also served as deputy commanding general of American armoured corps. He also commanded the Canadian army and multinational forces in Bosnia and Afghanistan.

Born in Newfoundland in 1955, he never lost the distinctive Newfoundland lilt in his voice, nor did he shed the quirky sense of humour instinctive in so many of those who hail from The Rock.

Comedian Rick Mercer, himself a Newfoundlander and a quipster of note, once wrote of Hillier:

``He is funny as hell and inspiring as anyone I have ever seen speak. He makes soldiers laugh and then he makes them cry. He thanks them all in a way that makes everyone grow inches."

But there was more to the general than an infectious grin, flashing eyes and a lifelong, unrequited love affair with the Toronto Maple Leafs.

He also presided over a turbulent time of renewal and reorganization within the Canadian Forces.

“He had the intellectual capacity to see what the problems were ... and the need for changing the way in which the Canadian Forces trained themselves, equipped themselves and organized themselves.” said Graham.

“And then he implemented that at the same time keeping the loyalty of his troops. Change is always bloody in big institutions.”

He was the architect of a defence policy that reorganized the Forces and established new commands to deal with the dangerous 21st century.

“He was a very fortunate combination of circumstances,” said Bercuson. “He came along just at the time when the Martin government was starting to pay attention to the military, wanted to start rejuvenating the military ... and here was the perfect candidate to do it.

“He not only raised the profile of the military throughout the country, but he had tremendous support within the military.”

It seemed, to some, that Hillier far outshone the defence ministers and the governments he served, but Graham disagreed.

“He spoke truth to power and gave his best shot at advice about what we should be doing,” Graham said. “Sometimes it wasn't 100 per cent on page with what the government of the day was doing, but governments are big enough to be able to understand that.

“I think he was saying what he had to say about the business.”

And he would say it anyone. He crisscrossed the country for three years, speaking to conferences and service clubs and community groups, hotel meeting rooms and town halls and hockey arenas.

He would usually show up with a couple of bemedalled corporals or junior officers, recount their exploits, express his pride.

His message was always the same: My troops are your sons and daughters and husbands and wives and fathers and mothers; they are everyday Canadians and they deserve and need your support.

That, a joke or two and a tongue-in-cheek lament about the Leafs and their moribund playoff prospects, constituted his standard performance.

In his final message to the troops, he again expressed his pride in them.

“You are Canada's greatest credentials, our national treasures, and I am so very proud of you.”

He also reminded them of “the vocal and visible support of millions of Canadians who have demonstrated that they recognize, understand and honour your service, and the sacrifice of your families.”

Many would say that support was largely Hillier's doing.

He seemed to be an informal general. He would don formal mess attire when he had to, but his usual working dress was a tieless shirt and a military pullover with the four gold maple leaves of his rank on the shoulders. He wore camouflaged battle dress as often as he could.

He visited Afghanistan repeatedly. He hauled hockey players, Olympic athletes, musicians and comedians with him. He took the Stanley Cup there for a tour. He cajoled Tim Hortons into opening a Kandahar branch.

But back in Ottawa, in defence headquarters, a glass-and-steel monolith within sight of Parliament Hill, he was a dogged scrapper who wrung every penny he could from Liberal and Conservative government alike.

After what he called ``a decade of darkness," the military got more money, more people, new planes, new high-tech artillery pieces, tanks, trucks, patrol vehicles, mine-clearance machines and eye-in-the sky surveillance drones.

And he instilled new pride in the ranks.

At one point, early in his tenure, he said the Forces aren't just another government department. ``We are the Canadian Forces and our job is to be able to kill people."

That rankled some, Graham recalled, especially those who only saw the military in the context of peacekeeping.

``But the Canadian Forces themselves and particularly many of our veterans sat up and said: Finally somebody's saying it like it is."

Hillier, a soldier since high school, has given no hint of his plans. He has, in the past, shrugged off the idea of a political career.

MacKenzie had a piece of advice for retirement: Don't talk to anyone for 30 days.

``I'm sure everyone will be after him with a job offer."

There is already speculation about a replacement.

The two most-mentioned candidates are Lt.-Gen. Walt Natynczyk, the vice-chief of the defence staff and Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie, commander of the army.

``My guess is that Natynczyk will probably be the one because of his time working with the U.S., the good job he's done and the fact that he's very popular with the troops," said Granatstein.

Bercuson said Leslie, an officer much in the Hillier mould, may lose out on the promotion for that very reason.

``It really doesn't suit the style of this government, I think, to have a senior military leader ... feeling he has the freedom to speak publicly to the extent that Hillier probably has done."

'Soldier's soldier' Gen. Rick Hillier stepping down as defence chief

DATE: 2008.04.15
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 939

OTTAWA _ Gen. Rick Hillier, the country's top military commander and most passionate spokesman for the war in Afghanistan, is stepping down in July after more than three years as chief of defence staff.

Hillier, 52, has been the most visible military leader in a generation and a political lightning rod over his often blunt assessments of Canada's enemies and defence policy.

He has been both a blessing and a curse for the Conservative government, making a case for the combat mission in Kandahar when political leaders seemed unable to articulate it.

The job of top military commander generally lasts about three years and there were persistent rumours that Hillier _ who celebrated that third anniversary on Feb. 5 _ would soon be leaving.

Hillier said he was under no pressure from Prime Minister Stephen Harper to retire.

``He and I have had a discussion in the past _ several times _ about when it was appropriate and certainly he indicated that there was no hurry for me to go and he was very comfortable with me as chief of the defence staff.

``I felt that now, coming to the summer, was the appropriate time to hand off to somebody else."

Hillier issued a statement on his departure, saying the military has ``reached the critical milestones I originally set out for us to reach."

``We have transformed how we recruit, train, equip, command, deploy, employ, bring home, recognize and care for our operational forces and our families, focused on achieving a strategic effect for Canada.

``We have been strengthened, immensely, by the vocal and visible support of millions of Canadians who have demonstrated that they recognize, understand and honour your service, and the sacrifice of your families."

Harper praised Hillier in the House of Commons, saying he has worked well with the government.

``He is a great Canadian and we are very proud to have worked with him," Harper said.

Hillier's popularity has often overshadowed his political masters and became a liability last summer.

He wound up in a public tussle with former defence minister Gordon O'Connor over how long it would take for Canadian troops to train their Afghan counterparts _ key to Canada's exit strategy.

The contradiction between the two that was widely believed to have led to O'Connor's shuffle out of the defence portfolio.

Harper and his Liberal predecessor, Paul Martin, have said they relied heavily on Hillier's military advice.

It was Martin who appointed him to the top defence job and the former prime minister said Hillier was the man for the Canadian military at the right time.

“I think he'll be remembered as the man who took office at the time when the rebuilding of the Canadian military was a priority for the government and he fulfilled every expectation,” Martin told The Canadian Press.

The timing of his departure was deliberate, Hillier said, coming after months of consideration and following Parliament's extension of the mission in Kandahar by three years.

Seeing the mission through to 2011 was an additional time commitment he said he wasn't prepared to make, having initially planned to stay in the chief's job for only two years.

Ordinary soldiers, sailors and aircrew worshipped Hillier and his loss will be felt keenly, many of them said Tuesday.

“The care of the soldiers was his primary goal and we really, really feel it,” said Warrant Officer Daniel Demers, a recruiter.

“For us, everyone was ready to step forward with this man.”

The woman who is, technically speaking, Hillier's boss, said he informed her of the decision a while ago.

Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean has spent plenty of time with him. When she took on her post as commander-in-chief of the Canadian Forces, she said Hillier was extremely helpful in sharing his military knowledge, and to this day they console grieving families together at repatriation ceremonies whenever a Canadian soldier is killed in Afghanistan.

“He always had the right word and the right thing to say to the military _ and also to their families,” Jean told reporters during a trip to the Arctic.

“He always paid tribute to their many sacrifices. . . I have the highest respect for him and I wish him the best.”

Hillier's outspoken comments have fuelled speculation that he could be considering a political career _ an assertion Hillier has consistently dismissed.

He was asked a potential political career and responded: “No. Is that clear?”

Some have credited him with being the architect of Canada's military mission in Kandahar, the most intense conflict the country has been involved in since the Korean War.

A recent book, co-authored by a former Liberal insider, claimed Hillier's persuasive arguments persuaded an uncertain Paul Martin to approve the deployment in 2005.

The man who recommended Hillier's appointment to Martin said the general is a forceful personality.

“He brought a combination of drive, intelligence and experience ... that made him in the end the logical choice,” said former Liberal defence minister Bill Graham.

His replacement is widely expected to come from the army even though the top defence job, by custom, usually rotates between services.

One of the names often mentioned is Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie, the current head of the army.

Also mentioned is Lt.-Gen. Walter Natynczyk, vice-chief of defence staff since 2006. He was on exchange with U.S. Army III Corps in Texas during the invasion of Iraq, went with the III Corps to Iraq and became deputy commanding general of the Multi-National Corps.

NDP Leader Jack Layton, who has often been critical of Hillier, was full of praise Tuesday.

“Here's someone who has given many years of service to our country,” Layton said.

“We always have to be thankful that people are willing to do these kinds of difficult jobs and when they decide to move on and take their retirement, I think all Canadians would want to wish the general well and certainly I would add my name to that list of Canadians.”

Born in 1955, Hillier was known as the soldiers' soldier, an outspoken advocate who put the welfare of his troops before all else.

His legacy will be a renewed military, equipped with new aircraft, vehicles and other equipment depleted by years of budget cuts and neglect.

Having earned a science degree from Memorial University in his native Newfoundland, Hillier joined the army 36 years ago and trained as an armoured officer.

He said when he joined he had no ambitions to be a general: “I just wanted to be a soldier.”

Hillier's career took him from regimental duties in a tank unit to staff jobs in Montreal and National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa, where he eventually became army, then defence, chief.

He has served across Canada, twice in Europe and the United States, and did a term as the senior NATO officer in Afghanistan.

His predecessor, air force Gen. Ray Henault, served five years in the job, while Gen. John de Chastelain served two separate appointments _ from 1989 until 1993, and again in 1994–95.

URGENT-ADVISORY-LIVE, Hillier news conference

DATE: 2008.04.15
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 41

General Rick Hillier will discuss his resignation as Chief of Defence Staff at National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa at approximately 5:30 p.m. E-T.

The feed -- with English translation -- will be available on Channel 06.

The start time is approximate so please monitor the channel.

Stations using this feed MUST credit CBC Newsworld.

The Canadian Press Toronto

INDEX:Advisories

DATE: 2008.04.15
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 261

General Rick Hillier says he was under no pressure from Prime Minister Harper to resign as chief of defence staff.

Hillier plans to step down in July after more than three years as Canada's top military officer.

Hillier says he has ``no idea" what he will do after he retires on July 1st.

He says he wants to play some golf, spent time with his family, recharge his batteries, ``and then see what the future brings." (17)

(Tories RCMP Raid)

The Mounties searched the Ottawa headquarters of the federal Conservative party.

It concerns allegations of spending irregularities on advertising in the campaign leading up to the 2006 election.

The Mounties say it's not their investigation, adding they're helping Canada's elections commissioner who requested the search.

Prime Minister Harper maintains the Tory party has done nothing wrong. (17)

(Oil Prices Record)

For the second straight day, the price of oil is at a record closing high.

Oil gained just over two-dollars to end the day in New York at \$113.79 U-S a barrel.

Traders point to signs the supply of oil on the world market will be tight.

As part of that, a report says Russian oil production dropped this year for the first time in a decade. (17)

(BIZ-Gasoline Prices)

The latest M-J Ervin survey shows the average price of regular gasoline across Canada is a-dollar 18-point-5 cents a litre.

That's up 2.3 cents in the past week.

South of the border, the latest Triple-A survey shows average price of regular gasoline is at a record high -- three-dollars and 38.6 cents U-S per American gallon.

That converts to 91-cents a litre in Canadian money. (17)

(Terror Arrests)

Charges have been stayed, or essentially dropped, against four men in an alleged terrorism plot.

The four were among 18 arrested in the Toronto area almost two years ago.

Last year, charges were also stayed against three, leaving number of accused at 11.

The alleged plot called for bombs to be set off in downtown Toronto, Parliament to be stormed, and politicians taken hostage. (17)

(Pope US) (Audio: 171)

In a rare gesture, U-S President George W. Bush was on hand at Andrews Air Force Base to greet Pope Benedict the 16th.

It's the first time Bush greeted a foreign leader at the military base near Washington.

During his six-day trip to the United States, the Pope will visit the White House, address the U-N in New York, and visit a synagogue. (17)

(NewsWatch by Bill Marshall)

INDEX:Advisories

DATE: 2008.04.15
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 260

Compliments are pouring in for General Rick Hillier, who plans to step down in July after three-plus years as chief of defence staff.

Prime Minister Harper says Hillier did an excellent job of rebuilding Canada's armed forces.

Defence Minister Peter MacKay says Hillier oversaw ``an unprecedented period of growth within the Canadian Forces."

Liberal M-P John McCallum -- a former defence minister -- says he has enormous respect for Hillier, whom he calls ``an incredibly strong leader." (19)

(Hillier Retires-Squeezed)

At least two opposition M-Ps say the Harper government forced General Rick Hillier to resign as chief of defence staff.

Liberal Bob Rae and New Democrat Pat Martin say Hillier is being squeezed out for outshining his political masters.

However, Hillier says he was under no pressure from the Harper government to resign as Canada's top military officer. (19)

(Tories RCMP Raid)

The Harper government was under fire in the Commons after R-C-M-P officers raided the Ottawa headquarters of the federal Tory party.

Liberal deputy leader Michael Ignatieff says it's incredible that the Mounties ``have to pry information from this government's clenched fist."

Elections Canada is looking into allegations of spending irregularities on advertising for the 2006 election campaign.

The Mounties say they merely assisted the elections commissioner in his investigation. (19)

(Taser Secrecy) (Audio: 190)

The commissioner of the R-C-M-P says the force stumbled by keeping too many secrets on the use of Tasers.

William Elliott says the Mounties should not have censored key details about stun gun use across the country before agreeing to release more information.

Elliott says the Mounties ``didn't handle this very well." (19)

(Pope US)

Benedict the 16th is spending his first night in the United States since he became Pope three years ago.

President George W. Bush was on hand to greet Benedict as he arrived at Andrews Air Force base near Washington.

The two will meet at the White House on Wednesday, which is the Pope's 81st birthday.

On Friday, Benedict visits the U-N in New York. (19)

(France—Anorexic)

In France, it soon may be a crime to promote extreme thinness.

The lower house of the French Parliament has adopted a bill that cracks down on websites advising anorexics how to starve themselves.

The maximum fine is 72-thousand dollars.

Critics say the bill is very leaky because it doesn't define ``extreme thinness." (19)

(NewsWatch by Bill Marshall)

INDEX:Advisories

DATE: 2008.04.15
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PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 305

(Hillier–Retires) (Audio:156)

Chief of defence staff General Rick Hillier has confirmed he has handed in his resignation, effective Canada Day.

Defence Minister Peter MacKay says Hillier made an enormous contribution and is not leaving because of any conflict with the government.

Hillier, who became known as a leader who put troop welfare above everything else, says he accomplished his goals of the rebuilding the armed forces. (15)

(Tories–RCMP–Raid)

The Conservatives came under fire in the House of Commons today after the R–C–M–P raided their national headquarters at the request of Elections Canada.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper says the raid is connected to a legal battle between his party and Canada's elections watchdog over alleged spending irregularities in 2006.

Harper insists his party has done nothing wrong, but N–D–P Leader Jack Layton called the raid a result of the Tories' — quote — “culture of secrecy.” (15)

(Seal–Hunt–Hakapik)

A Swedish member of the European Parliament suggests a request to outlaw use of controversial clubs used in Canada's annual seal hunt, won't improve things.

The premiers of Newfoundland and Nunavut plan to ask Ottawa to outlaw the use of hakapiks.

It's an attempt to improve the hunt's image and convince the European Union not to introduce a ban on seal products.

But Carl Schlyter (Shly–ter) says shooting the animals is just as bad and not every bullet hits its intended mark. (15)

(Native–Protest)

The next native Day of Action is set for May 29th.

And the man who helped shut down a stretch of Ontario's busiest highway last June says Canadians can again expect disruption.

Shawn Brant served two months in jail after leading highway and railway blockades near Kingston, Ontario

last June.

The Mohawk activist says First Nations across Canada are set to send a loud and clear message next month. (15)

(US–Pope Visit) (Audio:153)

Pope Benedict has arrived on his first official visit to the United States.

President Bush personally welcomed the pontiff at Andrews Air Force Base outside Washington.

Thousands more are expected to greet him tomorrow when he visits the White House and marks his 81st birthday.

He will visit Ground Zero in Lower Manhattan Sunday. (15)

(Ont–Apology–Law) (Audio:133)

An Ontario Liberal has introduced the Apology Act in the provincial legislature in hopes of encouraging more professionals to offer sincere regrets for mistakes.

David Oraziotti says law must be changed to allow everyone — including doctors, nurses and police — to apologize for their errors without fear of retribution in civil court.

B–C, Saskatchewan and Manitoba have similar apology laws, as do 35 U–S states. (15)

(NewsWatch by Chris Mayberry)

--Fourteenth NewsWatch--

DATE: 2008.04.15
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PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 326

Defence Minister Peter MacKay says General Rick Hillier is a man of exceptional ability who made ``enormous" contributions to rebuilding the Canadian Forces.

Hillier has announced his resignation as chief of defence staff after three years as Canada's top military officer.

In a statement issued this afternoon, he says he has accomplished his goals in the post and believes the forces will best be served by ``the invigoration of new leadership."

Calling Hillier a ``great Canadian," Prime Minister Stephen Harper told the House of Commons today the government was proud to have worked with him. (14)

(Tories--RCMP--Raid) (Audio:p11)

Opposition parties tore into the Conservatives' reputation for clean and transparent governing, following an R--C--M--P raid on Tory headquarters at Elections Canada's request.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper confirms the raid was connected to a protracted legal battle between his party and Canada's elections watchdog.

It's over alleged spending irregularities during the 2006 election campaign.

N--D--P Leader Jack Layton says the raid is a result of the Conservatives' ``culture of secrecy." (14)

(Terror--Arrests)

Charges have been stayed against four more members of the so--called ``Toronto 18."

The ruling in a Brampton, Ontario courtroom further diminishes a case once heralded as Canada's largest post--9--11 counterterrorism operation.

Seven of the 18 suspects arrested in 2006 have now had their charges stayed.

Eleven still face charges in an alleged plot to storm Parliament Hill and bomb targets in Toronto and Ottawa. (14)

(Internet--Dot--Quebec) (Audio:128)

A member of the Parti Quebecois is starting a petition to create a distinct Quebec identity on the Internet.

Daniel Turp hopes to convince the international authority responsible for Internet domain names to create an extension that would be unique to websites in Quebec.

Turp says if his efforts are successful, Quebecers would use the extension dot-q-c. (14)

(Que-Boy-Missing)

The body of a missing 11-year-old Quebec boy was found in the Noire River today.

Marc-Antoine Latulippe had been missing for eight days after he disappeared while playing under a bridge along the shore of the river with friends in Roxton Falls.

His tearful mother today offered a warning to other kids to stay away from water that has rapids in it. (14)

(NS-Hockeyland)

A proposed International Hockey Heritage Centre in the town of Windsor, Nova Scotia will get a 20-thousand dollar boost from the provincial government.

The community that claims to be the birthplace of the game and the facility is expected to draw upwards of 150-thousand visitors each year.

The Hockeyland board of directors is seeking private-sector sponsorships for construction and operation. (14)

(NewsWatch by Chris Mayberry)

INDEX:Advisories

DATE: 2008.04.15
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PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 292

(Hillier-Retires) (Audio:166)

General Rick Hillier is stepping down in July after more than three years as Canada's chief of defence staff.

He has issued a statement on his departure, saying the military has reached the ``critical milestones" he set out for the armed forces to reach.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper praised Hillier in the House of Commons, calling him a ``great Canadian," and saying he has worked well with the government. (16)

(Tories-RCMP-Raid) (Audio:p11)

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has downplayed the significance of an R-C-M-P raid on national party headquarters today.

The raid was made at the request of Elections Canada.

He confirmed the raid is connected to a protracted legal dispute between the Conservatives and Canada's elections watchdog over alleged spending irregularities in 2006. (16)

(Seal-Hunt-Hakapik)

Nunavut's premier says several European parliamentarians told him they would not support a proposed ban on seal products if Canada eliminated the hakapik.

Paul Okalik says banning the seal-hunting club would make a huge difference in how the hunt is perceived, calling it a real image problem.

But Carl Schlyter, a Swedish Member of European Parliament representing the Green Party, says getting rid of the hakapik wouldn't make much difference at this point. (16)

(Bisphenol-Bottle-Recall)

Two major retailers are yanking bottles from shelves that contain the controversial chemical bisphenol-A.

The Forzani Group and Hudson's Bay Company expect Health Canada will label it a dangerous substance.

Both have announced they're removing B-P-A products, including water and baby bottles, from their shelves.

The chemical is linked to breast and prostate cancer. (16)

(US-Pope-Visit)

Pope Benedict has arrived in the United States and President Bush, first lady Laura Bush and their daughter, Jenna, all greeted the pontiff at Andrews Air Force Base.

It's Benedict first visit to the U-S as pontiff.

On the flight over, the Pope said the problem of clergy sex abuse in the states has been a source of deep shame for him and the Roman Catholic Church. (16)

(Delta-Northwest)

Delta and Northwest executives say they want to smoothly complete their deal to create the world's largest airline by the end of the year.

But investors reacted negatively today, amid word there are no plans for further domestic flight cuts.

Differences in the airlines' relationships with its workers were reflected when the deal was announced yesterday.

Delta pilots support it but Northwest pilots oppose it. (16)

(NewsWatch by Chris Mayberry)

--Eleventh NewsWatch--

DATE: 2008.04.15
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PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 337

Military sources say General Rick Hillier has decided to step down as the chief of defence staff this summer.

Hillier is an outspoken advocate for the military who put the welfare of his troops before all else.

His legacy will be a renewed military, equipped with new aircraft, vehicles and other equipment that had been depleted by years of budget cuts and neglect.

Hillier had been expected to step down three years after his appointment in 2005.

Chiefs of defence staff normally serve a three-year term, although that isn't fixed. (11)

(Tories--RCMP--Raid)

The R--C--M--P has raided Conservative party headquarters in Ottawa at the request of Elections Canada.

At least two Mounties were at the party offices on the 12th floor of a downtown building today to execute a search warrant.

Elections Canada spokesman John Enright would not say why.

Elections Canada and the Conservative party have been engaged a protracted legal battle over alleged campaign spending irregularities in the 2006 election. (9)

(Toddler--Shot) (Audio: P02)

Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl says he won't impose a solution to gang-related crime on a central Alberta reserve, despite the drive-by shooting of a two-year-old girl.

She's in critical but stable condition in an Edmonton hospital after what is believed to be a gang-related shooting Sunday on the Samson Cree First Nation.

The minister says he'll await suggestions from the reserve on how they want to handle the problem.

The R--C--M--P says an 18-year-old from Hobbema, Alberta, and a 15-year-old boy face a total of 31 charges between them. (9)

(House--Fire--Five--Dead)

A former Quebec man accused of killing his wife and four children has been found dead in his Ohio jail cell.

A prosecutor says 34-year-old Michel Veillette hanged himself.

Originally from Laval, near Montreal, Veillette had pleaded not guilty to aggravated murder and aggravated

arson.

Police alleged he stabbed his wife after they had a fight at their home near Cincinnati in January, then set fire to the house, killing his four children. (9)

(Breast–Cancer–Inquiry)

Newfoundland and Labrador's health minister says he's angry he was misled into believing that all patients affected by the province's botched breast–cancer testing scandal were notified.

Ross Wiseman has told a public inquiry that the Eastern Health authority didn't have the information last year to make that claim.

The inquiry in St. John's is looking into how nearly 400 patients received the wrong results on their breast–cancer tests.

It is also trying to find out whether the Health authority appropriately notified patients and the public. (9)

(Delta–Northwest Merger) (Audio: 41)

Delta and Northwest Airlines have agreed to merge to create the world's biggest air carrier.

Now, they have to convince anti–trust regulators and labor unions that the deal should move forward.

In 2001, an attempted merger of United Airlines and U–S Airways fell through amid anti–trust concerns. (9)

(NewsWatch by Phil Godin)

--Eleventh NewsWatch--

DATE: 2008.04.15
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 366

General Rick Hillier is refusing to comment on reports that he is stepping down after three years as chief of defence staff.

In an interview with the C-B-C today, he would only say he'd be ``delighted" to comment later -- maybe today.

Military sources have told The Canadian Press that Hillier has submitted his resignation to the prime minister effective July 1st.

The outspoken Hillier became known as ``the soldier's soldier," a leader who put the welfare of his troops before all else.

The Newfoundland native joined the army 36 years ago. (11)

(US-Cda-Khadr)

A Court of Appeals in the United States has reserved judgment on whether it will consider Omar Khadr's case.

The Canadian's lawyers have asked the court to reconsider a decision last year by a special military court that put Khadr's terrorism case back on track at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

But Washington says the appeals court has no jurisdiction until Khadr gets a full trial before the military tribunal.

Khadr is accused of killing a U-S soldier in Afghanistan in 2002. (11)

(Tories-RCMP-Raid) (Audio: P05)

Conservative party headquarters in Ottawa have been raided by the Mounties at the request of Elections Canada.

The Tories and Elections Canada have disagreed over alleged campaign spending irregularities from the 2006 federal election.

Elections Canada spokesman John Enright confirms that elections commissioner William Corbett asked for R-C-M-P assistance in a search warrant, but wouldn't say why. (11)

(Terror-Arrests)

It's believed charges will be stayed today against three adult suspects in an alleged Toronto terror plot.

The three (Qayyum Abdul Jamal, Ahmad Mustafa Ghany and Ibrahim Aboud) were issued peace bonds this morning in Brampton, Ontario and all three were already free on bail.

Seventeen men and youths in the Toronto area were arrested in a sweep of terror arrests last June, and an 18th suspect was arrested two months later.

Twelve people still face charges. (11)

(Seal–Hunt–Hakapik) (Audio: 121)

Premiers Danny Williams of Newfoundland and Paul Okalik of Nunavut say they are writing Ottawa to ask for a ban on the use of the hakapik.

That's the spiked club used by seal hunters which has become a rallying point for those opposed to the hunt.

Okalik says getting rid of the club would make a huge difference in how the hunt is perceived.

But Rebecca Aldworth of the Humane Society of the United States says using rifles to kill seals is just as inhumane as clubbing them with a hakapik. (11)

(House–Fire–Five–Dead) (Audio:110)

Ohio officials say a Quebec man accused of stabbing his wife to death and then killing his four young children has been found dead.

They say Michel Veillette, formerly of Laval, hanged himself with a sheet in his jail cell during a brief period between rounds by the guards.

Veillette was accused of killing his wife in January after a fight, and then setting fire to his home near Cincinnati, killing the four children.

He had pleaded not guilty. (11)

(NewsWatch by Chris Mayberry)

Canadian Press NewsAlert

DATE: 2008.04.15
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 28

OTTAWA – The chief of defence staff, Gen. Rick Hillier, is stepping down after three years in the job, military sources say.

(The Canadian Press)

INDEX:Defence, International, Politics

DATE: 2008.04.15
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 120

OTTAWA – Military sources say the chief of defence staff, Gen. Rick Hillier, is leaving after three years as the military's most senior officer.

Sources have told The Canadian Press that Hillier, appointed three years ago, has submitted his resignation to the prime minister effective July 1.

Born in 1955, he was known as the soldiers' soldier, an outspoken advocate who put the welfare of his troops before all else.

His legacy will be a renewed military, equipped with new aircraft, vehicles and other equipment that had been depleted by years of budget cuts and neglect.

Having earned a science degree from Memorial University in his native Newfoundland, Hillier joined the army 36 years ago and trained as an armoured officer.

He said when he joined he had no ambitions to be a general: 'I just wanted to be a soldier.'

(The Canadian Press)

Hillier–QuickSketch

DATE: 2008.04.15
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 162

OTTAWA _ A brief look at the life and career of Gen. Rick Hillier, Canada's retiring defence chief:

Born — 1955 in Campbellton, N.L.

Education — Bachelor of Science from Memorial University of Newfoundland (1975); honorary member, Royal Military College of Canada.

Career — Regimental duties in a tank unit; staff jobs in Montreal and National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa; appointed army chief in 2003; became defence chief in 2005; has served across Canada, twice each in Europe and the United States, where he was the first Canadian to serve as deputy commanding general of III Corps, U.S. Army, in Fort Hood, Texas; appointed one term as senior NATO commander in Afghanistan.

Hobbies — Enjoys many recreational pursuits, in particular “runs slowly, plays hockey poorly and golfs not well at all.”

Family — Wife, Joyce; two sons, Chris and Steven; grandson, Jack.

Quote — “These are detestable murderers and scumbags. They detest our freedoms, they detest our society, they detest our liberties.” _ July 14, 2005, on Osama bin Laden and his ilk.

(The Canadian Press)

INDEX:Advisories

DATE: 2008.04.15
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 309

General Rick Hillier says it's time to let someone else be chief of defence staff.

With that, Hillier plans to step down in July after more than three years as Canada's top military officer.

He says he was under no pressure from the government to step down.

Hillier says he has ``no idea" what he will do after he after he retires from the military.

He's 52, and plans to keep working in some capacity until he's 65 or 70. (18)

(Hillier Resign—Reaction)

Prime Minister Harper is praising General Rick Hillier, saying he's ``a great Canadian" who did ``an excellent job of rebuilding Canada's armed forces."

Retired general Lewis MacKenzie says Hillier's biggest accomplishment was ``elevating the morale of the Canadian Forces in general, and the army in particular, at a very difficult time."

And, MacKenzie adds that's critical when your're fighting a counter—insurgency operation like the Taliban in Afghanistan. (18)

(Tories—RCMP Raid)

Opposition M—Ps hammered the Harper government in the Commons after Mounties raided the Ottawa headquarters of the Conservative party.

Liberal M—P Michael Ignatieff says the Tories have ``shredders working overtime in some back room," adding spinners are ``in frantic damage control."

The raid concerns allegations of spending irregularities on advertising in the 2006 election campaign.

Prime Minister Harper says the Tory party did nothing wrong. (18)

(Bisphenol Bottle Recall)

At least three major Canadian retail chains are recalling plastic water and baby bottles containing bisphenol A.

That's a controversial chemical Health Canada reportedly is ready to label as a dangerous substance.

The retailers are Canadian Tire, Hudson's Bay — which includes the Bay and Zellers — and the Forzani group, Canada's biggest sporting goods retailer. (18)

(House Fire Five Dead)

A former Quebec man charged with killing his wife and four children has hanged himself with a bed sheet in his jail cell near Cincinnati, Ohio.

Thirty-four-year-old Michel Veillette (vay-ET') — formerly of the Montreal suburb of Laval — pleaded not guilty in the death of his family.

Last January 11th, Veillette's wife was stabbed to death and his children died in a fire that gutted their home in Mason, Ohio. (18)

(Congo Plane Crash) (Audio: 150)

Reports say at least 21 people are dead after a D-C-9 jetliner crashed and burned while trying to take off from the city of Goma in the eastern Congo.

About 80 people were aboard the jet, operated by Hewa Bora Airways.

The carrier has been banned from flying in the European Union because of safety concerns. (18)

(NewsWatch by Bill Marshall)

--Twelfth NewsWatch--

DATE: 2008.04.15
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 328

Military sources have told The Canadian Press that General Rick Hillier has submitted his resignation as chief of defence staff, effective Canada Day.

The general had no comment when asked today by C-B-C Newsworld about the report, but did say he might have something to say later today.

Appointed just over three years ago, Hillier is considered to be Canada's most articulate spokesman for the war in Afghanistan.

He is also extremely popular with Canadian soldiers for putting the welfare of his troops first. (12)

(Seal-Hunt-Hakapik) (Audio:121)

A proposed ban on the spiked club used in the East Coast seal hunt is being labelled a ``cynical ploy" by an animal rights activist.

The premiers of Newfoundland and Nunavut plan to ask Ottawa to impose a ban on use of the hakapik.

But Rebecca Aldworth of the Humane Society of the United States says using a rifle to kill the seals is just as inhumane and cruel as clubbing them with a hakapik. (12)

(Tories-RCMP-Raid) (Audio:p06)

The Conservatives say they don't understand why Elections Canada asked the R-C-M-P to raid party headquarters in Ottawa today.

Elections Canada won't say why the Mounties were called in to carry out a search warrant.

Prime Minister Harper says the party has provided all documents requested in a dispute over Tory spending on T-V and radio ads in the 2006 election campaign.

But N-D-P Leader Jack Layton says the raid makes a mockery of the government's claims to openness and transparency. (12)

(CRIME-Toddler-Shot)

Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl says he'll await suggestions from the Samson Cree Nation in Alberta on how they want to handle a gang problem.

A two-year-old girl was hit in the torso by a bullet from a drive-by shooting Sunday on the reserve in a shooting that investigators believe to be gang-related.

Two teens are in custody.

The minister says he'll consider helping Samson Cree leaders if they request it. (12)

(Pope-US)

Pope Benedict says the sexual abuse scandal involving U-S clergy makes him ``deeply ashamed."

He is pledging to make sure pedophiles do not become priests and says it's ``more important to have good priests than many priests." He made the comments on a flight from Rome to Washington.

Benedict is making his first papal visit to the United States. (12)

(Congo-Plane-Crash)

Dozens of people were killed when a D-C-9 plane faltered after takeoff today and plunged into a residential neighbourhood in the eastern Congo town of Goma.

Officials say there are only six known survivors out of the 85 people who were onboard.

The governor of the province says the crash site is engulfed in flames. (12)

(NewsWatch by Chris Mayberry)

INDEX:Defence, International, Politics

DATE: 2008.04.15
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
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OTTAWA _ General Rick Hillier, the country's top military commander, confirms he's stepping down in July after more than three years as chief of defence staff.

Speaking to reporters in Ottawa late this afternoon, Hillier talked about critical milestones the military has reached during his tenure.

They included planning for Canada's presence in Afghanistan past 2009, implementing a Canada-first defence strategy and boosting support among Canadians for our troops to unprecedented levels.

He says he's been eyeing this scenario and the timing since last fall.

Earlier, Prime Minister Harper praised Hillier in the House of Commons.

Harper says Hillier ``is a great Canadian" and the government is proud to have worked with him.

Hillier has been the most visible military leader in a generation and a political lightning rod over his often blunt assessments of Canada's enemies and defence policy.

Hillier's popularity has often overshadowed his political masters and became a liability last summer.

Hillier tussled with former defence minister Gordon O'Connor over how long it would take for Canadian troops to train their Afghan counterparts.

The contradiction was widely believed to have cost O'Connor his job.

(The Canadian Press)

--Tenth NewsWatch--

DATE: 2008.04.15
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PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 349

Military sources say General Rick Hillier will be quitting as Chief of Defence Staff as of July 1st.

A native of Newfoundland, Hillier joined the army 36 years ago and trained as an armoured officer.

He will be leaving after three years as Canada's most senior military officer.

Hillier is highly popular with his troops for putting the welfare of his soldiers above everything.

It was reported last fall that the Conservatives were seeking to force the outspoken general out as chief of defence staff.

That report was denied by Prime Minister Stephen Harper. (10)

(Tories--RCMP--Raid) (Audio: 112)

The Mounties have executed a search warrant at Conservative party headquarters in Ottawa after receiving a request from Elections Canada.

The R--C--M--P says the Mounties are not investigating but are merely assisting the Commissioner of Canada Elections.

An Elections Canada spokesman would not provide any details about the investigation.

Elections Canada and the Conservative party have been arguing over alleged campaign spending irregularities in the 2006 election involving expenses for national T--V commercials. (10)

(Seal--Hunt--Hakapik)

The premiers of Nunavut and Newfoundland are calling for a ban on the spiked club used in parts of the East Coast seal hunt.

After meeting today in St. John's, Paul Okalik and Danny Williams announced they are writing to Ottawa to ask for a ban.

Okalik has just returned from Europe where he was trying to counter negative publicity surrounding the hunt.

He says getting rid of the club would make a huge difference in how the hunt is perceived. (10)

(CRIME--Toddler--Shot) (Audio: P--02)

Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl says the shooting of a two--year--old girl in what is believed to be gang--related violence on a central Alberta reserve is a tragedy.

The toddler is in critical condition and two teenage boys are charged in the drive-by shooting on Sunday.

Strahl says he won't impose a solution to gang-related crime on the reserve but will await suggestions from the Samson Cree Nation on how they want to handle the problem.

Police say violence has been increasing in the community as more than a dozen gangs jockey to control the drug trade. (10)

(Pope-US) (Audio: 100)

Pope Benedict says he is 'deeply ashamed' of the clergy sexual abuse scandal that has stained the Roman Catholic church.

Chicago Archbishop Cardinal Francis George says the Pope wants to make sure that clergy sexual abuse won't happen again and that pedophiles don't become priests.

The pope is on his way to Washington from Rome for his first six-day pilgrimage to the U-S. (10)

(Britain-British Airways)

Two senior executives of British Airways have stepped down amid embarrassing problems in moving to a new Heathrow terminal in London.

The departures of Gareth Kirkwood and David Noyes follow the airline's move to the 8.6 (b) billion dollar Terminal Five.

The carrier has canceled hundreds of flights since the opening after a high-tech baggage routing system broke down.

At one point, more than 15-thousand pieces of luggage went missing. (10)

(NewsWatch by Phil Godin)

--Thirteenth NewsWatch--

DATE: 2008.04.15
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Prime Minister Harper is praising General Rick Hillier as a great Canadian.

The general today handed in his resignation as chief of defence staff.

Harper told the House of Commons that Hillier has done an excellent job in rebuilding Canada's military and the government is very proud to have worked with him.

The prime minister released no other details but the resignation is expected to be effective July 1st.

Hillier was extremely popular with the troops and is also considered to be the most articulate spokesman for the war in Afghanistan. (13)

(Tories--RCMP--Raid) (Audio: P09)

The Conservatives say they remain ``confident" in their legal position after an R--C--M--P raid on party headquarters in Ottawa.

At the request of Elections Canada, the Mounties executed a search warrant on the Tory offices today.

At issue is a legal battle over alleged campaign spending irregularities from the 2006 election.

Prime Minister Harper and Tory House Leader Peter Van Loan say the party has co-operated with Elections Canada and they don't understand why a search warrant was necessary. (13)

(Terror--Arrests) (Audio: 129)

In Brampton, Ontario, charges have been stayed against four men who were arrested in an alleged Toronto terror plot.

That essentially means the charges are dropped unless the Crown reactivates them within a year.

The move is a further blow to a case once heralded as Canada's largest post-9-11 counterterrorism operation.

Of the 18 charged in the case in 2006, 11 still face charges. (13)

(HEALTH--Bisphenol--Bottle--Recall)

A major Canadian sporting--goods retailer is recalling all water bottles that contain bisphenol A.

Forzani Group C--E--O Bob Sartor says the move follows reports that Ottawa is about to designate the chemical as dangerous.

B--P--A has been linked to breast and prostate cancer.

Forzani Group stores, which include Sport Check, Athlete's World and Coast Mountain Sports, will provide refunds for any bottles with receipts. (13)

(McCain–Gas–Taxes)

John McCain is offering a plan he says would reduce gas prices and spread economic relief across the United States.

The Republican presidential candidate is calling on the federal government to suspend gasoline taxes from Memorial Day to Labour Day.

He also wants the U–S to stop adding to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which could somewhat lessen the worldwide demand for oil. (13)

(ODDITY–Programmer–Proposal)

Hiding a ring in a bouquet is just so yesterday.

So New Jersey computer programmer Bernie Peng decided to pop the question in a different way.

He reprogrammed Tammy Li's favourite video game, ``Bejeweled," so a ring and a marriage proposal would show up on the screen when she reached a certain score.

Li reached the needed score – and said yes.

The firm that makes the game has decided to fly the couple to Seattle as part of their honeymoon. (13)

(NewsWatch by Chris Mayberry)

CANADA'S TOP GENERAL CALLS IT QUIT; Hillier ushered in new style of candour

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ILLUSTRATION: Ryan Remiorz the canadian press Gen. Rick Hillier puts a playfulheadlock on Master Cpl. Mark Fedorchuk during a visit to the Canadian base in Kandahar, Afghanistan, last May. Hillier is beloved by the troops, and always shares the spotlight with them. ; bill grimshaw for the toronto star General Rick Hillier announces yesterday in Ottawa that he is stepping down as head of Canada's military, a decision he says was months in the making. ;

BYLINE: Bruce Campion-Smith and Les Whittington

SOURCE: Toronto Star

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WORD COUNT: 925

During his time as Canada's top general, Rick Hillier won new aircraft and tanks for the armed forces, billions of dollars in additional funding and soaring public support.

But on the day he announced his resignation, Hillier said the achievement he's most proud of is restoring pride in the ranks.

"I think we had lost that," Hillier said yesterday, as he officially announced his decision to step down in July as the head of the military.

He moved quickly to quash speculation that the announcement was politically motivated, saying he had accomplished the goals he set when he accepted the job just over three years ago.

That includes steering the future of Canada's Afghan mission, now extended to 2011, laying the groundwork for the government's "Canada First" defence strategy on the home front and ensuring that troops and their families had the support of Canadians.

"That support for our men and women and their families has never been higher, certainly not in my time in uniform," Hillier told a news conference yesterday.

The 52-year-old career army officer was reflective and easygoing as he sat in a chair at defence headquarters and fielded questions.

He joked that he met with Prime Minister Stephen Harper yesterday to formally offer his resignation – and was unsure what to do.

"I told him I was not practised at his retiring business. I actually didn't know what process I had to go through but I'd write him a letter and formalize that in the next several days there. We agreed that would take place," Hillier joked.

Harper did not ask Hillier to stick around. "He knew that I had made my decision to take my retirement."

Hillier revealed that he took on the job in early 2005 expecting to serve only an "intense time ... and a short time" – only two years.

"I felt that now, coming to the summer, was the appropriate time to hand off to somebody else."

The outspoken general tried to put to rest speculation that he had locked horns with his political masters over the years, insisting that he enjoyed good relations with the prime minister and defence ministers during his tenure.

"I've had immense political support to get things done. Sometimes the challenge inside the bureaucracy (was) to move things as quickly as we would have liked," he said.

The popular and charismatic leader says he has no plans, beyond some down time, some golf and more time with his family and perhaps a private sector job.

"Whatever I do it's going to have to be pretty exciting to lure me in ... after having this appointment," he said, while making it plain he has no plans to enter politics.

But the avid Toronto Maple Leafs fan quipped if he'd be open to offers if the hockey organization came calling. "I can put general in general manager if the Leafs want to look this way," Hillier said.

Hillier took over in February 2005 and immediately showed his outspoken style, using his swearing-in ceremony to poke the Liberals for short-changing the armed forces – as then prime minister Paul Martin looked on. For most Canadians, it was a jarring introduction to Hillier, who brought a new style of candour and populist appeal to the office of top general. Under his tenure, funding for the forces went up, public support soared and more recruits enlisted, lured by edgy new advertising that encouraged them to sign on to "fight."

During his time, the armed forces shed its peaceable blue beret image and, in his words, went after "detestable murderers and scumbags." In language, not typically heard from military commanders, he talked about how Canadian special forces troops were working to "neutralize" Taliban leaders in Afghanistan.

"We are not the Public Service of Canada. We are not just another department. We are the Canadian Forces and our job is to be able to kill people," he said in 2005.

Hillier is beloved by the troops, an admiration helped in part by his habit of always sharing the spotlight with the lower ranks. During speeches, it was common for the general to introduce privates and others to the audience and invite applause for their efforts.

At the back of the room yesterday, one senior officer wiped tears from her eyes as Hillier wrapped up his news conference.

Hillier, who says he never aspired to be anything more than a foot soldier, conceded he will miss mixing it up with fellow soldiers.

"That's the part of being a soldier that I loved so much and that I'm going to miss," he said.

But Hillier also made plain those emotional ties with the troops take their own toll as well, as casualties mounted in Afghanistan.

"I just wear that emotional toll ... The worst thing in the world in this job was that phone call at 3 o'clock in the morning. I just knew it was not going to be good news."

In the Commons, Harper said Hillier "is a great Canadian and we are very proud to have worked with him." In a written statement, Harper noted Hillier's "singular dedication" to not just the troops but to Canada as well.

"He has championed the revitalization of our military and the dignity of those who choose to serve.

"Under Gen. Hillier's leadership, the fine young men and women of the Canadian Forces have stood among the greatest of their generation," Harper said.

David Wilkins, the U.S. ambassador in Canada, said Hillier served Canada "and the cause of freedom with honour and distinction."

"His pride and faith in the young men and women of the Canadian Forces is truly contagious and his belief in their valour helped spread the seeds of democracy," Wilkins said in a statement.

Former defence minister Bill Graham, who recruited Hillier for the job, called Hillier the "architect" of today's armed forces.

"He's shown unbelievable leadership to the troops and he has their complete and utter confidence and their complete loyalty. I think that reflects a lot," Graham said.

Hillier was the most influential chief of defence in many decades, said military historian Jack Granatstein.

"What he really did was to hit the Canadian self-image as peacekeepers between the eyes," he said. "Hillier, I don't think, is against peacekeeping. I think Hillier just thinks it's not the only thing we should be able to do."

Of the general's outspoken ways, Granatstein said: "I think he probably embarrassed the government sometimes, but I think he was the best thing the government had going for it in building support for its efforts to modernize the military. It simply would not have happened without Hillier."

Hillier the driving force on policy

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When historians ponder how Canada came to trade decades of soft diplomacy on the international stage for an indefinite spell of military activism in the early years of the 21st century, they should look to the retiring Rick Hillier rather than the two prime ministers he served under.

Over his three-year watch as top soldier, Hillier emerged as the driving force behind the remodelling of Canada's foreign policy – a military commander with a more focused view of Canada's potential role in the post 9/11 world and sharper communication skills than his successive political masters.

On that score, the main difference between Paul Martin and Stephen Harper is that the first had to be talked into the more muscular Canadian role Hillier craved for in Afghanistan while the second embraced it with gusto.

At times, the line between politics and the military became uncomfortably thin. Hillier dwarfed every minister he served under and, under the Conservatives, the Department of National Defence he operated in came to overtake Foreign Affairs as the top venue for articulating Canadian foreign policy.

Part of this ascendancy was not of Hillier's own making but rather the product of volatile political times. He might not have exerted the same influence under the more sure-footed, more stable governments of Jean Chretien or, for that matter, Brian Mulroney.

In the end, Hillier filled a succession of providential vacuums, serving first under a government preoccupied with a domestic scandal of corrosive proportions and then under a rookie regime whose leader brought more military instincts than foreign policy knowledge to the job.

He is so far the only public servant who can claim to have disposed of the career of a Harper minister. Under the current regime, the reverse is usually the case. In this instance, though, Gordon O'Connor has been seen but rarely heard from since he was shuffled out of the defence portfolio last summer.

A weaker chief-of-defence staff might have foundered under uncertain or distracted political bosses, but Hillier ultimately thrived in an environment of ministerial mediocrity and, as it happens, he never lacked for it.

That was demonstrated with the latest and most colossal public blunder to date of accident-prone Maxime Bernier. His public musings about the removal of the Afghan governor of Kandahar province this week set back months of behind-the-scenes diplomacy.

Not all of Canada's foreign affairs ministers have been Pearsonian in stature, but it is the first time that a government has one whom it should seriously consider grounding in Ottawa.

For Harper, Hillier's departure comes at a logical point in the cycle, with the politics of the Afghan deployment if not the policy itself in relative order. The prospect of taking Hillier on, even if only by proxy, in an election certainly weighed in the Liberal decision to seek common ground with the Tories to extend the mission to 2011 rather than campaign to take the troops out of Kandahar next year.

There will be many in the government who will not be sorry to see the media-savvy Hillier go. But government strategists should be wary that they have not seen the last of him. In contrast with senior civil servants, retired generals do not always fade quietly into the night. The sustained media presence of former military luminaries such as Romeo Dallaire and Lewis MacKenzie is a reminder that they sometimes have a fruitful second life as self-appointed government consciences.

As he ponders Hillier's succession, early indications are that Harper will not lack for competent choices. If only the Prime Minister could say as much about his cabinet options.

Chantal Hebert's national affairs column appears Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Hillier goes, not Bernier

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Is Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier in over his head? He certainly gave that impression this week, with his ham-fisted advice that the governor of Afghanistan's Kandahar province be replaced. Yesterday, Bernier was pummelled in the Commons, where Liberal MP Bob Rae called him "extremely clumsy" and asked what Prime Minister Stephen Harper intends to do about it. Harper did not respond.

The contrast with praise for another major figure on the Afghan file, Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier, couldn't have been more striking. When news broke yesterday that Hillier will retire this summer, the bluff, popular and effective general was described by Harper as "a great Canadian."

Bernier embarrassed Harper with his gaffe. Hillier, while abrasive at times, generally made the PM look good.

While the Prime Minister's office gamely rose to Bernier's defence and called the Quebecer "a bold and aggressive" minister, this isn't the first time his ability has been questioned since Harper appointed him in a cabinet shuffle last August.

Bernier's maiden speech at the United Nations in October was thin even by the UN's pitiful standards. And he has ducked questions in Parliament on everything from Afghan detainees to Radarsat 2, leaving them to be stickhandled by other ministers.

When Commonwealth leaders and foreign ministers met in Uganda in November amid nuclear-armed Pakistan's political crisis, Bernier was despatched to a Francophonie summit in Laos, where he was named chair of the club's Quebec City summit this October.

Bernier presides over a foreign affairs and trade department whose budget shrank this year, with more cuts projected. Our diplomats are said to be utterly demoralized.

Contrast that with Hillier, a Liberal appointee, whose intelligence and drive revitalized the Canadian Forces, leaving the nation a modernized, more mobile military with greater firepower.

Perhaps the wrong man is resigning.

'The end of the beginning' for Hillier

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SOURCE:	Toronto Star
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Soldiers cut through the spin, the sophistry and the smarminess. They are the antithesis of politicians.

But soldiers serve government and none more at the pleasure of the prime minister than the chief of defence staff.

This was always the core dichotomy – not conflict – in the relationship between Gen. Rick Hillier and Prime Minister Stephen Harper. One can't stop being a control–freak–in–chief and the other is genetically incapable of sidestepping controversy, if that meant muzzling himself or breaking faith with those he commanded.

When Hillier steps down in July, Canada will probably not see his like again, for which some will rejoice, particularly those who revile the unorthodox, who like their mandarins all in a genuflecting row and recoil from even the mildly profane.

He was an anomaly: A general with brass balls, not just clanging insignia on the chest and gold braiding on the shoulder.

In the vacuum of leadership over Canada's military deployment in Afghanistan – because neither Harper nor his revolving door of ministerial adjutants has ever properly seized the Kandahar file – Hillier put a face and a moral clarity to the mission.

That put noses out of joint in the PMO and Foreign Affairs, even Defence, diplomats and technocrats endlessly at cross–purposes with a military seminally distrusted and long beggared, stripped over decades of purpose and pith.

But take a look at what happened this week, when a galumphing politician wades into the internal slosh of Afghanistan, Maxime Bernier sounding off like the colossal naif he is, either foolishly tipping Ottawa's hand to preferred realignment of power in Kandahar or going entirely off the reservation with a unilateral pitch for replacing the governor, later recanted.

While NATO forces profess to be in support of extending the authority of President Hamid Karzai's Kabul–centric government, our foreign minister provokes diplomatic furor by overtly compromising Afghanistan's sovereignty.

One shudders to think how this Tory administration – or whichever regime might replace it – will next put a foot wrong in Afghanistan, without Hillier to block tackles from the alliance of critics. Some individuals can

take the heat, even thrive in it; others turtle.

Hillier survived, a year ago, his most controversial episode as CDS – the alleged abuse of detainees by Afghan prison authorities, that scandal devolving to the prisoner–turnover agreement that Hillier had signed with Afghanistan.

Yet in his 31/2 years at the mast, Hillier accomplished remarkable things.

He placed the military once again into a proper place on the national consciousness, securing billions to revitalize the services, restoring dignity and fighting muscle. He reconnected soldier to civilian.

Hillier appeared ebullient yesterday, rather than drained, though one strongly suspects the stresses of his job, and occasional rebukes, have been exhausting.

"The end of the beginning," as he put it, of this crucial transitioning stage in the 21st century, with all its dangers and multilateral security challenges, nudging – sometimes booting – Canadians into relinquishing peacekeeping anachronisms, many clinging still to the complete irrelevancy of a standing army that responds.

"I think Canadians have always realized you have to do certain things as a nation, particularly as a G-8 nation. In fact, only being blue berets was a very narrow point of our history, and can still be part of our future. But the spectrum of operations of Canadian Forces will be the entire spectrum, whether it's blue beret operations, peacekeeping operations, peace support operations or full combat operations in a place similar to Afghanistan."

Hillier put the lead back in the pencil.

And he took Canada to war – but never used that word.

That was political.

Rosie DiManno usually appears Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

Hillier to retire from military's top post

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BYLINE: Don Martin and Mike Blanchfield
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OTTAWA — His personal military mission accomplished, Gen. Rick Hillier will step aside as Canada's top soldier this summer.

Known for speaking his mind, Hillier said his departure from the post of chief of defence staff is entirely voluntary. "If anything, the pressure was the other way to keep me around," he said in an exclusive interview.

With the Kandahar mission extended until 2011 and the purchase of heavy-lift planes, upgraded tanks and helicopters, Hillier says it was a good time to go because it allows him to claim a legacy of reinforced pride inside the military.

"We've achieved the irreversible momentum that I wanted to have," Hillier told Canwest News Service. "It's a transition to a whole different mode and I'm quite comfortable that I can leave on a high and leave hopefully enabling Canadian Forces to carry on to much greater things."

In the House of Commons on Tuesday afternoon, Prime Minister Stephen Harper called Hillier "a great Canadian," even though the Conservative government was never fully comfortable with Hillier's outspoken nature.

"Gen. Hillier has worked very well with the government, he has done an excellent job in rebuilding Canada's Armed Forces. He is a great Canadian and we are very proud to have worked with him."

Hillier said he never aspired to the military's top job, and that he had been planning his departure since last fall. He said he was waiting for the fate of the Afghanistan mission to be determined and that he only planned to stay in the job for two years.

He finally delivered the news to Harper on Tuesday, and the prime minister accepted his resignation, which Hillier said he would formalize in a letter later. The two men shook hands. "His last words were thank you for what you've done," Hillier said.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion also praised Hillier's dedication.

"... his influence far exceeds our own armed forces," Dion said in a written statement. "As a commander of NATO forces in both Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as in Afghanistan, he demonstrated a level of professionalism that won him praise from soldiers and leaders of all our country's military allies."

Even NDP Leader Jack Layton, whose party opposes Canada's military mission in Afghanistan and has called for the immediate withdrawal of the country's 2,500 troops there, had praise for Hillier.

"There's no question that he was very controversial and direct at times," Layton said. "I always felt it came from the heart and we might not have agreed with absolutely everything he recommended but I never doubted this man's sincerity or his commitment to the country and I think all Canadians thank him for his service. It's certainly not an easy job that he's performed."

The general, appointed by Liberal prime minister Paul Martin in 2005, says recent governments have refunded the military government adequately and put Canada on the road to serving as a global power.

"I can only repeat what one of my commanders once said when he noted we're not trying to be one of the big boys, we are one of the big boys and we have to start acting like it," Hillier recalled. "That's a very good comment because that reflects our place in the world. Canada has had a significant re-profiling in the world. We're one of the big boys now."

National Post and Ottawa Citizen

Veteran of Iraq war heads list to succeed Hillier

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Canwest News Service, file / Lt.-Gen. Walt Natynczyk;
KEYWORDS: RELIGION; CLERGY
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: Ottawa Citizen; Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 713

OTTAWA – It was May 2007, and the affable general with the Popeye forearms met Prime Minister Stephen Harper with a warm handshake at the bottom of the staircase of his government jet.

Harper was on his way to Afghanistan for the second time, but the general greeting him at this military base deep in the Persian Gulf desert was not a household name.

Now, suddenly, that man is the leading contender to succeed Gen. Rick Hillier as chief of the defence staff.

Lt.-Gen. Walt Natynczyk, vice-chief of defence staff, is one of a handful of candidates on the shortlist to take over the job as Canada's military chief.

Natynczyk has the experience; he is one of the few Canadian soldiers to have served in Iraq. He also shares Hillier's ability to communicate; as a colonel, Natynczyk was given the job in 1999 as the chief Canadian Forces spokesman for the NATO-led air war in Kosovo.

"Life was good (as) a colonel," Natynczyk joked in an interview with Canwest News last year. "I dream of those days."

While many are betting that Natynczyk might be poised to take the top job, he will have some serious competition. The other leading contenders for Hillier's post are Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie, commander of the army, and Lt.-Gen. Michel Gauthier, chief of the Forces overseas deployments.

Like Hillier, both Leslie and Gauthier are well versed on Afghanistan. But with the United States poised to become Canada's main military partner in Kandahar, Natynczyk's experience with U.S. forces — something Hillier had more than any other Canadian soldier — makes him the odds-on favourite.

Natynczyk is a veteran of numerous peacekeeping stints in the Balkans in the 1990s, including as a commander, but he also distinguished himself by serving as a deputy commander of the U.S. army's III Corps at Fort Hood, Texas, part of a unique exchange program with the United States.

Hillier and Natynczyk are among only three Canadian officers to take part in that exchange program, and the experience allowed both to hold a senior position on the largest U.S. military base, which at 60,000 strong, is roughly the size of the entire Canadian Armed Forces. In 2004, Natynczyk was also deployed to Iraq for one year following the U.S.-led invasion and served as the deputy commander of the Multinational Corps there.

"Even though I am a contingent of one, I am able to attend some senior forums and proudly show the flag," Natynczyk wrote in one dispatch back to Hillier, reflecting on the fact that he was taking part in a military mission that his county had refused to support.

In his current post, Natynczyk has been charged with implementing the Forces ambitious restructuring plans, the so-called "transformation" that Hillier began.

The Conservative government's long-awaited Canada First defence plan has yet to be formally released, but Natynczyk has been busy behind the scenes trying to persuade the government to boost defence spending enough to support the plan.

Prying money out of the government has been the job that ultimately falls to the chief of the defence staff, and one that Hillier redefined with his very public pleas for more money.

Among the other leadership hopefuls, Leslie is an eloquent and educated soldier who also has considerable battlefield experience as a former commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

Gauthier, a former head of military intelligence, is less flamboyant but is highly respected as the commander of Canada's overseas operations, and has over the course of his 20 trips to Afghanistan developed into a knowledgeable strategist on the Forces' most important mission.

Lt.-Gen. Angus Watt, commander of the air force and Vice-Admiral Drew Robertson, head of the navy, are also top contenders for the chief of the defence staff. The one factor in their favour is the past practice of rotating the CDS among the Force's three branches — but that practice is far from firm, especially with the army's premier role in landlocked Afghanistan.

"Leadership in the Canadian Forces is not the role of one single person; it is the responsibility of all who wear the Canadian Forces uniform," Hillier said in his farewell statement to his troops Tuesday. "I believe you will now be best served by the invigoration of new leadership, with the vision, energy, and strength to lead you through the challenges that will lie ahead. For we have not finished evolving."

Top soldier leaving his post; Gen. Rick Hillier retires as defence staff chief this summer, says move entirely voluntary

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PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2008.04.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Ottawa Citizen, Canwest News Service / Gen. Rick Hillier speaks to the Ottawa Muslim Association on Sunday. ;
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Don Martin and Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 702

OTTAWA – His personal military mission accomplished, Gen. Rick Hillier will step aside as Canada's top soldier this summer.

Known for speaking his mind, Hillier said his departure from the post of chief of defence staff is entirely voluntary.

"If anything, the pressure was the other way to keep me around," he said in an exclusive interview.

With the Kandahar mission extended until 2011 and the purchase of heavy-lift planes, upgraded tanks and helicopters, Hillier says it was a good time to go because it allows him to claim a legacy of reinforced pride inside the military.

"We've achieved the irreversible momentum that I wanted to have," Hillier told Canwest News Service.

"It's a transition to a whole different mode and I'm quite comfortable that I can leave on a high and leave hopefully enabling Canadian Forces to carry on to much greater things."

In the House of Commons on Tuesday afternoon, Prime Minister Stephen Harper called Hillier "a great Canadian," even though the Conservative government was never fully comfortable with Hillier's outspoken nature.

"Gen. Hillier has worked very well with the government, he has done an excellent job in rebuilding Canada's Armed Forces. He is a great Canadian and we are very proud to have worked with him."

Hillier said he never aspired to the military's top job, and that he had been planning his departure since last fall.

He said he was waiting for the fate of the Afghanistan mission to be determined and that he only planned to stay in the job for two years.

Top soldier leaving his post; Gen. Rick Hillier retires as defence staff chief this summer, says move entirely voluntary

He finally delivered the news to Harper on Tuesday, and the prime minister accepted his resignation, which Hillier said he would formalize in a letter later. The two men shook hands. "His last words were thank you for what you've done," Hillier said.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion also praised Hillier's dedication.

"... His influence far exceeds our own armed forces," Dion said in a written statement. "As a commander of NATO forces in both Bosnia–Herzegovina, as well as in Afghanistan, he demonstrated a level of professionalism that won him praise from soldiers and leaders of all our country's military allies."

Even NDP Leader Jack Layton, whose party opposes Canada's military mission in Afghanistan and has called for the immediate withdrawal of the country's 2,500 troops there, had praise for Hillier.

"There's no question that he was very controversial and direct at times," Layton said. "I always felt it came from the heart and we might not have agreed with absolutely everything he recommended but I never doubted this man's sincerity or his commitment to the country and I think all Canadians thank him for his service. It's certainly not an easy job that he's performed."

The general, appointed by Liberal prime minister Paul Martin in 2005, said recent governments have refunded the military government adequately and put Canada on the road to serving as a global power.

"I can only repeat what one of my commanders once said when he noted we're not trying to be one of the big boys, we are one of the big boys and we have to start acting like it," Hillier recalled. "That's a very good comment because that reflects our place in the world. Canada has had a significant re–profiling in the world. We're one of the big boys now."

Hillier insisted he has no political ambitions. "I have no idea what I'll do, but I'm sure I'll work for another 10, 15 years," Hillier said. "I don't want to sit on the couch scratching my belly in my underwear watching the soaps."

With his outspoken, sometimes self–deprecating wit, Hillier transformed the job of Canada's chief of defence staff from that of dull departmental deputy minister who dutifully and quietly implemented government policy — whether the government was cutting the military's budget — to that of a chief soldier, an advocate on the behalf of the men and women who serve under him.

Hillier, along with former Liberal defence minister Bill Graham, were the architects of Canada's current military involvement in Kandahar.

With Graham at his side, Hillier was able to persuade Martin to back his vision for restructuring the Forces, and for Canada to take the lead in the new post–Cold War struggle in Kandahar.

With the \$13 billion that the Liberals pumped into defence in 2005 and the subsequent \$5 billion commitment by the current Conservative government, the Graham–Hillier vision of the Three Bloc War took root in Kandahar.

Put simply, that called on the military to fight its way into a hostile territory, establish stability and help reconstruct a battered society. In Hillier's view, the modern Canadian soldier was equal parts trained killer, diplomat and aid worker.

National Post and Ottawa Citizen

Chief of defence a superstar who worried about privates

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EDITION: Final
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PAGE: A4
COLUMN: Don Martin
KEYWORDS: !@DATELINE=OTTAWA
BYLINE: Don Martin
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 680

OTTAWA — Soldiers are trained to follow orders and, when their chain of command reaches the top, direction comes from the reigning political masters.

But retiring Gen. Rick Hillier ... not so much.

Canada's first chief of defence staff superstar will step down this summer after three years as a defining force of military personality, a general who worried less about the lofty views of prime ministers than the battlefield grievances of a lowly private.

His considerable mouth was a formidable weapon, letting fly opinions like laser-guided missiles that could penetrate any political flak jacket. He didn't fear the politicians. They feared him.

And with reason. Taking on Rick Hillier quickly became an unfair fight. It started the day of his appointment in early 2005 with a demand for more federal funding — a boost promptly dropped into the budget.

Former defence minister Gordon O'Connor paid the ultimate price for losing a popularity contest against Hillier. With that relationship poisoned by friction between former general O'Connor and his once junior officer, one of the pair had to go. The unhappy loser of that showdown is now the revenue minister.

After that, all talk of Hillier being dumped was CTV pulp fiction. He would go at a time and on terms of his choosing.

On the eve of his retirement announcement over beer Monday night, Hillier nicely framed his military legacy in a single sentence: "We're one of the big boys now."

With air, ground and naval equipment upgrades on order or delivered to bolster an extended Afghanistan mission fortified with 1,000 fresh American troops, Hillier has put the force back into the military.

That's why it was the perfect time to retire. The mission may be entering a more aggressive phase as the killing season arrives in Kandahar to coincide with the testosterone release accompanying an influx of American troops.

But more than re-arming Canada as a middle power player, the success secret has been Hillier's public relations acumen, talent rarely seen in brass spending too long collecting stripes while climbing through the ranks.

With carefully timed speeches and politically incorrect outbursts defending the needs of the soldier, Hillier dwarfed queasy voter opinion about the Afghanistan mission by focusing on strong public support for the military and its too-many sacrifices.

It's not that Hillier shoots from the lip before his brain is loaded. He knows his limits.

When pushed for any parting opinions on his political masters, he laughs. "Note to your tape recorder, I'm shaking my head in the negative."

It should also be noted the pride of Campbelton, N.L., who tried to enlist as an eight-year-old before successfully signing up at 17 to begin a 35-year rise up the ranks, had plenty of luck on his side.

His commands were the mixture of white knight rescues and black ops. He commanded military efforts during the Red River floods of 1997 and the 1998 ice storm that blanketed Ottawa and Montreal. He commanded the 6,000-strong International Security Assistance Force as Canada prepared to shift south into Kandahar. Then came his greatest challenge: selling a casualty-plagued peacemaking mission to a nation accustomed to blue-helmeted peacekeepers.

Perhaps one name best defines the Hillier phenomenon: Ray Henault.

The pre-Hillier chief of defence staff accepted his posting as a political puppet with nary a discouraging word. He came and left — and nobody knew his name.

Hillier shrugs off legacy talk, but there's been a profoundly positive shift in military perception since the disgrace of the Somalia scandal in the mid-1990s.

"I can't go anywhere these days or anybody else in uniform without somebody patting you on the head or shaking your hand and saying thank you very much," Hillier says.

Hillier dismisses talk of a political career, preferring to think in terms of golf or hockey. But he insists he won't be idle. "I don't want to sit on the couch scratching my belly in my underwear watching the soaps," he smirks. "At most I'll take two or three days off."

Hillier has strong views on the type of person to replace him. He leans over his beer, his face suddenly dead serious. "You're dealing with issues that cost men and women their lives. If you're not prepared to argue your case eloquently, articulately, occasionally aggressively but always clearly, you can't be a chief of defence staff."

That's the trouble, as you scan the lineup of heirs. None of them appears to have what it takes to meet Hillier's self-styled criteria. That suggests we may not see the likes of him again.

'Milestones' reached, Hillier to retire; Canada's top soldier, known for speaking his mind, says he'll go on July 1 with his key objectives achieved

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PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun
DATE: 2008.04.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Chris Wattie, Reuters / Gen. Rick Hillier pauses while announcing his retirement during a news conference at the Department of National Defence headquarters. ;
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Don Martin and Matthew Fisher
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 423

OTTAWA — His personal military mission accomplished, Gen. Rick Hillier will step aside as Canada's top soldier this summer.

As news of Hillier's retirement spread Tuesday, Hillier released a statement to the Canadian Forces saying he would end his tenure July 1.

He explained that he has achieved his key objectives and reached the "critical milestones" that he set out for the Forces to reach by the end of his tenure.

"We have moulded our culture to one which recognizes that operations are our raison d'etre; that our efforts, all of them, must concentrate on achieving the missions and tasks given to us by the government of Canada, on behalf of all Canadians," Hillier said in his message. He said the Forces have transformed how they recruit, train, deploy and care for its members.

"We have done so while growing the Canadian Forces, re-equipping it, and while carrying out intense combat and peace support operations overseas and demanding, essential security tasks here at home," Hillier's statement said.

The top soldier said he will continue in his role "until relieved of my duties by my successor, to be named in due course by our prime minister."

Hillier was expected to meet Prime Minister Stephen Harper to formally declare his retirement plans after three years as the colourful chief of defence staff.

Known for speaking his mind, often in politically incorrect terms, Hillier insists his departure is entirely voluntary.

"If anything, the pressure was the other way to keep me around," he said in an interview.

With the Kandahar mission extended until 2011 and the purchase of heavy-lift planes, upgraded tanks and helicopters, Hillier says it was a good time to go because it allows him to claim a legacy of reinforced pride inside the military.

"We've achieved the irreversible momentum that I wanted to have," Hillier told Canwest News Service. "It's a transition to a whole different mode and I'm quite comfortable that I can leave on a high and leave hopefully enabling Canadian Forces to carry on to much greater things."

In the House of Commons Tuesday afternoon, Harper called Hillier a "great Canadian."

"Gen. Hillier has worked very well with the government, he has done an excellent job in rebuilding Canada's armed forces. He is a great Canadian and we are very proud to have worked with him."

Defence Minister Peter MacKay also had kind words for the retiring soldier.

"We want to say thank you to Gen. Hillier for the great service he has given to our country," MacKay told the House of Commons.

The general, appointed by then-prime minister Paul Martin in 2005, says recent governments have refunded the military government adequately and put Canada on the road to serving as a global power.

"I can only repeat what one of my commanders once said when he noted we're not trying to be one of the big boys, we are one of the big boys and we have to start acting like it," Hillier recalled.

Canada loses a fighting general; Putting troops into Kandahar punched the peacekeeping myth right between the eyes

IDNUMBER 200804160065
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2008.04.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial / Op-Ed
PAGE: A23
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: SGT. ROXANNE CLOWE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE
PHOTO / General Rick Hillier is stepping down as Canada's top soldier. Prime Minister Stephen Harper, seen here with Hillier in Afghanistan in March 2006, will have difficulty finding a replacement. ;
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
BYLINE: J.L. GRANATSTEIN
SOURCE: Freelance
WORD COUNT: 873

One week in February last year, I went twice to hear the chief of the defence staff speak. The first time General Rick Hillier talked to a large military audience in Ottawa and had the officers, serving and retired, junior and senior, on their feet cheering.

The second address was in Toronto, and a collection of bankers and industrialists laughed at his jokes, cheered him to the echo, and leapt from their chairs applauding when he finished. There has not been a Canadian general officer with that kind of powerful charisma for decades, likely not since General Jacques Dextraze in the 1970s or General Andrew McNaughton in the early days of the Second World War.

How did Hillier do it? First, he was funny, patriotic and transparently sincere in the way he singled out soldiers, sailors, and airmen in the audience who had been decorated for meritorious service. Wars to Hillier are not fought only for generals. It was the soldiers who did the hard, dirty work, and their chief wanted Canadians to know this.

The troops loved him for his obvious concern for them, and so did the people. With his speeches and presence, he made sure that everyone understood that war was a costly business, and the extraordinary outpouring of respect and patriotism when the remains of those killed in Afghanistan return home is clear evidence that he succeeded.

But it was not only the military and the public that Hillier affected. He moved governments as no other soldier in our time has. Former defence minister Bill Graham jumped him over the heads of more senior officers to be chief of the defence staff – and will still say how proud he is of his choice.

Graham and Hillier together then moved prime minister Paul Martin, hitherto no special fan of the Canadian Forces, to adopt a new International Security Policy in 2005, the first defence statement in years to make sense, with its new vigorous approach.

Martin's and Graham's approbation might not have been an automatic guarantee that the new government of Stephen Harper would approve of him, but the chief made the turn seamlessly, and Harper's hard line on the

Canada loses a fighting general; Putting troops into Kandahar punched the peacekeeping myth right between

need for Canada to carry its full share of the Afghanistan burden fit perfectly with the Hillier approach.

And the general's approach was tough indeed. Hillier clearly believed that the idea that Canada's natural role – for some Canadians, the only role – was peacekeeping had gone too far in capturing the public imagination.

Putting Canadian soldiers into Kandahar helped begin knocking the powerful peacekeeping mythology right between the eyes. Hillier didn't succeed completely. To listen to the New Democratic Party's members of Parliament and the twaddle peddled by some "defence" institutes reveals that. But at the very least, large segments of public opinion and the government now understand that sometimes only the careful application of force can work to achieve Canadian interests.

It was not that Hillier opposed peacekeeping in principle or that he was averse to seeing Canadians serve the United Nations. Instead, it was simply that he understood that wearing a blue beret could not be the only role for the Canadian Forces. To him, Canada had international responsibilities to its neighbours, friends and allies. Our soldiers, sailors and airmen had to be ready for operations that ranged from traditional peacekeeping to war fighting, with everything in between, and Hillier also set out to remind the Canadian Forces of this.

No serviceman or woman could assume any longer that military service was simply a pleasant job. Now the unlimited liability of the soldier is once again at the forefront of the military mind.

But if a soldier is asked to risk his life for Canada, the government and people must accept their obligations as well. If Canada sends its men and women to fight, it must give them the tools they need to do the job. Here, Hillier had extraordinary success. As the mission in Afghanistan altered, as the Taliban changed its tactics, the Canadians serving in Kandahar received the tools to do their jobs. New long-range transport aircraft, vehicles, tanks, artillery and devices that could begin to sniff out the improvised explosive devices that have killed and wounded so many – whatever they needed, the troops got. And now with new helicopters expected by the autumn and with unmanned aerial vehicles on the way, Hillier has done his best for his soldiers overseas.

Yes, Hillier had his difficulties with his political masters. Calling the Taliban "detestable murderers and scumbags" was not tactful in our so-polite nation, even if it was true. Labelling the Jean Chrétien era "a decade of darkness" for the forces might have seemed a politically loaded remark to Liberal defence critics, although it was absolutely correct.

But telling the truth was Hillier's forte. It was why his troops loved him. It was why the public responded, and it is why General Rick Hillier will be almost impossible to replace with anyone of similar ability and charisma.

J.L. Granatstein is a senior research fellow at the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute.

Hillier was the right man for the job

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SOURCE: The Gazette
WORD COUNT: 552

Few Canadians, we believe, could name the chief of this country's defence staff who preceded Gen. Rick Hillier.

In fact, you have to go back past Gen. Ray Henault and several others, all the way to 1993, to find a Canadian military chief even remotely as prominent as Hillier – and that man, John de Chastelain, is known as well for his later peace efforts in Ulster as for his time leading the Canadian Forces.

Of course, Canadians in uniform are under fire these days, and that in part explains why Hillier's name has become a household word. But the sheer force of the man's personality is a factor, too. At a time when the Forces have taken a place in the national consciousness unmatched since the Korean war over half a century ago, Rick Hillier has been in some ways the ideal man for the job.

And so the official announcement yesterday, that Hillier will retire after serving a few months more than the usual three-year term, creates an interesting challenge for the government: to find someone else who can be equally effective as a military leader, as a bureaucrat, and at the same time as a public face for the mission in Afghanistan and the Canadian Forces in general.

This is not, evidently, a head-hunting job the government was eager to take on. Hillier made it clear yesterday that he's leaving of his own will, and that his political masters tried "to keep me around" longer.

You can see why they did. His energy, clarity and pugnacious brand of blunt-speaking, along with his refreshing lack of pretention, make him a figure with whom people easily form a sense of connection. From time to time he has been a little too outspoken for our taste about his opinions on some aspects of his job – ultimately generals must take orders from civilians – but despite that Hillier has plainly maintained a solid working relationship of mutual respect with the Conservative government, as with its Liberal predecessor.

The timing of Hillier's departure is easy to understand. Heading the armed forces organization of a sovereign state is a daunting management challenge, even in peacetime, and especially when that organization is under-strength and held in low national esteem, as the Canadian Forces have been until recently.

On Hillier's watch, however, the changes within the Forces, and to the public awareness of our military, have been enormous, and in most ways strongly positive.

Hillier remained past his three-year date because talk of a replacement would have been awkward at a time when the future of the Canadian role in Afghanistan was a subject of national political debate. Now that the picture is a little clearer and the issue off the national front burner, Hillier has said he is ready to move on.

Nobody likes warfare, and every body shipped home, along with every wounded soldier and every Afghan casualty, drives home again the reasons why not. Although the Afghan mission is still a source of controversy

among Canadians, we believe the country feels an unalloyed pride in the capability, determination, and demeanour that the men and women of the Canadian Forces display in Afghanistan each day.

For this Hillier deserves a considerable share of the credit. He'll retire with honour and with the thanks of his country.

Celebrity–soldier prodded country to war; Unwilling to toe the line, brash chief of defence staff returned the Forces to prominence as a key Canadian institution

IDNUMBER 200804160033
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2008.04.16
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SECTION: News
PAGE: A14
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: CHRIS WATTIE, REUTERS / General Rick Hillier announces his retirement at the Department of National Defence headquarters yesterday. ;
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
BYLINE: RICHARD FOOT
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 850

General Rick Hillier made it clear from the beginning that he was going to be different, unwilling – in contrast to his more cautious predecessors – to toe the line imposed by his political masters.

On the very day he assumed command of Canada's military in 2005, at a public ceremony attended by former prime minister Paul Martin and former defence minister Bill Graham, Hillier issued a brazen pitch for more military spending.

"In this country, we could probably not give enough resources to the men and women (in uniform) to do all the things that we ask them to do," he said. "But we can give them too little, and that is what we are doing now. Remember them in your budgets."

During his three years atop the Canadian armed forces, Hillier carved out an uncommon role for himself as a force to be reckoned with in Ottawa, as a man idolized by his troops, and as a media-savvy, celebrity–soldier who prodded the country into its first 21st-century war.

"We have to go all the way back to General Andrew MacNaughton and the Second World War to find a head of the military who had the impact on the Canadian Forces that Rick Hillier had," says Terry Copp, a military historian at Wilfrid Laurier University in Kitchener–Waterloo, Ont.

Hillier conspired from childhood to join Canada's army, secretly sending letters from his boyhood home in Campbellton, N.L., to military recruiters, who wrote back without knowing the wannabe–soldier was only a child.

Who could have predicted then that this precocious Newfoundlander would one day write the blueprints of Canada's first combat mission since Korea, and would then share the burden of watching 82 soldiers come home from Kandahar in coffins?

As one of the architects of the Kandahar campaign, and the senior general who presided over Canadian military efforts there, Hillier bears much responsibility for the mission.

Celebrity–soldier prodded country to war; Unwilling to toe the line, brash chief of defence staff returned the F

Afghanistan looms as the unknown aspect of his legacy: If the mission succeeds in the coming years, he will deserve credit; if it fails, history will hold him to account, along with others, for the outcome.

Those who know Hillier say he certainly feels keenly the loss of every Canadian killed or injured in Afghanistan.

"I think he takes a great deal of responsibility for the casualties there, and it may be one of the reasons he's leaving – because of the stress of dealing with that," says Doug Bland, a political scientist and former military officer who once commanded Hillier himself.

But Bland also says it makes sense for Hillier to step down, now that Canada has settled its commitment to Kandahar until 2011, now that the army has a clear, five-year troop rotation schedule in place, and now that helicopters and other equipment for the campaign are finally on their way.

Whatever the future in Afghanistan, Hillier's impact on the military at home is clear.

His greatest accomplishment, says Bland, has been reigniting pride and public ownership in a force widely disparaged and disconnected from civilian life following the Somalia scandal and years of government neglect.

"He succeeded in connecting the armed forces to ordinary Canadians," Bland says.

"Hillier made the point that the Canadian Forces are the people's armed forces, and that the soldiers were members of our communities. That was an important part of his mandate."

He also made the military a cool place to work, helped along by the arrival of new governments – first Paul Martin's and then Stephen Harper's – that were willing to spend money again, on recruitment, training, and on long-overdue military hardware.

Hillier also leaves office having presided over the continuing transformation of the military – a process started by the man he replaced, General Ray Henault – from a stale, Cold War institution into a flexible, expeditionary force for a modern age.

There were bumps along the way.

When the Harper government came to power with its election promises of Arctic icebreakers and giant military transport aircraft, it collided head-on with Hillier's vision of troop-carrying support ships, helicopters and smaller, tactical aircraft to support a 21st-century armed force ready to respond to global emergencies.

Hillier compromised, but in many ways also prevailed.

Many observers say the armed forces are now better trained, better organized – into domestic and overseas commands – and better oriented toward coping with the treacherous humanitarian missions, and terrorist insurgencies, of a post-Cold War era.

"He's accomplished what he's wanted to," Bland says.

"And I wouldn't be surprised if he's looking for relief from perhaps one of the most stressful jobs in Canada, especially in wartime with dead soldiers coming home. It's a job not many people would aspire to."

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Celebrity-soldier prodded country to war; Unwilling to toe the line, brash chief of defence staff returned the

General Rick Hillier Has 'Won the Respect and Confidence of the People in Uniform'

"He has a very outgoing and gregarious personality that was embraced wholeheartedly by the men and women in uniform and he provided a great deal of inspiration and was a very hands-on chief of defence staff. He'll be sorely missed."

Defence Minister Peter MacKay

"General Hillier has worked very well with the government, he has done an excellent job in rebuilding Canada's armed forces. He is a great Canadian and we are very proud to have worked with him."

Prime Minister Stephen Harper

"I have no idea what I'll do, but I'm sure I'll work for another 10, 15 years. I don't want to sit on the couch scratching my belly in my underwear watching the soaps."

General Rick Hillier

"Not only did he mobilize public opinion to make the Forces an important national institution once again, he's also won the respect and confidence of the people in uniform. I think that's an incredible achievement."

Military historian Terry Copp

Ottawa's next mission: Find a replacement

IDNUMBER 200804160003
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
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SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: CANWEST NEWS SERVICE / Lt.-Gen. WaltNatynczyk. ; Colour Photo: CANWEST NEWS SERVICE / Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie. ; Colour Photo: CANWEST NEWS SERVICE / Lt.-Gen. Michel Gauthier. ; Photo: ***** New Photo ***** ;
KEYWORDS: RELIGION; CLERGY
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: MIKE BLANCHFIELD
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 757

It was May 2007, and the affable general with the Popeye forearms met Prime Minister Stephen Harper with a warm handshake at the bottom of the staircase of his government jet.

Harper was on his way to Afghanistan, but the general greeting him at the military base in the Persian Gulf desert was not a household name.

Now, that man is the leading contender to succeed General Rick Hillier – who announced yesterday he will step aside July 1 – as chief of the defence staff.

Lt.-Gen. Walt Natynczyk, vice-chief of the defence staff, is one of a handful of candidates on the short list to take over as Canada's military boss.

Natynczyk has the experience – he is one of the few Canadian soldiers to have served in Iraq. He also shares Hillier's ability to communicate; as a colonel, Natynczyk was given the job in 1999 of chief Canadian Forces spokesperson for the NATO-led air war in Kosovo.

"Life was good (as) a colonel," Natynczyk joked in an interview with Canwest News last year. "I dream of those days."

While many are betting Natynczyk might be poised to take the top job, he will have serious competition.

The other leading contenders for Hillier's post are Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie, commander of the army, and Lt.-Gen. Michel Gauthier, chief of the Forces' overseas deployments.

Like Hillier, Leslie and Gauthier are well informed on Afghanistan. But with the United States poised to become Canada's main military partner in Kandahar, Natynczyk's experience with the U.S. military – also one of Hillier's strong points – makes him the odds-on favourite.

Natynczyk is a veteran of numerous peacekeeping stints in the Balkans in the 1990s, including as a commander, but he also distinguished himself by serving as a deputy commander of the U.S. army's III Corps at Fort Hood, Tex., part of an exchange program with the United States.

Hillier and Natynczyk are among only three Canadian officers to take part in that exchange program, and the experience allowed them to hold a senior position on the largest U.S. military base, which at 60,000 strong is about the size of the entire Canadian Forces.

In 2004, Natynczyk was deployed to Iraq for one year after the U.S.-led invasion. He served as deputy commander of the Multinational Corps there.

"Even though I am a contingent of one, I am able to attend some senior forums and proudly show the flag," Natynczyk wrote in one dispatch back to Hillier, reflecting on the fact he was taking part in a military mission his county had refused to support.

In his current post, Natynczyk has been charged with implementing the Forces' ambitious restructuring plans, the so-called "transformation" Hillier began.

The Conservative government's long-awaited Canada First defence plan has yet to be formally made public, but Natynczyk has been busy behind the scenes, trying to persuade the government to boost defence spending to support the plan.

Prying money out of the government has been the job that ultimately falls to the chief of the defence staff, and one that Hillier has redefined with his very public pleas for more money.

As Hillier told Canwest News Service in an exclusive interview, being an advocate for the Forces will be a major requirement for whoever succeeds him.

"Everybody comes at leadership uniquely," he said.

"There are quieter leaders and more extroverted leaders. But we need a force of personality. It's not as if you're dealing with slight issues – you're dealing with issues that cost men and women their lives.

"If you're not prepared to argue your corner eloquently, articulately, occasionally aggressively but always clearly, you can't be a CDS or you can't be a commander," Hillier said.

"If you don't have a force of personality and a strong vision for what the men and women should do for Canada and articulate that, you can't help shape the Canadian Forces to be the best it can be for Canada."

Among the other leadership hopefuls, Leslie is an eloquent and educated soldier who also has considerable battlefield experience, as a former commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

Gauthier, a former head of military intelligence, is less flamboyant but is highly respected as the commander of Canada's overseas operations.

During his 20 trips to Afghanistan, he has developed into a knowledgeable strategist on the Forces' most important mission.

Lt.-Gen. Angus Watt, commander of the air force, and Vice-Admiral Drew Robertson, head of the navy, are also top contenders for the post of chief of the defence staff.

The one factor in their favour is the past practice of rotating the CDS among the Forces' three branches – but that practice is far from firm, especially with the army's premier role in landlocked Afghanistan.

"Leadership in the Canadian Forces is not the role of one single person; it is the responsibility of all who wear the Canadian Forces uniform," Hillier said in his farewell statement to the troops yesterday.

"I believe you will now be best served by the invigoration of new leadership, with the vision, energy, and strength to lead you through the challenges that will lie ahead, for we have not finished evolving."

Ottawa Citizen

Salute the general Retiring chief of defence staff will be missed by troops, public

SOURCETAG 0804160662
PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun
DATE: 2008.04.16
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PAGE: 9
BYLINE: PETER WORTHINGTON
WORD COUNT: 516

If anyone in the Canadian Forces is indispensable, that soldier is Gen. Rick Hillier.

The military likes to say no one is irreplaceable — that someone is always ready to fill the gap. Yet history has periodically proven this adage wrong — as, say, when the Confederate army of Robert E. Lee in the U.S. Civil War lost Stonewall Jackson, its irreplaceable commander. ("Jackson lost his left arm, I've lost my right," Lee is supposed to have said after Jackson was mortally wounded at Chancellorsville.)

Gen. Hillier at age 52 is stepping down as chief of defence staff on July 1 after some three years in the job. Rumours had circulated for some time that Hillier's time was done — provoked, it often seemed, by some who wanted to be rid of him because they felt he was too influential for their own good.

For serving soldiers, it was a sorry day. As well as respected, Hillier was arguably the most popular Canadian commander among troops since the Second World War.

One hopes it is Hillier who wanted to quit, because certainly the army doesn't want him to leave. The political opposition may relish a change — which presumably will be Army commander, Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie, grandson to Gen. Andrew McNaughton, Canada's top soldier at the start of WW II and another who was immensely liked by troops.

The Globe and Mail and, to a degree, Maclean's magazine have seemed eager to be rid of Hillier, whom they think is too political. Accusations have been made that he tried to make policy instead of follow policy. This misunderstands the role of the CDS to advise and assess.

AFGHANISTAN

When Hillier opined that it would be 10 years before Afghanistan's security problems would be resolved, it was assumed by critics that he was dictating government policy.

Hillier vigorously denied this, and explained his assessment of the situation was one thing, the government's decision another. As CDS, he would abide by the government's decision and follow orders.

Hillier's charisma offended some who neither possessed it nor understood its use. Many great field commanders have had charismatic personalities that won the hearts of their men.

There was more Hollywood than Sandhurst in some of Gen. Hillier's outspoken bluntness, which resonated among soldiers and with the Canadian public. Candour from commanders was unusual and welcomed.

"We're not the public service of Canada, we're not just another department. We are the Canadian Forces, and our job is to be able to kill people," Gen. Hillier said, and the country applauded. Telling it like it is.

Other Hillier bon mots included calling terrorists, "scumbags," and saying they "detest our freedoms." Crude, but no equivocating.

He's said that "any commander who'd say we didn't need more soldiers should be tarred and feathered and rode out of town on a rail."

That's Rick Hillier.

Politicians are uneasy when soldiers speak their mind. But Hillier (in my view) has never crossed the line where he seemed to be dictating policy rather than giving an honest opinion on which policy should be based. Every PM should want a CDS with such an approach.

JOINED AT 17

Hillier is an Armoured Corps soldier, born in Campbelton, N.L., who joined up when he was 17 and wanted only to be a serving soldier.

The question begs, what will he do now?

Some see a political future for him, but after being the top guy in the Canadian military, and respected among allies and troops as a soldier's soldier, what can politics offer except frustration and pettiness?

It's likely Hillier's successor will carry on the Hillier tradition — with perhaps less salty language and Newfie bluntness.

But it's unlikely Canada has heard the last of Hillier.

Hillier did a great job

SOURCETAG 0804160660
PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun
DATE: 2008.04.16
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SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 8
BYLINE: LORRIE GOLDSTEIN
COLUMN: Editorial
WORD COUNT: 277

The test of a good general is whether his soldiers would want to share a foxhole with him in combat.

Gen. Rick Hillier, who yesterday announced his retirement as Canada's chief of defence staff, effective July 1, passed that test with flying colours.

Widely praised as a "soldier's soldier," Hillier, 52, who spent three years in the top job and 36 years in the military, said he's not being forced out, and if anything, Prime Minister Stephen Harper wanted him to stay.

We hope that's true, in light of reports last fall — denied by Harper — that Hillier would be fired because his so-called clashes with the government on the end date of Canada's military mission in Afghanistan, offended unnamed Conservative officials.

If accurate, those officials were (and are) idiots.

Canada was lucky to have Hillier overseeing our first official combat operation since Korea.

He articulately explained the mission's importance, steadied public support as casualties mounted, restored military pride and successfully lobbied the Conservatives for major new investments in the armed forces.

Appointed by the previous Liberal government of Paul Martin, Hillier was unafraid to speak truth to power.

That was the case whether he was describing the Taliban ("detestable murderers and scumbags"), the role of the military ("We are not the Public Service of Canada ... our job is to be able to kill people") or how long it will take before the Afghanistan military can pacify the Taliban without NATO's help ("10 years or so").

Contrary to criticism by some bureaucrats and media desk jockeys, Hillier never challenged the right of the government to set the end date for Canada's mission in Afghanistan, first for 2009 and now, 2011. Rather, he said securing Afghanistan would take longer, a view most experts share.

Hillier also said he's not ready to retire and once joked he'd love to be general manager of his beloved Maple Leafs. (The Canucks could use him, too.)

More seriously, what company looking for a dynamic leader, wouldn't want Hillier as its CEO?

General consensus Outgoing chief of defence staff roundly praised for job well done

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SECTION: News

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ILLUSTRATION: photo by Sean Kilpatrick, CP Gen. Rick Hillier speaks at a press conference yesterday at Department of National Defence headquarters about his plans to step down July 1 as Canada's chief of defence staff.

BYLINE: KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU CHIEF

WORD COUNT: 365

Canada's retiring top soldier says the toughest part of the job was receiving news of fallen war heroes in Afghanistan.

Gen. Rick Hillier, who will step down as chief of defence staff July 1, has spent more than three years fighting fierce political battles to frame a prolonged Kandahar mission, boost military spending and better equip the troops.

But he says the most gruelling part of his job was the emotional toll of getting bad news from the field.

"The worst thing in the world in this job was that phone call at 3 a.m.," he said. "I got to the point where the phone would ring, I'd take my time, get myself up and get myself squared away because I knew it was not going to be good news."

Since 2002, 82 soldiers have died in Afghanistan, most of them under Hillier's watch. Still, he said the personal pain of receiving flag-draped caskets back from the war zone is "minuscule" compared to the grief endured by families.

While rumours of tension and clashes between Hillier and senior government officials have raged for months, there were strong denials from both sides yesterday there was any political nudge. With a recent vote to extend the Afghan mission to 2011 and a defence and procurement strategy in place, Hillier said the decision was months in the works and the time is right for a "hand-off."

Shrugging off talk of a "legacy," Hillier said he's proud to leave the post with public confidence and support for the troops at a high.

"I really did focus a lot on ensuring the men and women who wear our nation's uniform ... had the support of Canadians ... in all the missions they choose to do," he said. "I believe that support for our men and women, and their families, has never been higher."

Prime Minister Stephen Harper denied any tensions were behind Hillier's decision to go, and heaped praise on the achievements of the outgoing general.

"He has done an excellent job in rebuilding Canada's armed forces. He is a great Canadian and we are proud to have worked with him," he said.

Defence Minister Peter MacKay added to the chorus of applause.

"Gen. Hillier was among the most capable, dedicated, informed and professional people I've ever met," he said.

Hillier said he will take time to rejuvenate, golf and spend time with his family before he charts his next professional move. He flatly ruled out a run for political office, but joked he'd consider a job with his favourite hockey team, the Toronto Maple Leafs.

"I can put the 'general' in general manager if the Leafs want to look this way," he quipped.

KEYWORDS=CANADA

Salute the general Retiring chief of defence staff will be missed by troops, public

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BYLINE: PETER WORTHINGTON
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Hillier did a great job

SOURCETAG 0804160465
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2008.04.16
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PAGE: 18
COLUMN: Editorial
WORD COUNT: 270

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Widely praised as a "soldier's soldier," Hillier, 52, who spent three years in the top job and 36 years in the military, said he's not being forced out, and if anything, Prime Minister Stephen Harper wanted him to stay.

We hope that's true, in light of reports last fall — denied by Harper — that Hillier would be fired because his so-called clashes with the government on the end date of Canada's military mission in Afghanistan, offended unnamed Conservative officials.

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Rather, he said securing Afghanistan would take longer, a view most experts share.

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Letters to the Editor Column

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COLUMN: Letters to the Editor
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WE'RE LOSING A GOOD MAN

General Rick Hillier's resignation will be a surprise to many regular and reserve force personnel. There have been some good generals and admirals in the past, but none I can recall who spoke out like Gen. Hillier. He is well liked by the officers and enlisted men alike. At least this general was on the ball and knew what he was talking about. The military could use many more. In my own 27 years in the RCAF and 17 years in DND, I had gone up through the ranks with many people. Some who became officers would not back their men. Too many career officers looked after themselves only. Our military has always had too many generals and captains for the size of service strength. At 52, Hillier had a few years left to stay in service. Canada has lost some very good men — like Gen. Romeo Dallaire, now a senator, Maj.-Gen. Lewis MacKenzie, and others who resigned or retired early.

KEN POWELL, CD RCAF, RETIRED BARRIE

(Why is it so hard to keep a good man in those jobs?)

OBSESSING ON OBJECTS

Re "Knife crime bill needed" (Mark Bonokoski, April 15): Why do we always feel a need to come up with another law when something bad happens? Murder is illegal. Does it matter whether you are stabbed, shot or beaten with a high-heeled shoe? The victim is dead, I'm fairly certain they would like their assailant to serve some hard time regardless of the weapon of choice. How about we start giving out punishments that suit the crimes, and stop obsessing about the objects used as if they are responsible? If the sentences for murder are not high enough, then increase them for all murder, not just murder by knife.

OSCAR LONG

(Let's find them guilty first)

MOUNTIES SILENT ... AGAIN

What is it with the RCMP these days? They won't release details of injuries sustained by people who've been stunned by Tasers ("Mounties shield details on Taser use," March 25). They wouldn't answer questions at a town hall meeting in Merritt, B.C., where three children were murdered. Now there are questions about their storming of an anti-sealing vessel in international waters. It seems Canada's national police force is making headlines for all the wrong reasons.

DAN NYZNIK

KEENE

(Reasonable question) THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

Re "Scoring Points" (April 15): Poor Greg Weston. Immigration wouldn't let him into Canada if he applied now. Exactly. I wouldn't be welcome either at my age (50+) — and that's just the point. Canada needs younger, more educated immigrants to make it grow — not 50+-year-olds who have little time to contribute but are nearing the withdrawal phase of their lives. Canada has become a retirement and nursing home for the world, and those of us who grew up here paid for it. Now, as we ourselves grow older, we're finding our investments in health and infrastructure quickly disappearing. Canada was built by immigrants who came to build a country, but we've left our borders wide open for so long, allowed so many social and criminal burdens into this country that we as a nation paid dearly. It's about time we slammed that door and inspected all wannabe Canadians.

T. BARTOFFY

WOODBIDGE

(So 50+ and you're useless to society? Sheesh)

BUSINESS FOR CHINA

The government needs to give some serious thought to outsourcing some of our prison system to places like China and Bangladesh. Since the average yearly cost for a male inmate in Canada is roughly \$80,000 versus the \$42 it cost in China, we could save a pretty penny (even with the round-trip airfare). As an added bonus, I am quite certain that spending a few years in a Chinese prison would cut down the number of repeat offenders, and it would be a great incentive for wannabe thugs to live an honest and productive life. Hey, it's worth a try.

MICHEL TRAHAN

VERDUN, QUE.

(That's thinking outside the sandbox)

General falling out Retiring Hillier says getting 3 a.m. calls about fallen soldiers was toughest part of job

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ILLUSTRATION: file photo by The Canadian Press A smiling Gen. Rick Hillier arrives at the Provincial Reconstruction Team base in Kandahar, Afghanistan, in May last year.

BYLINE: KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU CHIEF

DATELINE: OTTAWA

WORD COUNT: 446

Canada's retiring top soldier says the toughest part of the job was receiving news of fallen war heroes in Afghanistan.

Gen. Rick Hillier, who will step down as chief of defence staff in July, has spent more than three years fighting fierce political battles to frame a prolonged Kandahar mission, boost military spending and better equip the troops.

But he says the most gruelling part of his job was the emotional toll of getting bad news from the field. "The worst thing in the world in this job was that phone call at 3 a.m.," he said. "I used to joke, but it's not a joke, that no one calls me at three in the morning to tell me I've won the lotto. I got to the point where the phone would ring, I'd take my time, get myself up and get myself squared away because I knew it was not going to be good news."

Since 2002, 82 soldiers have died in Afghanistan, most of them under Hillier's watch. He said the pain of receiving flag-draped caskets back from the war zone is "minuscule" compared to the grief endured by military families.

RUMOURS OF TENSION

While rumours of tension and clashes between Hillier and senior government officials have raged for months, there were strong denials from both sides yesterday that there was any political nudge.

With a recent vote to extend the Afghan mission to 2011 and a defence and procurement strategy in place, Hillier said the time is right for a "hand-off" to his successor.

Shrugging off talk of a "legacy," Hillier said he's proud to leave the post with public confidence and support for the troops at an all-time high.

"I really did focus a lot on ensuring the men and women who wear our nation's uniform, and their families certainly, had the support of Canadians from coast to coast to coast in all the missions they choose to do," he said.

"I believe that support for our men and women, and their families, has never been higher. Certainly not in my

General falling out Retiring Hillier says getting 3 a.m. calls about fallen soldiers was toughest part of job

time in uniform and I think perhaps never in our country before."

The witty, outspoken Newfoundlander said he did not see his role as marketing the mission in Afghanistan so much as the "national treasures" in uniform doing the heavy lifting on the front lines.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper denied any tensions were behind Hillier's decision to go, and heaped praise on the achievements of the outgoing general.

"He has done an excellent job in rebuilding Canada's armed forces. He is a great Canadian and we are proud to have worked with him," he said.

Defence Minister Peter MacKay described Hillier's decision as purely personal. "Gen. Hillier was among the most capable, dedicated, informed and professional people I've ever met," he said.

Hillier said he will take time to rejuvenate, golf and spend time with his family before he charts his next professional move. He flatly ruled out a run for political office, but joked that he'd consider a job with his favourite pro hockey club, the Toronto Maple Leafs.

"I can put the 'general' in general manager if the Leafs want to look this way," he quipped.

KEYWORDS=CANADA

"He said it"

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DATE: 2008.04.16
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SECTION: News
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BYLINE: CP
WORD COUNT: 297

Outgoing defence chief Gen. Rick Hillier is known for his colourful, no-nonsense comments.

"Any commander who would stand up here and say that we didn't need more soldiers should be tarred and feathered and rode out of town on a rail." — May 30, 2003, at the ceremony marking his appointment as army chief

"In this country, we could probably not give enough resources to the men and women to do all the things that we ask them to do. But we can give them too little, and that is what we are now doing. Remember them in your budgets." — Feb. 4, 2005, in his first speech as defence chief

"These are detestable murderers and scumbags. They detest our freedoms, they detest our society, they detest our liberties." — July 14, 2005, on Osama bin Laden and his ilk

"We're not going to let those radical murderers and killers rob from others and certainly we're not going to let them rob from Canada." — July 14, 2005

"We are not the Public Service of Canada. We are not just another department. We are the Canadian Forces and our job is to be able to kill people." — July 14, 2005.

"An army is what's required to allow them to keep their security, so that's a long-term project. It's going to take 10 years or so just to work through and build an army to whatever the final number that Afghanistan will have, and make them professional and let them meet their security demands here." — Oct. 25, 2007, on Canada's role in Afghanistan

"I've talked to the prime minister. I'm absolutely clear where he wants to go and on what he needs and I'm absolutely in line with that; otherwise I wouldn't be his chief of defence staff." — Oct. 26, 2007, on suggestions he was at odds with Stephen Harper over Afghanistan

"I admit I am no politician. And I don't think I'm very wise. But I represent the 87,000 Forces members and their families." — Nov. 6, 2007. KEYWORDS=CANADA

Life and career

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BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: OTTAWA
WORD COUNT: 123

A brief look at the life and career of Gen. Rick Hillier, Canada's retiring defence chief:

- Born — 1955 in Campbellton, Nfld.
- Education — Bachelor of Science from Memorial Univ. of Newfoundland (1975); honorary member, Royal Military College of Canada.
- Career — Regimental duties in a tank unit; staff jobs in Montreal and National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa; appointed army chief in 2003; became defence chief in 2005; has served across Canada, twice each in Europe and the United States, where he was the first Canadian to serve as deputy commanding general of III Corps, U.S. Army, in Fort Hood, Texas; appointed one term as senior NATO commander in Afghanistan.
- Hobbies — Enjoys many recreational pursuits, in particular "runs slowly, plays hockey poorly and golfs not well at all."
- Family — Wife, Joyce; two sons, Chris and Steven; grandson, Jack. KEYWORDS=CANADA

Salute the general Retiring chief of defence staff will be missed by troops, public

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DATE: 2008.04.16
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BYLINE: PETER WORTHINGTON
WORD COUNT: 516

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BYLINE: LORRIE GOLDSTEIN
COLUMN: Editorial
WORD COUNT: 277

The test of a good general is whether his soldiers would want to share a foxhole with him in combat.

Gen. Rick Hillier, who yesterday announced his retirement as Canada's chief of defence staff, effective July 1, passed that test with flying colours.

Widely praised as a "soldier's soldier," Hillier, 52, who spent three years in the top job and 36 years in the military, said he's not being forced out, and if anything, Prime Minister Stephen Harper wanted him to stay.

We hope that's true, in light of reports last fall — denied by Harper — that Hillier would be fired because his so-called clashes with the government on the end date of Canada's military mission in Afghanistan, offended unnamed Conservative officials.

If accurate, those officials were (and are) idiots.

Canada was lucky to have Hillier overseeing our first official combat operation since Korea.

He articulately explained the mission's importance, steadied public support as casualties mounted, restored military pride and successfully lobbied the Conservatives for major new investments in the armed forces.

Appointed by the previous Liberal government of Paul Martin, Hillier was unafraid to speak truth to power.

That was the case whether he was describing the Taliban ("detestable murderers and scumbags"), the role of the military ("We are not the Public Service of Canada ... our job is to be able to kill people") or how long it will take before the Afghanistan military can pacify the Taliban without NATO's help ("10 years or so").

Contrary to criticism by some bureaucrats and media desk jockeys, Hillier never challenged the right of the government to set the end date for Canada's mission in Afghanistan, first for 2009 and now, 2011. Rather, he said securing Afghanistan would take longer, a view most experts share.

Hillier also said he's not ready to retire and once joked he'd love to be general manager of his beloved Maple Leafs. (The Canucks could use him, too.)

More seriously, what company looking for a dynamic leader, wouldn't want Hillier as its CEO?

Quote of the Day

SOURCETAG 0804160586

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun

DATE: 2008.04.16

EDITION: Final

SECTION: Editorial/Opinion

PAGE: 10

WORD COUNT: 43

"I have no idea what I'll do, but I'm sure I'll work another 10, 15 years. I don't want to sit on the couch scratching my belly in my underwear watching soaps."

Gen. Rick Hillier, who will retire July 1 as Canada's chief of defence staff

General consensus Outgoing chief of defence staff roundly praised for job well done

SOURCETAG: 0804160583

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun

DATE: 2008.04.16

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 9

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Sean Kilpatrick, CP Gen. Rick Hillier speaks at a press conference yesterday at Department of National Defence headquarters about his plans to step down July 1 as Canada's chief of defence staff.

BYLINE: KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU CHIEF

WORD COUNT: 365

Canada's retiring top soldier says the toughest part of the job was receiving news of fallen war heroes in Afghanistan.

Gen. Rick Hillier, who will step down as chief of defence staff July 1, has spent more than three years fighting fierce political battles to frame a prolonged Kandahar mission, boost military spending and better equip the troops.

But he says the most gruelling part of his job was the emotional toll of getting bad news from the field.

"The worst thing in the world in this job was that phone call at 3 a.m.," he said. "I got to the point where the phone would ring, I'd take my time, get myself up and get myself squared away because I knew it was not going to be good news."

Since 2002, 82 soldiers have died in Afghanistan, most of them under Hillier's watch. Still, he said the personal pain of receiving flag-draped caskets back from the war zone is "minuscule" compared to the grief endured by families.

While rumours of tension and clashes between Hillier and senior government officials have raged for months, there were strong denials from both sides yesterday there was any political nudge. With a recent vote to extend the Afghan mission to 2011 and a defence and procurement strategy in place, Hillier said the decision was months in the works and the time is right for a "hand-off."

Shrugging off talk of a "legacy," Hillier said he's proud to leave the post with public confidence and support for the troops at a high.

"I really did focus a lot on ensuring the men and women who wear our nation's uniform ... had the support of Canadians ... in all the missions they choose to do," he said. "I believe that support for our men and women, and their families, has never been higher."

Prime Minister Stephen Harper denied any tensions were behind Hillier's decision to go, and heaped praise on the achievements of the outgoing general.

"He has done an excellent job in rebuilding Canada's armed forces. He is a great Canadian and we are proud to have worked with him," he said.

Defence Minister Peter MacKay added to the chorus of applause.

"Gen. Hillier was among the most capable, dedicated, informed and professional people I've ever met," he said.

Hillier said he will take time to rejuvenate, golf and spend time with his family before he charts his next professional move. He flatly ruled out a run for political office, but joked he'd consider a job with his favourite hockey team, the Toronto Maple Leafs.

"I can put the 'general' in general manager if the Leafs want to look this way," he quipped.

KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Captured the attention of public

SOURCETAG 0804160384
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2008.04.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: N2
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: OTTAWA
WORD COUNT: 86

Perhaps no Canadian soldier in a generation or more captured the public's attention and the hearts of his soldiers as did Rick Hillier.

Bill Graham, the former Liberal defence minister who recommended him to then-prime minister Paul Martin as chief of defence staff, called Hillier "one of the most charismatic figures around Ottawa generally . . . and a huge inspiration to his troops."

Historians Jack Granatstein and David Bercuson, said there hasn't been a general so admired by the troops since Jacques Dextraze in the 1970s. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Top soldier resigns Captured the attention of public

SOURCETAG 0804160383

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2008.04.16

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: N1

ILLUSTRATION: 2 photos 1. photo by Reuters Gen. Rick Hillier, chief of defence staff, announces his upcoming retirement during a news conference in Ottawa yesterday. 2. photo by CP Gen. Rick Hillier, Canada's chief of defence staff, arrives at the Provincial Reconstruction Team base in Kandahar, Afghanistan, last year.

BYLINE: KATHLEEN HARRIS, SUN MEDIA NATIONAL BUREAU CHIEF

DATELINE: OTTAWA

WORD COUNT: 610

Canada's retiring top soldier says the toughest part of the job was receiving news of fallen war heroes in Afghanistan.

Gen. Rick Hillier, who will step down as chief of defence staff in July, has spent more than three years fighting fierce political battles to frame a prolonged Kandahar mission, boost military spending and better equip the troops.

But he says the most gruelling part of his job was the emotional toll of getting bad news from the field.

"The worst thing in the world in this job was that phone call at 3 a.m.," he said. "I used to joke — but it's not a joke — that no one calls me at three in the morning to tell me I've won the lotto. I got to the point where the phone would ring, I'd take my time, get myself up and get myself squared away because I knew it was not going to be good news."

Since 2002, 82 soldiers have died in Afghanistan, most of them under Hillier's watch.

Still, he said the personal pain of receiving flag-draped caskets back from the war zone is "minuscule" compared to the grief endured by families.

While rumours of tension and clashes between Hillier and senior government officials have raged for months, there were strong denials from both sides yesterday that there was any political nudge. With a recent vote to extend the Afghan mission to 2011 and a defence and procurement strategy in place, Hillier said the decision was months in the works.

Shrugging off talk of a legacy, Hillier said he's proud to leave the post with public confidence and support for the troops at an all-time high.

"I really did focus a lot on ensuring the men and women who wear our nation's uniform, and their families certainly, had the support of Canadians from coast to coast to coast in all the missions they choose to do," he said. "I believe that support for our men and women, and their families, has never been higher. Certainly not in my time in uniform and I think perhaps never in our country before."

The witty, outspoken Newfoundlander said he didn't see his role as marketing the mission in Afghanistan so much as the "national treasures" in uniform doing the heavy lifting on the front lines.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper denied any tensions were behind Hillier's decision to go, and heaped praise on the achievements of the outgoing General.

"He has done an excellent job in rebuilding Canada's armed forces. He is a great Canadian and we are proud to have worked with him," he said.

Defence Minister Peter MacKay added to the chorus of applause, describing Hillier's decision as entirely personal.

"Gen. Hillier was among the most capable, dedicated, informed and professional people I've ever met," he said.

Hillier said he will take time to rejuvenate, golf and spend time with his family before he charts his next professional move. He flatly ruled out a run for political office, but joked that he'd consider a job with his favourite pro hockey club, the Toronto Maple Leafs.

"I can put the General in general manager if the Leafs want to look this way."

QUOTABLE QUOTES

"These are detestable murderers and scumbags. They detest our freedoms, they detest our society, they detest our liberties." — July 2005, on al-Qaida terrorists "We're not the public service of Canada. We're not just another department. We are the Canadian Forces, and our job is to be able to kill people." — July 2005 "The Taliban gave al-Qaida the training camps and the ability to plan and recruit and finance and get people ready. You want to remove that petri dish so you can't grow that kind of violence and the capabilities to project that violence around the world." — December 2007 "All the Canadians are very proud of you. They are proud of your work, your devotion, your professionalism and certainly your courage. I also am very proud of you and I just want to tell you I'm proud to be your chief of defence staff." — To the troops at Christmas in Kandahar, 2007 KEYWORDS=CANADA

Salute the departing general HILLIER: The retiring chief of defence staff will be missed by troops and the public

SOURCETAG 0804160358
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2008.04.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A7
BYLINE: PETER WORTHINGTON
WORD COUNT: 509

If anyone in the Canadian Forces is indispensable, that soldier is Gen. Rick Hillier.

The military likes to say no one is irreplaceable — that someone is always ready to fill the gap. Yet history has periodically proven this adage wrong — as, say, when the Confederate army of Robert E. Lee in the U.S. Civil War lost its commander, Stonewall Jackson. ("Jackson lost his left arm, I've lost my right," Lee is supposed to have said after Jackson was mortally wounded.)

Hillier, at age 52, is stepping down as chief of defence staff on July 1 after some three years in the job. Rumours had circulated for some time that Hillier's time was done — provoked, it often seemed, by some who wanted to be rid of him because they felt he was too influential for their own good.

For serving soldiers, it's a sorry day. As well as respected, Hillier was arguably the most popular Canadian commander among troops since the Second World War.

One hopes it is Hillier who wanted to quit, because certainly the army doesn't want him to leave. The political opposition may relish a change — which presumably will be Army commander Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie, grandson to Gen. Andrew McNaughton, Canada's top soldier at the start of the Second World War and another who was immensely liked by troops.

The Globe and Mail and, to a degree, Maclean's magazine have seemed eager to be rid of Hillier, whom they think is too political. Accusations have been made that he tried to make policy instead of follow policy. This misunderstands the role of the CDS to advise and assess.

When Hillier opined that it would be 10 years before Afghanistan's security problems would be resolved, it was assumed by critics that he was dictating government policy.

Hillier vigorously denied this, and explained his assessment of the situation was one thing, the government's decision another. As CDS, he would abide by the government's decision and follow orders.

Hillier's charisma offended some who neither possessed it nor understood its use. Many great field commanders have had charismatic personalities that won the hearts of their men.

There was more Hollywood than Sandhurst in some of Hillier's outspoken bluntness, which resonated among soldiers and with the Canadian public. Candour from commanders was unusual and welcomed.

"We're not the public service of Canada, we're not just another department. We are the Canadian Forces, and our job is to be able to kill people," Hillier said, and the country applauded. Telling it like it is.

Other Hillier bon mots included calling terrorists, "scumbags," and saying they "detest our freedoms." Crude, but no equivocating.

He's said that "any commander who'd say we didn't need more soldiers should be tarred and feathered and rode out of town on a rail."

That's Rick Hillier.

Politicians are uneasy when soldiers speak their mind. But Hillier (in my view) has never crossed the line where he seemed to be dictating policy rather than giving an honest opinion on which policy should be based. Every prime minister should want a CDS with such an approach.

Hillier is an Armoured Corps soldier, born in Campbelton, N.L., who joined up when he was 17 and wanted only to be a serving soldier.

The question is, what will he do now?

Some see a political future for him, but after being the top guy in the Canadian military, and respected among allies and troops as a soldier's soldier, what can politics offer except frustration and pettiness?

It's likely Hillier's successor will carry on the Hillier tradition — with perhaps less salty language and Newfie bluntness.

But it's unlikely Canada has heard the last of Hillier.

Hillier did a great job as our top general

SOURCETAG 0804160356
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2008.04.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A6
BYLINE: LORRIE GOLDSTEIN
COLUMN: Editorial
WORD COUNT: 270

The test of a good general is whether his soldiers would want to share a foxhole with him in combat.

Gen. Rick Hillier, who yesterday announced his retirement as Canada's chief of defence staff, effective July 1, passed that test with flying colours.

Widely praised as a "soldier's soldier," Hillier, 52, who spent three years in the top job and 36 years in the military, said he's not being forced out, and if anything, Prime Minister Stephen Harper wanted him to stay.

We hope that's true, in light of reports last fall --- denied by Harper --- that Hillier would be fired because his so-called clashes with the government on the end date of Canada's military mission in Afghanistan, offended Conservative officials.

If accurate, those officials were (and are) idiots. Canada was lucky to have Hillier overseeing our first official combat operation since Korea.

He articulately explained the mission's importance, steadied public support as casualties mounted, restored military pride and successfully lobbied the Conservatives for major new investments in the forces.

Appointed by the previous Liberal government of Paul Martin, Hillier was unafraid to speak truth to power.

That was the case whether he was describing the Taliban ("detestable murderers and scumbags"), the role of the military ("We are not the Public Service of Canada . . . our job is to be able to kill people") or how long it will take before the Afghanistan military can pacify the Taliban without NATO's help ("10 years or so").

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SOURCETAG: 0804160742

PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun

DATE: 2008.04.16

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 12

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Sean Kilpatrick, the Canadian Press Gen. Rick Hillier speaks at a press conference yesterday at Department of National Defence headquarters about his plans to step down July 1 as Canada's chief of defence staff.

BYLINE: KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU CHIEF

WORD COUNT: 488

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WELL SAID

– "These are detestable murderers and scumbags. They detest our freedoms, they detest our society, they detest our liberties."

— July 2005, on al-Qaida terrorists

– "We're not the public service of Canada. We're not just another department. We are the Canadian Forces, and our job is to be able to kill people."

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— December 2007

– "All the Canadians are very proud of you. They are proud of your work, your devotion, your professionalism and certainly your courage. I also am very proud of you and I just want to tell you I'm proud to be your chief of defence staff."

— To the troops at Christmas in Kandahar in 2007 KEYWORDS=CANADA

Salute the general Retiring chief of defence staff will be missed by troops, public

SOURCETAG 0804160738
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2008.04.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 11
BYLINE: PETER WORTHINGTON
WORD COUNT: 516

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The military likes to say no one is irreplaceable — that someone is always ready to fill the gap. Yet history has periodically proven this adage wrong — as, say, when the Confederate army of Robert E. Lee in the U.S. Civil War lost Stonewall Jackson, its irreplaceable commander. ("Jackson lost his left arm, I've lost my right," Lee is supposed to have said after Jackson was mortally wounded at Chancellorsville.)

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AFGHANISTAN

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Hillier did a great job

SOURCETAG 0804160736
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2008.04.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 10
BYLINE: LORRIE GOLDSTEIN
COLUMN: Editorial
WORD COUNT: 277

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SOURCETAG 0804160856
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2008.04.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 15
BYLINE: PETER WORTHINGTON
WORD COUNT: 516

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SOURCETAG 0804160852
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2008.04.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 14
BYLINE: LORRIE GOLDSTEIN
COLUMN: Editorial
WORD COUNT: 277

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Top soldier stepping down Outgoing chief of defence staff roundly praised for job well done

SOURCETAG: 0804160848

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2008.04.16

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 10

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Sean Kilpatrick, CP Gen. Rick Hillier speaks at a press conference yesterday at Department of National Defence headquarters about his plans to step down July 1 as Canada's chief of defence staff.

BYLINE: KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU CHIEF

COLUMN: National Affairs

WORD COUNT: 355

Canada's retiring top soldier says the toughest part of the job was receiving news of fallen war heroes in Afghanistan.

Gen. Rick Hillier, who will step down as chief of defence staff July 1, has spent more than three years fighting fierce political battles to frame a prolonged Kandahar mission, boost military spending and better equip the troops.

But he says the most gruelling part of his job was the emotional toll of getting bad news from the field.

"The worst thing in the world in this job was that phone call at 3 a.m.," he said. "I got to the point where the phone would ring, I'd take my time, get myself up and get myself squared away because I knew it was not going to be good news."

Since 2002, 82 soldiers have died in Afghanistan, most of them under Hillier's watch. Still, he said the personal pain of receiving flag-draped caskets back from the war zone is "minuscule" compared to the grief endured by families.

While rumours of tension and clashes between Hillier and senior government officials have raged for months, there were strong denials from both sides yesterday there was any political nudge. With a recent vote to extend the Afghan mission to 2011 and a defence and procurement strategy in place, Hillier said the decision was months in the works and the time is right for a "hand-off."

Shrugging off talk of a "legacy," Hillier said he's proud to leave the post with public confidence and support for the troops at a high.

"I really did focus a lot on ensuring the men and women who wear our nation's uniform ... had the support of Canadians ... in all the missions they choose to do," he said. "I believe that support for our men and women, and their families, has never been higher."

Prime Minister Stephen Harper denied any tensions were behind Hillier's decision to go, and heaped praise on the achievements of the outgoing general.

"He has done an excellent job in rebuilding Canada's armed forces. He is a great Canadian and we are proud to have worked with him," he said.

Defence Minister Peter MacKay added to the chorus of applause.

"Gen. Hillier was among the most capable, dedicated, informed and professional people I've ever met," he said.

Hillier said he will take time to rejuvenate, golf and spend time with his family before he charts his next professional move. He flatly ruled out a run for political office, but joked he'd consider a job with his favourite hockey team, the KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Iraq war veteran on shortlist to be next chief of defence

IDNUMBER 200804160063
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2008.04.16
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SECTION: National
PAGE: B7
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Lt.-Gen. Walt Natynczyk; Photo: Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie ; Photo: Lt.-Gen. Angus Watt ; Photo: Lt.-Gen. Michel Gauthier ;
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 763

OTTAWA — It was May 2007, and the affable general with the Popeye forearms met Prime Minister Stephen Harper with a warm handshake at the bottom of the staircase of his government jet. Harper was on his way to Afghanistan for the second time, but the general greeting him at this military base deep in the Persian Gulf desert was not a household name.

Now suddenly that man is the leading contender to succeed Gen. Rick Hillier as chief of the defence staff.

Lt.-Gen. Walt Natynczyk, vice-chief of defence staff, is one of a handful of candidates on the shortlist to take over the job as Canada's military chief.

Natynczyk has the experience; he is one of the few Canadian soldiers to have served in Iraq. He also shares Hillier's ability to communicate; as a colonel, Natynczyk was given the job in 1999 as the chief Canadian Forces spokesperson for the NATO-led air war in Kosovo.

"Life was good (as) a colonel," Natynczyk joked in an interview with Canwest News last year. "I dream of those days."

While many are betting that Natynczyk might be poised to take the top job, he will have some serious competition. The other leading contenders for Hillier's post are Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie, commander of the army, and Lt.-Gen. Michel Gauthier, chief of the Forces overseas deployments.

Like Hillier, both Leslie and Gauthier are well versed on Afghanistan. But with the United States poised to become Canada's main military partner in Kandahar, Natynczyk's experience with U.S. forces — something Hillier had more than any other Canadian soldier — makes him the odds-on favourite.

Natynczyk is a veteran of numerous peacekeeping stints in the Balkans in the 1990s, including as a commander, but he also distinguished himself by serving as a deputy commander of the U.S. army's III Corps at Fort Hood, Texas, part of a unique exchange program with the United States.

Hillier and Natynczyk are among only three Canadian officers to take part in that exchange program, and the experience allowed both to hold a senior position on the largest U.S. military base, which at 60,000 strong, is roughly the size of the entire Canadian Armed Forces.

In 2004, Natynczyk was also deployed to Iraq for one year following the U.S.-led invasion and served as the deputy commander of the Multinational Corps there. "Even though I am a contingent of one, I am able to attend some senior forums and proudly show the flag," Natynczyk wrote in one dispatch back to Hillier, reflecting on the fact that he was taking part in a military mission that his county had refused to support.

In his current post, Natynczyk has been charged with implementing the Forces ambitious restructuring plans, the so-called "transformation" that Hillier began.

The Conservative government's long-awaited Canada First defence plan has yet to be formally released, but Natynczyk has been busy behind the scenes trying to persuade the government to boost defence spending enough to support the plan.

Prying money out of the government has been the job that ultimately falls to the chief of the defence staff, and one that Hillier redefined with his very public pleas for more money.

As Hillier told Canwest News Service in an exclusive interview, being an advocate for the Forces will be a major requirement for whoever succeeds him.

"Everybody comes at leadership uniquely. There are quieter leaders and more extroverted leaders. But we need a force of personality. It's not as if you're dealing with slight issues, you're dealing with issues that cost men and women their lives. If you're not prepared to argue your corner eloquently, articulately, occasionally aggressively but always clearly, you can't be a CDS or you can't be a commander," Hillier said.

"If you don't have a force of personality and a strong vision for what the men and women should do for Canada and articulate that, you can't help shape the Canadian Forces to be the best it can be for Canada."

Among the other leadership hopefuls, Leslie is an eloquent and educated soldier who also has considerable battlefield experience as a former commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

Gauthier, a former head of military intelligence, is less flamboyant but is highly respected as the commander of Canada's overseas operations, and has over the course of his 20 trips to Afghanistan developed into a knowledgeable strategist on the Forces' most important mission.

Lt.-Gen. Angus Watt, commander of the air force and Vice-Admiral Drew Robertson, head of the navy, are also top contenders for the chief of the defence staff.

The one factor in their favour is the past practice of rotating the CDS among the Force's three branches — but that practice is far from firm, especially with the army's premier role in landlocked Afghanistan.

(Ottawa Citizen)

Hillier stepping down; 'Critical milestones' have been achieved, general says

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Canwest News Service, File / Chief of Defence StaffRick Hillier will step down in July ;
DATELINE: OTTAWA
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SOURCE: Canwest News Service
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OTTAWA -- His personal military mission accomplished, Gen. Rick Hillier will step aside as Canada's top soldier this summer.

Known for speaking his mind, Hillier said his departure from the post of chief of defence staff is entirely voluntary. "If anything, the pressure was the other way to keep me around," he said in an exclusive interview.

With the Kandahar mission extended until 2011 and the purchase of heavy-lift planes, upgraded tanks and helicopters, Hillier says it was a good time to go because it allows him to claim a legacy of reinforced pride inside the military.

"We've achieved the irreversible momentum that I wanted to have," Hillier told Canwest News Service. "It's a transition to a whole different mode and I'm quite comfortable that I can leave on a high and leave hopefully enabling Canadian Forces to carry on to much greater things."

In the House of Commons on Tuesday afternoon, Prime Minister Stephen Harper called Hillier "a great Canadian," even though the Conservative government was never fully comfortable with Hillier's outspoken nature.

"Gen. Hillier has worked very well with the government, he has done an excellent job in rebuilding Canada's Armed Forces. He is a great Canadian and we are very proud to have worked with him."

Hillier said he never aspired to the military's top job, and that he had been planning his departure since last fall. He said he was waiting for the fate of the Afghanistan mission to be determined and that he only planned to stay in the job for two years.

He finally delivered the news to Harper on Tuesday, and the prime minister accepted his resignation, which Hillier said he would formalize in a letter later. The two men shook hands. "His last words were thank you for what you've done," Hillier said.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion also praised Hillier's dedication.

"... his influence far exceeds our own armed forces," Dion said in a written statement. "As a commander of NATO forces in both Bosnia–Herzegovina, as well as in Afghanistan, he demonstrated a level of professionalism that won him praise from soldiers and leaders of all our country's military allies."

Even NDP Leader Jack Layton, whose party opposes Canada's military mission in Afghanistan and has called for the immediate withdrawal of the country's 2,500 troops there, had praise for Hillier.

"There's no question that he was very controversial and direct at times," Layton said. "I always felt it came from the heart and we might not have agreed with absolutely everything he recommended but I never doubted this man's sincerity or his commitment to the country and I think all Canadians thank him for his service. It's certainly not an easy job that he's performed."

The general, appointed by Liberal prime minister Paul Martin in 2005, says recent governments have refunded the military government adequately and put Canada on the road to serving as a global power.

"I can only repeat what one of my commanders once said when he noted we're not trying to be one of the big boys, we are one of the big boys and we have to start acting like it," Hillier recalled. "That's a very good comment because that reflects our place in the world. Canada has had a significant re–profiling in the world. We're one of the big boys now."

In recent years, Hillier's post has become increasingly politicized. He incurred the wrath of the Liberal opposition by referring to the preceding 15 years of budget cuts that started under the Mulroney Conservatives as a "decade of darkness."

His take–no–prisoners, straight–talking style also irked the Conservatives, who were never comfortable with Hillier speaking his mind on Afghanistan. The Conservatives were roundly criticized in the recent Manley report as being poor communicators on the mission.

"He has a very outgoing and gregarious personality that was embraced wholeheartedly by the men and women in uniform and he provided a great deal of inspiration and was a very hands on chief of defence staff," Defence Minister Peter MacKay said Tuesday at a news conference where new ads for the military were unveiled.

"He'll be sorely missed."

STANDING DOWN: RICK HILLIER'S RESIGNATION: OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN He was a decent man, doing a decent job for indecent politicians

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SECTION: Column

EDITION: Metro

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CHRISTIE BLATCHFORD cblatchford@globeandmail.com The miracle is that Rick Hillier, a native son of the plainest-speaking province after all, stood it as long as he did, surrounded as he was by the mealy-mouthed, the fork-tongued, the rawly insecure, the nakedly ambitious and the others who form the political elite and professional class in the national capital.

Leaving the job, he said, is akin to the pain of "a sucking chest wound." Can you imagine anyone but a Newfoundlander – and a soldier – putting it like that? He meant it is difficult leaving soldiers; he meant he has mixed emotions; he meant he knows that, as he put it in a phone interview with The Globe and Mail last night, "Nothing will ever come close to being CDS [Chief of the Defence Staff]." He hopes the next job, whatever it is, will be a challenge, will be exciting, but, as he said, "It won't be this." That, I've always thought, is the real reason soldiers, whatever their rank, have a tough time coming home or rejoining the civilian world or adjusting to the joys of wandering the local Wal-Mart: There is no company as fierce, as much fun or as rock-bottom true as the company of soldiers.

The news of his resignation broke about noon on cable television and online, about four hours earlier, he said, than he actually planned to make it official. By late afternoon, the politicians, some of whom cannot even aspire to dream of carrying the general's jockstrap, were saying what a good fellow he is, which is akin to one of the little corner boys (the low-level baby teens who sell drugs on ghetto corners) on HBO's *The Wire* praising Omar (the seasoned scar-faced killer who robs major drug dealers of their stashes, but he has his principles) for his big nuts.

I have my doubts that the timing was as purely his as the CDS says – if only because, despite the ever-contracting sphincters in the Prime Minister's Office, the house that Stephen Harper built still leaks like a sieve when it suits 'em, and so does the bureaucracy, and besides, wouldn't Gen. Hillier have had a real resignation letter at the ready? – but far more importantly, the decision was.

He wasn't pushed out. When he met the PM last fall, he told The Globe, "One thing was clear: There was no hurry for me to go out the door. It was the opposite way." But it was also obvious that if an extension was in the wind, it would have been a two- or three-year long extension, taken him "past the Olympics" in Vancouver, and that was too long.

The job was impossible to sustain for years longer the way Gen.

Hillier did it.

Just the public part of it was exhausting to watch – the speeches; the gut-wrenching appearances at Trenton for the return of Canadian casualties; the rubber-chicken circuit he so dominated with his funny patter; the hockey rinks, soldiers always at his side, where he kept showing up; the meet 'n greets in Kandahar and at home.

We saw little of the battles he fought inside Ottawa, although there were hints of those. The one time I remember him recently being on vacation, last January, the PM's communications secretary, Sandra Buckler, had her infamous bout of misspeaking, when she pointed the finger of blame at the military for not keeping the government up to speed on the detainee issue.

Ms. Buckler never did make clear what she meant to say, but she certainly apologized for what she did say. Gen. Hillier was in the air, en route to his rare holiday, when that fire broke out.

Who among that lot of politicians, diplomats and greasy enablers would have had the requisite parts to push him out, anyway? The preferred method on Parliament Hill is nothing so honest as a push, but rather a shiv to the back, or best, a series of them. Official Ottawa reminds me of what a former Toronto Star managing editor, used to taking all manner of sharp blows from behind, once said to illustrate a particularly chaotic time at the paper: "It's so bad people are stabbing me in the chest." For all that he did and all the change he presided over, Gen.

Hillier's singular accomplishment, and the one that endears him to soldiers more than any other, is that he made it respectable again to be in the Canadian Forces.

One of his most memorable phrases, and one that got him in almost as much trouble as calling the Taliban "scumbags," was a description of the 1990s as the "decade of darkness." Neither phrase was a literary flight of fancy: What else would you call those who kill doctors and teachers and send suicide bombers into markets but scumbags? And what other term would do for the post-Somalia period in Canada? There were several decades of darkness, in truth, but they reached their nadir after 1993, when a teenager named Shidane Arone was beaten to death by Canadian troops, the whole business nearly covered up by more senior leaders. The fixes made by the government and the military were ludicrously simple: The Canadian Airborne Regiment with its proud traditions was disbanded, and off and on throughout the years that followed, Canadian soldiers across the country were often told and occasionally ordered not to wear their uniforms in public, presumably lest the sight of them invoke fear and loathing in the populace.

The CF has, as retired major-general Lewis MacKenzie said yesterday, real bench strength now; there are several worthy and accomplished candidates in the wings. In many regards, as Gen. Hillier wryly told The Globe, "Two weeks after I'm gone, we'll have a great CDS" and his shoes will be filled in many regards. "I was very touched by all the e-mail messages," he said last night, then, "All three of them, two from my family." But only Rick Hillier gave the Canadian soldier his mojo back.

Soon, the general will be able to spend a little more time in Newfoundland. The last time I was there, on my book tour, I was escorted around by a long-time Toronto resident who had just moved to St. John's with her brewmaster hubby. She was already smitten, and in part to explain it, she told me of how, while readying their new pub, her husband couldn't find his mate in the building one day.

"Liam," he bellowed, "where you at?" "Third floor," Liam yelled down at him.

"Whatcha doing?" "Oh, just whaling on, me cock," said Liam.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

STANDING DOWN: RICK HILLIER'S RESIGNATION: OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN He was at 62cent ma

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada

SUBJECT TERM: defence; political; biography

PERSONAL NAME: Rick Hillier

STANDING DOWN: RICK HILLIER'S RESIGNATION: OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN He was at 100 cent ma

TELEVISION: WHAT'S AHEAD: FROM RICK HILLIER'S FUTURE TO THE COLBERT REPORT Ten more things you need to know

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SECTION: The Globe Review C

EDITION: Metro

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WORD COUNT: 840

JOHN DOYLE jdoyle@globeandmail.com Another week, another wallop of information to set you reeling.

Another 10 things you should know about TV.

1. Ladies, calm down. Put down the remote. Do it gently. We can work this thing out. Nobody needs to get hurt here. Yes, yesterday's column contained a mistake, an error. (I know some of you think that the very existence of this column is a mistake, but we'll work on that issue later.) Grey's Anatomy and Ugly Betty return with new episodes next week, not this week. In next week's Ten Things You Should Know About TV, I will explain that referring to viewers of Grey's Anatomy and Ugly Betty exclusively as "ladies" was a mistake. Here in the TV Cranny, we think ahead, even if we're clueless.

2. General Rick Hillier's future is on TV. As I write this, broadcasters are probably busy promising to send wheelbarrows of money to him.

Affable, rugged, slyly aware of image and a student of marketing and spin, he knows to always have a Tim's cup in his hand when he's filmed in the 'Ghan. His future is as the new Canadian Tire Guy.

Betcha.

3. Laura Bush will be "guest host" for an hour of NBC's Today show next week. Seriously. The network says she'll host the 9 a.m.

hour on April 22. This is the day of the Pennsylvania primary. NBC is so screwed if the Democrats win the presidential election.

4. When the next and 17th season of Survivor starts on CBS, it will become the first network non-studio reality show to be filmed in high definition. A CBS honcho said, "Survivor's locations and natural elements have always served as another character in the show and an important part of the competition. With HD, viewers will feel as if they are on location instead of in their living room." Ah, no. Survivor and its new HD future is not about the location – the real reason why high definition is being introduced is that the "natural elements" are the ta-ta's on the female contestants.

5. The annual White House Correspondents' Dinner will take place soon. This year's showbiz guests include Hayden Panettiere (the cheerleader on *Heroes*), Marcia Cross (Bree on *Desperate Housewives*), Pamela Anderson and Lauren Conrad from *The Hills* . That's right, Lauren Conrad. She is the weirdly famous, narcissistic nit from a reality show on MTV, a young woman whose name, online, is often followed by the word "famewhore." And here's the thing I learned from in-depth research – Lauren has a long-standing feud with some other nit named Kirstin over a guy whom, it turns out, ended up dating Hayden Panettiere. We are actually talking here about the guests at the White House Correspondents' Dinner. And the Republicans thought the Clinton White House was skanky.

6. Oprah Winfrey is an important person. So important that a Gallup/USA Today opinion poll is regularly conducted to determine what Americans think of her. A recent poll found that 61 per cent of Americans had a favourable view of the TV personality. This has caused some consternation among people who care. See, a year ago, 74 per cent of Americans had a favourable view of Oprah. Not that any of this is relevant. In 1999, a U.S. survey of the most admired and respected 20th-century women found that Oprah came in second only to Mother Teresa.

7. *Gossip Girl* returns next Monday. (Yes, I'm certain. Monday, April 21.) A new ad campaign shows characters having carnal knowledge of each other and uses the phrase "OMFG" to promote the show's return.

Some people are upset. Next thing you know, somebody on *Gossip Girl* will use the word "ta-ta's." 8. CBC has ordered up a new drama series called *The Wild Roses* . CBC says, "The Wild Roses tells the story of a family of women fighting for what is lawfully theirs in the new Wild West – which includes steel and glass towers as well as Alberta ranches." There's a rumour going around Ottawa that the show was Laureen Harper's idea. CBC execs are believed to be behind the rumour.

9. Hillary Clinton is going to be on *The Colbert Report* on Thursday night. Barack Obama is reported to be "bitter" about that.

10. Dr. Phil is a famewhore, a pompous ass and his show is a freak show. But you knew that.

***** Airing tonight Democratic Presidential Candidates Debate (ABC, 8 p.m.) is what it is – Obama and Clinton have a polite argument. Canada might get a mention. You never know. *Back to You* (Fox, 8:30 p.m., Global, 9:30 p.m.) is back. When it arrived last fall, it was the new season's hottest sitcom – Kelsey Grammer (*Cheers* , *Frasier*) and Patricia Heaton (*Everybody Loves Raymond*) playing bickering co-anchors of a local news program. Now, it's a matter of back to who? Or is it "whom"? Mistakes can be made.

Check local listings. J.D.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

SUBJECT TERM:television; review

GENERAL RICK HILLIER Timely leadership, timely departure

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General Rick Hillier was the right man at the right time for the Canadian Forces. A largely successful Chief of the Defence Staff, he helped rebuild Canada's military not only in terms of resources, but also in terms of morale and prestige. His kind of leadership – visible, blunt-spoken and persuasive – was especially timely, as it came when Canada was involved in the country's most dangerous mission since Korea. He spoke frankly and correctly about the need for Canadians to embrace their military as a fighting force, refashioning the spin from Ottawa that had long sought to portray Canada's military as an NGO. He put the bite back into the Canadian Forces.

His passionate commitment to the combat mission in Afghanistan has been unshaken by the human toll and the difficulty of the job there.

He has often been forced to sell Canada's involvement in Kandahar, filling the void left when the country's civilian leadership went wobbly or off-message. And the fact is the general has become better known, better liked and better trusted, than most of his political masters. But with his obvious talent for communication, and for politics, there was always a risk that Gen. Hillier would become bigger than the job itself. The timing of his decision to step down is right.

Gordon O'Connor would always have been out of his depth in the defence portfolio, but the scale of his inadequacy was constantly in evidence by virtue of Gen. Hillier's presence. Indeed, Peter MacKay has fared only slightly better. The general's disagreements with Mr. O'Connor over certain equipment purchases, over his speculation that Canadian troops would stay in Afghanistan for 10 years and over how long it would take for Canadian troops to train their Afghan replacements, all likely contributed to Mr. O'Connor's downfall.

The government became worried. In 2006, word was leaked that Gen.

Hillier had been ordered by micromanagers in the Prime Minister's Office to first obtain clearance for his remarks. This demand was later downgraded to a request for a courtesy notification of the "theme" of the general's speeches.

While Prime Minister Stephen Harper paid high tribute to Gen.

Hillier in the House of Commons on Tuesday as a "great Canadian," it seems likely that the government will be just as happy to see the tail end of him. Indeed, in this there may be rare all-party agreement.

That made his departure in the short term desirable. But the general's popularity among average Canadians will not end with the change of command on Canada Day. The mechanic's son from Newfoundland has left an indelible imprint on the military, and the country, he has served so long and with such distinction. Gen. Hillier represented something noble in Canada, a country that was historically, and is again, unafraid to fight for what's right.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada

SUBJECT TERM: defence; political; biography

PERSONAL NAME: Rick Hillier

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

STANDING DOWN: RICK HILLIER'S RESIGNATION

Outspoken general bows out with no regrets Happy with Canada's progress in Afghanistan, Rick Hillier will be remembered for pushing the boundaries, transforming the Forces

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EDITION: Metro

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WORD COUNT: 1304

STEVEN CHASE With a report from Brian Laghi Daniel Leblanc OTTAWA General Rick Hillier, Canada's charismatic and outspoken top military commander, announced he's stepping down after more than three years on the job, saying he'd stayed longer than planned to ensure the future of the military mission in Afghanistan was resolved.

He said he is happy with Canada's progress in Afghanistan since 2002, but acknowledged he's not satisfied. More than 6,500 Afghans were killed last year – making it by far the most violent since 2001 in the growing Taliban insurgency.

"Obviously you would always want more [success] in the south," Gen. Hillier said, referring to the conflict-ridden province of Kandahar where Canadian Forces operate. "But I am also a realist and understand it's very tough to make progress." He said one good thing about the stiff battle in the south against the Taliban is that it has focused the conflict there and allowed the rest of the country to develop relatively free of strife.

Appointed in 2005 by former prime minister Paul Martin, Gen. Hillier quickly became the most high-profile Canadian military leader in more than a quarter century – sometimes to the dismay of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government, which didn't always appreciate his blunt assessments of defence policy.

After a meeting with Mr. Harper yesterday where he tendered his resignation, Gen. Hillier rejected the suggestion he'd been pushed, and sources said he'd been offered a two-year extension if he wanted it.

Gen. Hillier told reporters he'd previously talked with Mr. Harper about continuing to serve, but he felt now was a logical time to quit unless he wanted to stay on a lot longer.

"It was clear in that conversation that it wouldn't be an extension of six or 12 months . . . the next [phase] was two to three years long and I am just not ready to commit to two to three more years," he said.

Gen. Hillier, who'd previously been ordered by the Harper government to tone down his interventions on defence policy, and once clashed with former defence minister Gordon O'Connor, sought yesterday to play

down these conflicts.

"Disagreements are a part of our life," he said.

He said he expects to stay on until July, by which time a successor will be chosen.

Gen. Hillier, 52, flatly rejected suggestions he might enter politics and said he'll likely look for "private sector" work.

The Newfoundland-born soldier was the communicator-in-chief behind a transformation of the Forces from a Cold War relic into a modern military capable of sending expeditions overseas to fight small wars.

He was also the chief architect of Canada's war in Afghanistan and successfully urged MPs earlier this year to extend the mission to 2011.

Gen. Hillier used the Afghan mission as a springboard to upgrade the Forces' equipment, from aircraft to vehicles, which had suffered from decades of budget cuts. It was a resupply that both the Liberal government and later the Harper administration supported.

Equally important, he helped rebuild public support for the military – tainted and tattered after the 1993 Somalia affair – using his public-relations skills to build a bond with Canadians that had eroded long ago.

"It's a long time before we will see the likes of this guy again," said Alex Morrison, president of the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies.

"He had the ability to capture the attention, the imagination and admiration of the average citizen. The Canadian Armed Forces are today held in the highest general esteem of any time I can recall – and I'm old enough to remember back to the Korean War." Critics say the silver-tongued general may have overstepped his bounds by intervening in public debates on military policy and lobbying Parliament to extend the Afghan mission.

"One of the legacies that Hillier will leave behind is a blurring of lines between the role of the military in carrying out public policy and the role in actually shaping public policy," said Rideau Institute president Steven Staples, whose group has criticized the mission.

At his news conference, Gen. Hillier made no apologies for his blunt style.

"Sometimes I think you need a little clarity as to what you're talking about." The Tories thanked Gen. Hillier for his "outstanding service." Defence Minister Peter MacKay called him a "very hands-on" chief, saying his leadership style and knowledge of all three branches of the Forces are important criteria for choosing his successor.

***** Who will be next? Three likely contenders: LIEUTENANT-GENERAL ANDREW LESLIE Lt.-Gen. Leslie, Chief of the Land Staff, is a blunt-talking officer from a well-known military family. If the government wants to keep a media-savvy officer at the head of the Canadian Forces, the 50-year-old fluently bilingual officer is a good choice. He has been to Afghanistan, where he acted as Commander of the Task Force in Kabul.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL WALTER NATYNCZYK Lt.-Gen. Natynczyk, Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff, has fostered high-level connections with his American counterparts, having served alongside U.S. troops in Iraq in 2004. He has a keen understanding of military operations, given he oversaw the recent "transformation" of the Forces into a more modern and better equipped operation.

STANDING DOWN: RICK HILLIER'S RESIGNATION Outspoken general bows out with no regrets, happy w

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL ANGUS WATT Lt.-Gen. Watt, Chief of the Air Staff, is a former helicopter pilot who has worked in Brussels and at NORAD headquarters in Colorado.

Given the main focus of the armed forces is Afghanistan, he benefits from his service as the deputy commander (Air) of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan in 2006.

Daniel Leblanc ***** Straight from the general's mouth On his appointment "Any commander who would stand up here and say that we didn't need more soldiers should be tarred and feathered and rode out of town on a rail." On terrorists "These are detestable murderers and scumbags." "We can't let up. There are those who might say that by doing that we make ourselves a target in Canada here for terrorists. I would come at it this way . . . We need to take a stand." "We're not going to let those radical murderers and killers rob from others and certainly we're not going to let them rob from Canada." "In the war against terror, there is no such thing as a doorstep defence. You cannot be, as a nation – any nation – an oasis unto yourself. You've got to be part of an international dynamic that is more stable, less chaotic and not the fertile garden for growing terrorists." On the military "We are not the Public Service of Canada. We are not just another department. We are the Canadian Forces and our job is to be able to kill people." On Canada's role in Afghanistan "An army is what's required to allow them to keep their security, so that's a long-term project. It's going to take 10 years or so just to work through and build an army to whatever the final number that Afghanistan will have, and make them professional and let them meet their security demands here." On his relationship with Stephen Harper "I've talked to the Prime Minister. I'm absolutely clear where he wants to go and on what he needs and I'm absolutely in line with that; otherwise I wouldn't be his chief of defence staff." On himself "I admit I am no politician. And I don't think I'm very wise.

But I represent the 87,000 Forces members and their families." The Canadian Press

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: defence; foreign policy; strife; statements; list; political

PERSONAL NAME: Rick Hillier

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

Hillier: mission accomplished; Canada's top general to step down after three years on the job

IDNUMBER 200804160028
PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2008.04.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Canada/World
PAGE: A8
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Chris Wattie, Reuters / Chief of Defence Rick Hillier is most proud of restoring pride in the ranks. ;
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Bruce Campion-Smith and Les Whittington
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2008 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 418

During his time as Canada's top general, Rick Hillier won the armed forces new aircraft and tanks, billions in additional funding and soaring public support.

But on the day he announced his resignation, Hillier said the achievement he's most proud of is restoring pride in the ranks.

"I think we had lost that," Hillier said yesterday, as he made official a decision he said that had been months in the making — that he was stepping down as the head of Canada's military in July.

He moved quickly to quash speculation that the announcement was politically motivated, saying that he had accomplished the goals he set when he accepted the job just over three years ago.

That includes steering the future of Canada's Afghan mission, now extended to 2011, laying the groundwork for the government's "Canada First" defence strategy on the home front and ensuring that troops and their families had the support of Canadians.

"That support for our men and women and their families has never been higher, certainly not in my time in uniform," Hillier said.

The 52-year-old career army officer was reflective and easygoing as he fielded questions about his time as chief of defence staff.

He joked that he met with Prime Minister Stephen Harper yesterday to formally offer his resignation — and was unsure what to do.

"I told him I was not practised at his retiring business. I actually didn't know what process I had to go through, but I'd write him a letter and formalize that in the next several days there. We agreed that would take place," Hillier joked.

Harper did not ask Hillier to stick around. "He knew that I had made my decision to take my retirement."

Hillier revealed that he took on the job in early 2005 expecting to serve only an "intense time ... and a short time" -- only two years.

"I felt that now, coming to the summer, was the appropriate time to hand off to somebody else," he said.

The outspoken general tried to put to rest speculation that he had locked horns with his political masters over the years, insisting that he enjoyed good relations with the prime minister and defence ministers during his tenure.

"I've had immense political support to get things done. Sometimes the challenge inside the bureaucracy (was) to move things as quickly as we would have liked," he said.

The popular leader says he has no future career plans, beyond some down time, some golf and more time with his family and perhaps a private-sector job.

"Whatever I do it's going to have to be pretty exciting to lure me in ... after having this appointment," he said, while making plain he has no plans to enter politics.

But the avid Maple Leafs fan said if he'd be open to offers if the hockey organization came calling.

"I can put general in general manager if the Leafs want to look this way," Hillier said.

Hillier took over in February 2005 and immediately make plain his outspoken style, using his swearing-in ceremony to poke the Liberals for shortchanging the armed forces -- as then-prime minister Paul Martin looked on.

Hillier steps down; Canada's outspoken top soldier says he's resigning as Chief of Defence voluntarily

IDNUMBER 200804160096
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2008.04.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: C1 / FRONT
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Reuters Photo: Chris Wattie / PULLING THE PIN:Canada's Chief of Defence Staff Rick Hillier pauses while announcing his retirement during a news conference at the Department of National Defence headquarters in Ottawa on Tuesday. ;
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Don Martin and Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 323

OTTAWA — His personal military mission accomplished, Gen. Rick Hillier will step aside as Canada's top soldier this summer.

Known for speaking his mind, Hillier said his departure from the post of chief of defence staff is entirely voluntary. "If anything, the pressure was the other way to keep me around," he said in an exclusive interview.

With the Kandahar mission extended until 2011 and the purchase of heavy-lift planes, upgraded tanks and helicopters, Hillier says it was a good time to go because it allows him to claim a legacy of reinforced pride inside the military.

"We've achieved the irreversible momentum that I wanted to have," Hillier told Canwest News Service. "It's a transition to a whole different mode and I'm quite comfortable that I can leave on a high and leave hopefully enabling the Canadian Forces to carry on to much greater things."

In the House of Commons on Tuesday afternoon, Prime Minister Stephen Harper called Hillier "a great Canadian," even though the Conservative government was never fully comfortable with Hillier's outspoken nature.

"Gen. Hillier has worked very well with the government, he has done an excellent job in rebuilding Canada's Armed Forces. He is a great Canadian and we are very proud to have worked with him."

Hillier said he never aspired to the military's top job, and that he had been planning his departure since last fall. He said he was waiting for the fate of the Afghanistan mission to be determined and that he only planned to stay in the job for two years.

He finally delivered the news to Harper on Tuesday, and the prime minister accepted his resignation, which Hillier said he would formalize later in a letter. The two men shook hands. "His last words were thank you for what you've done," Hillier said.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion also praised Hillier's dedication.

Hillier steps down; Canada's outspoken top soldier says he's resigning as Chief of Defence voluntarily

"As a commander of NATO forces in both Bosnia–Herzegovina, as well as in Afghanistan, he demonstrated a level of professionalism that won him praise from soldiers and leaders of all our country's military allies," Dion said in a written statement.

The defender of truth; Outgoing chief of the defence staff Rick Hillier won the hearts of footsoldiers and prime ministers in redefining Canada's military -- we may not see his like again

IDNUMBER 200804160051

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SECTION: News

PAGE: A13

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Brian Hutchinson, CNSPics / Chief of the Defence Staff Rick Hillier offers Yuletide greetings to soldiers from Bravo Company, Royal Canadian Regiment in Kandahar in 2006. The troops loved him for his obvious concern for them, and so did the people, writes J.L. Granatstein. ;

BYLINE: J.L. Granatstein

SOURCE: Citizen Special

WORD COUNT: 947

In one week in February last year, I went twice to hear the Chief of the Defence Staff, General Rick Hillier, speak. The first time, he talked to a large military audience in Ottawa and had the officers, serving and retired, junior and senior, on their feet cheering. The second address was in Toronto, and a collection of bankers and industrialists laughed at his jokes, cheered him to the echo, and leapt from their chairs applauding when he finished. There has not been a Canadian general officer with that kind of powerful charisma for decades, likely not since Gen. Jacques Dextraze in the 1970s or Gen. Andrew McNaughton in the early days of the Second World War.

How did Gen. Hillier do it? First, he was funny, patriotic, and transparently sincere in the way he singled out soldiers, sailors, and airmen in the audience who had been decorated for meritorious service. Wars to Gen. Hillier were not fought only for generals. It was the soldiers who did the hard, dirty work, and the chief wanted Canadians to know this. The troops loved him for his obvious concern for them, and so did the people. With his speeches and presence, he made sure that everyone understood that war was a costly business, and the extraordinary outpouring of respect and patriotism when the remains of those killed in Afghanistan return home is clear evidence that he succeeded.

But it was not only the military and the public that Gen. Hillier affected. He moved governments as no other soldier in our time has. Former defence minister Bill Graham jumped him over the heads of more senior officers to be chief of the defence staff -- and will still say how proud he is of his choice. Mr. Graham and Gen. Hillier together then moved prime minister Paul Martin, hitherto no special fan of the Canadian Forces, to adopt a new International Security Policy in 2005, the first defence statement in years to make sense, with its new vigorous approach. Mr. Martin and Mr. Graham's approbation might not have been an automatic guarantee that the new government of Stephen Harper would approve of Gen. Hillier, but the chief made the turn seamlessly, and Mr. Harper's hard line on the need for Canada to carry its full share of the Afghanistan burden fit perfectly with the Hillier approach.

And the General's approach was tough indeed. Gen. Hillier clearly believed that the idea that Canada's natural role -- for some Canadians, the only role -- was peacekeeping, had gone too far in capturing the public

The defender of truth; Outgoing chief of the defence staff Rick Hillier won the hearts of footsoldiers and prime

mind. Putting Canadian soldiers into Kandahar helped begin knocking the powerful peacekeeping mythology right between the eyes. Gen. Hillier didn't succeed completely -- to listen to the New Democratic Party's members of Parliament and the twaddle peddled by some "defence" institutes is to be certain of that. But at the very least, large segments of public opinion and the government now understand that sometimes only the careful application of force can work to achieve Canadian interests.

It was not that Gen. Hillier opposed peacekeeping in principle or that he was averse to seeing Canadians serve the United Nations. Instead, it was simply that he understood that wearing a blue beret could not be the only role for the Canadian Forces. To him, Canada had international responsibilities to its neighbours, friends, and allies. Our soldiers, sailors, and airmen had to be ready for operations that ranged from traditional peacekeeping to war fighting, along with everything in between, and Gen. Hillier also set out to remind the Canadian Forces of this.

No serviceman or woman any longer could assume that military service was simply a pleasant job. Now the unlimited liability of the soldier is once again at the forefront of the military mind.

But if a soldier is asked to risk his life for Canada, the government and people must accept their obligations as well. If Canada sends its men and women to fight, it must give them the tools they need to do the job. Here, Gen. Hillier had extraordinary success. As the mission in Afghanistan altered, as the Taliban changed its tactics, the Canadians serving in Kandahar received the tools to do their jobs. New long-range transport aircraft, vehicles, tanks, artillery, better personal equipment, and devices that could begin to sniff out the improvised explosive devices that have killed and wounded so many -- whatever they required, the troops received. And now with new helicopters expected by the autumn and with unmanned aerial vehicles on the way, Gen. Hillier has done his best for his soldiers overseas.

Yes, Gen. Hillier had his difficulties with his political masters. Calling the Taliban "detestable murderers and scumbags" was not tactful in our so polite nation, even if they were. Labelling the Jean Chrétien era "a decade of darkness" for the Canadian Forces might have seemed a politically loaded remark to Liberal defence critics, although it was absolutely correct.

But telling the truth was Gen. Hillier's forte. It was why his troops loved him. It was why the public responded, and it is why Rick Hillier will be almost impossible to replace with anyone of similar ability and charisma.

J.L. Granatstein is a senior research fellow at the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute.

Hillier is just one of the boys now

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COLUMN: Don Martin
BYLINE: Don Martin
SOURCE: The Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 683

Soldiers are trained to follow orders and, when their chain of command reaches the top, direction comes from the reigning political masters.

But retiring Gen. Rick Hillier ... not so much.

Canada's first chief of defence staff superstar will step down this summer after three years as a defining force of military personality, a general who worried less about the lofty views of prime ministers than the battlefield grievances of a lowly private.

His considerable mouth was a formidable weapon, letting fly opinions like laser-guided missiles that could penetrate any political flak jacket. He didn't fear the politicians. They feared him.

And with reason. Taking on Rick Hillier quickly became an unfair fight. It started the day of his appointment in early 2005 with a demand for more federal funding -- a boost promptly dropped into the budget.

Former defence minister Gordon O'Connor paid the ultimate price for losing a popularity contest against Hillier. With that relationship poisoned by friction between former general O'Connor and his once junior officer, one of the pair had to go. The unhappy loser of that showdown is now the revenue minister.

After that, all talk of Hillier being dumped was CTV pulp fiction. He would go at a time and on terms of his choosing.

On the eve of his retirement announcement over beer Monday night, Hillier nicely framed his military legacy in a single sentence: "We're one of the big boys now."

With air, ground and naval equipment upgrades on order or delivered to bolster an extended Afghanistan mission fortified with 1,000 fresh American troops, Hillier has put the force back into the military.

That's why it was the perfect time to retire. The mission may be entering a more aggressive phase as the killing season arrives in Kandahar to coincide with the testosterone release accompanying an influx of American troops.

But more than re-arming Canada as a middle power player, the success secret has been Hillier's public relations acumen. With carefully timed speeches and politically incorrect outbursts defending the needs of the soldier, Hillier dwarfed queasy voter opinion about the Afghanistan mission by focusing on strong public support for the military and its too many sacrifices.

The pride of Campbellton, N.L., who tried to enlist as an eight-year-old before successfully signing up at 17 to begin a 35-year rise up the ranks, had plenty of luck on his side.

His commands were the mixture of white knight rescues and black ops. He commanded military efforts during the Red River floods of 1997 and the 1998 ice storm that blanketed Ontario and Quebec. He commanded the 6,000-strong International Security Assistance Force as Canada prepared to shift south into Kandahar. Then came his greatest challenge: selling a casualty-plagued peacemaking mission to a nation accustomed to blue-helmeted peacekeepers.

Perhaps one name best defines the Hillier phenomenon: Ray Henault.

The pre-Hillier chief of defence staff accepted his posting as a political puppet with nary a discouraging word. He came and left — and nobody knew his name.

Hillier shrugs off legacy talk, but there's been a profoundly positive shift in military perception since the disgrace of the Somalia scandal in the mid-1990s.

"I can't go anywhere these days or anybody else in uniform without somebody patting you on the head or shaking your hand and saying thank you very much," Hillier says.

Even the most colourful old soldiers have to fade away eventually. But only a very few — perhaps just this one — get to stake a legacy of their own and cash in on their four-star reputation with lucrative speaking engagements or consulting contracts.

Hillier dismisses talk of a political career, preferring to think in terms of golf or hockey. But he insists he won't be idle. "I don't want to sit on the couch scratching my belly in my underwear watching the soaps," he smirks. "At most I'll take two or three days off."

While he doesn't get to choose his successor, Hillier has strong views on the type of person who should become his replacement.

He leans over his beer, his face suddenly dead serious. "You're dealing with issues that cost men and women their lives. If you're not prepared to argue your case eloquently, articulately, occasionally aggressively, but always clearly, you can't be a chief of defence staff."

That's the trouble, as you scan the lineup of heirs. None of them appears to have what it takes to meet Hillier's self-styled criteria. That suggests we may not see the likes of him again.

Don Martin is a columnist with the Calgary Herald.

'I can leave on a high:' Hillier; Departure as chief of defence staff entirely voluntary, general says

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Colour Photo: Chris Wattie, Reuters / Gen. Rick Hillier, the chief of defence staff, announces he will be stepping down July 1. The general delivered the news to Prime Minister Stephen Harper yesterday. ; Photo: Pat McGrath, The Ottawa Citizen /

ILLUSTRATION: Vice-Admiral Drew Robertson ; Colour Photo: Canwest News Service / Lt.-Gen. Walt Natynczyk ; Colour Photo: Jonathan Fowlie, Canwest News Service / Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie ; Colour Photo: Master CPL. Bruno Turcotte, DND / Lt.-Gen. Michel Gauthier ; Colour Photo: Bruno Schlumberger, The Ottawa Citizen / Lt.-Gen. Angus Watt ;

BYLINE: Don Martin and Mike Blanchfield, with files from Richard Foot

SOURCE: The National Post and The Ottawa Citizen

NOTE: Top Soldier to Step Down

WORD COUNT: 1389

His personal military mission accomplished, Gen. Rick Hillier will step aside as Canada's top soldier on July 1.

Known for speaking his mind, Gen. Hillier said his departure from the post of chief of defence staff is entirely voluntary. "If anything, the pressure was the other way to keep me around," he said in an exclusive interview.

With the Kandahar mission extended until 2011 and the purchase of heavy-lift planes, upgraded tanks and helicopters, Gen. Hillier says it was a good time to go because it allows him to claim a legacy of reinforced pride inside the military.

"We've achieved the irreversible momentum that I wanted to have," Gen. Hillier told Canwest News Service. "It's a transition to a whole different mode and I'm quite comfortable that I can leave on a high and leave hopefully enabling Canadian Forces to carry on to much greater things."

In the House of Commons yesterday afternoon, Prime Minister Stephen Harper called Gen. Hillier "a great Canadian," even though the Conservative government was never fully comfortable with Gen. Hillier's outspoken nature.

"Gen. Hillier has worked very well with the government, he has done an excellent job in rebuilding Canada's Armed Forces. He is a great Canadian and we are very proud to have worked with him."

Gen. Hillier said he never aspired to the military's top job, and that he had been planning his departure since last fall. He said he was waiting for the fate of the Afghanistan mission to be determined and that he only planned to stay in the job for two years.

He finally delivered the news to Mr. Harper yesterday, and the prime minister accepted his resignation, which Gen. Hillier said he would formalize in a letter later. The two men shook hands. "His last words were 'thank

you for what you've done'," Gen. Hillier said.

Liberal leader Stéphane Dion also praised Gen. Hillier's dedication.

"His influence far exceeds our own armed forces," Mr. Dion said in a written statement.

Even NDP leader Jack Layton, whose party opposes Canada's military mission in Afghanistan, had praise for Gen. Hillier.

"There's no question that he was very controversial and direct at times," Mr. Layton said. "I always felt it came from the heart and we might not have agreed with absolutely everything he recommended, but I never doubted this man's sincerity or his commitment to the country and I think all Canadians thank him for his service. It's certainly not an easy job that he's performed."

The general, appointed by Liberal prime minister Paul Martin in 2005, says recent governments have funded the military adequately and put Canada on the road to serving as a global power.

"I can only repeat what one of my commanders once said when he noted we're not trying to be one of the big boys, we are one of the big boys and we have to start acting like it," Gen. Hillier recalled. "That's a very good comment because that reflects our place in the world. Canada has had a significant re-profiling in the world. We're one of the big boys now."

In recent years, Gen. Hillier's post has become increasingly politicized. He incurred the wrath of the Liberal opposition by referring to the preceding 15 years of budget cuts that started under the Mulroney Conservatives as a "decade of darkness."

Defence Minister Peter MacKay said Gen. Hillier's legacy is that of improvement of the Armed Forces — including leaving behind a large number of people with the skill set to succeed him. Gen. Hillier would disagree.

"I have no legacy," he said.

"I can't go anywhere these days or anybody else in uniform without somebody patting you on the head or shaking your head and saying thank you very much. I didn't do that, but if I had help in putting spotlight on those folks, then I'm good to go."

During his three years atop the Canadian Forces, Gen. Hillier has carved out an uncommon role for himself as a force to be reckoned with in Ottawa, as a man idolized by his troops, and as a media-savvy, celebrity-soldier who prodded the country into its first 21st century war.

"We have to go all the way back to Gen. Andrew MacNaughton and the Second World War to find a head of the military who had the impact on the Canadian Forces that Rick Hillier had," says Terry Copp, a military historian at Wilfrid Laurier University in Kitchener-Waterloo.

"Not only did he mobilize public opinion to make the Forces an important national institution once again, he's also won the respect and confidence of the people in uniform. I think that's an incredible achievement."

— — —

Contenders for Chief of Defence Staff

Vice-Admiral Drew Robertson

'I can leave on a high:' Hillier; Departure as chief of defence staff entirely voluntary, general says 180

Commander of the navy. A graduate in engineering physics and a surface warfare specialist with numerous commands of warships. As a commodore after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, assembled the largest Canadian fleet since Korea and took it to the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea in support of operations in Afghanistan. Regarded as modest, reserved and cerebral with an ability to nourish collegial relations.

Lt.-Gen. Walt Natynczyk

Vice-chief of defence staff. An armoured officer and a westerner. Peacekeeping assignments in Cyprus, Bosnia (twice) and Croatia. As an exchange officer, served as deputy commander of the U.S. Army's III Corps. Deployed to Iraq for one year, where he held a senior position in plans and was deputy commanding general of the Multinational Corps. Highly respected by Americans he served with there.

Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie

Commander of the army. Artillery gunner with an infantry background. His father and grandfathers have served at the top of Canada's military/political establishment. Peacekeeping stints in Cyprus, Croatia and Afghanistan, where he was the deputy commander of NATO's International Security and Assistance Force. Polished public performer, at ease with the media and politicians.

Lt.-Gen. Michel Gauthier

Responsible for all troops overseas as head of Canadian Expeditionary Force Command since September 2005. A former head of military intelligence, he is a bilingual combat engineer with UN peacekeeping tours in Croatia and Bosnia. Was previously attached to CENTCOM, which directs the U.S. war on terror. Praised for Canada's Kandahar mission by Gen. Dan McNeill, the top U.S. general in Afghanistan.

Lt.-Gen. Angus Watt

Commander of the air force. A helicopter pilot with several graduate degrees. Worked closely for much of his career with the navy. Has held senior staff jobs with NATO and Norad. Served for a year in Kabul as commander of NATO's complex air war in Afghanistan. Like almost everyone in the air force, he advocates giving it a bigger role in South Asia.

Quotable

Gen. Rick Hillier is noted for saying what's on his mind. Below is a selection of what the general had to say during his time as chief of defence staff.

'If you're in Kandahar, you're going to be in combat operations. If you're in Kandahar, this is the home of the Taliban. If you're in Kandahar, and you have soldiers on the ground, you are going to be attacked by the Taliban. You simply are going to be in the middle of it.'

Feb. 1, 2008

'There's nothing more Canadian than a double-double.'

October 2007

'(Defence) Minister (Peter) MacKay and I have established a good relationship — in fact, a very good relationship. I feel that support. Every man and woman in uniform does, too. We feel it from the prime

'I can leave on a high:' Hillier; Departure as chief of defence staff entirely voluntary, general says 181

minister, also.'

October 2007

'I've been shot at. People have attempted to blow me up. I had a suicide bomber targeted against me when I was the commander in Afghanistan. And I've been called every name in the book, I'm certain. I don't think I've ever been so insulted as to be called a prop for a political party.'

March 1, 2007, in response to accusations by a Liberal MP

'Over the past one to two years, we have begun to fully realize the immense, the negative impact of the defence expenditure reductions in 1994 and the lasting, almost negative legacy that they brought into effect that has to be put right. (The cuts have left) some deep wounds ... in the Canadian Forces over this past, what I would call, a decade of darkness.'

— February 2007, speaking about budget decisions made by the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien

'These (terrorists) are detestable murderers and scumbags. They detest our freedoms, they detest our society, they detest our liberties.'

July 2005

'In some respects, Canada and Canadians ... are at more risk now of direct attack than they have ever been during the Cold War itself.'

March 2005

'You know in this country, we could probably not give enough resources to the men and women (of the Canadian Forces) to do all the things we ask them to do. But we can give them too little, and that is what we are now doing.'

February 2005, during a ceremony marking his installation as chief of defence staff

A soldier's soldier

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ILLUSTRATION: Black & White Photo: Dean Bicknell, CanWest News Service /(See hardcopy for Photo Description) ;
SOURCE: National Post
WORD COUNT: 702

It's common to praise an outgoing military commander as a "soldier's soldier." In the case of General Rick Hillier, who yesterday informed Prime Minister Stephen Harper that he intends to retire as head of Canada's Armed Forces on July 1, the compliment also happens to be true. Many of Gen. Hillier's predecessors have been, in truth, politician's soldiers or bureaucrats in uniform, but not Richard J. Hillier, the 52-year-old Newfoundlander who has been Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) since February, 2005. Unwilling to acquiesce politely to the dismantling of Canada's military, Gen. Hillier has restored morale among our soldiers, sailors and airmen; successfully pushed for a re-equipping of our Armed Forces; and restored national pride in our military. His achievements in three short years as CDS, have been nothing short of remarkable.

A native of the tiny, north-central Newfoundland fishing and lumbering community of Campbellton, Gen. Hillier has been fortunate that much of his tenure has coincided with that of a government equally committed to rebuilding our military after more than a decade of neglect. The General and the Conservatives have been a good fit for one another, to be sure.

But Gen. Hillier's frank efforts to re-establish Canada's military effectiveness began a year before Mr. Harper and his party came to power. During his swearing-in ceremony as CDS with then-prime minister Paul Martin and defence minister Bill Graham looking on, Gen. Hillier chastised the government for its unwillingness to fund the military properly. While acknowledging that it was likely impossible to find the money for everything our Armed Forces were being asked to do, he added: "Remember them in your budgets."

In large part thanks to his constant efforts, first the Liberals and then the Conservatives have agreed to a military buildup unprecedented in the past half-century. We have new large transport aircraft to lift our soldiers and their equipment quickly into international hot-spots; new patrol vehicles that better protect our soldiers from landmines; armoured logistical trucks; precision artillery guns; and computerized war rooms comparable to anything possessed by our allies, which allow commanders in theatre and at National Defence headquarters in Ottawa real-time intelligence on most operations. On the way are mine-detection vehicles and better helicopters and tanks.

Under the supervision of Gen. Hillier, the \$5-billion gap in equipment once identified by the auditor-general has been — or will have been — made up in just four years. Most experts predicted it would take at least a decade.

That's one reason why the General is a soldier's soldier: He saw the physical and emotional hazards poor equipment created for our troops, and he corrected the problem.

He also put our soldiers' safety at the top of his priority list. Last week, he told the House of Commons foreign affairs committee that in 2006, when Canada took over protection of Afghanistan's Kandahar province from the Americans, it was obvious NATO was suffering from a "troop gap." It needed two battalions to do the full job it had taken on, but had only one — the Canadian battalion. So, he ordered a scale-back of our mission to ensure our patrols were not dangerously overstretched and even more susceptible to ambush and other roadside attacks.

Finally, the General also gave our troops — and Canadians, in general — even more reason to be proud of our military and our national role in the world. Echoing words he heard from one of his junior officers, Gen. Hillier told the National Post's Don Martin that his vision for our military is: "We're not trying to be one of the big boys, we are one of the big boys and we have to start acting like it."

Yesterday in the Commons, Mr. Harper called Gen. Hillier a "great Canadian." He is that at the very least. Canada is a better country for his persistence, wisdom and public service. He has earned his retirement, even though we wish he were not going.

KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA

General carved out uncommon forces role; 'Won The Respect'

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PAGE: A6

ILLUSTRATION: Black & White Photo: Chris Wattie, Reuters / General Rick Hillier pauses while announcing his retirement during a news conference in Ottawa yesterday. ; Black & White Photo: / (See hardcopy for Photo Description) ; Black & White Photo: / (See hardcopy for Photo Description) ; Black & White Photo: / (See hardcopy for Photo Description) ; Black & White Photo: / (See hardcopy for Photo Description) ; Black & White Photo: / (See hardcopy for Photo Description) ;

BYLINE: Richard Foot

SOURCE: Canwest News Service

WORD COUNT: 1240

General Rick Hillier made it clear from the beginning that he was going to be different, unwilling — in contrast to his more cautious predecessors — to toe the line imposed by his political masters.

On the very day he assumed command of Canada's military in 2005, at a public ceremony attended by former prime minister Paul Martin and former defence minister Bill Graham, Gen. Hillier issued a brazen pitch for more military spending.

"In this country, we could probably not give enough resources to the men and women [in uniform] to do all the things that we ask them to do," he said. "But we can give them too little, and that is what we are doing now. Remember them in your budgets."

During his three years atop the Canadian Armed Forces, Gen. Hillier has carved out an uncommon role for himself as a force to be reckoned with in Ottawa, as a man idolized by his troops, and as a media-savvy, celebrity soldier who prodded the country into its first 21st-century war.

"We have to go all the way back to General Andrew MacNaughton and the Second World War to find a head of the military who had the impact on the Canadian Forces that Rick Hillier had," said Terry Copp, a military historian at Wilfrid Laurier University in Kitchener–Waterloo. "Not only did he mobilize public opinion to make the Forces an important national institution once again, he's also won the respect and confidence of the people in uniform. I think that's an incredible achievement."

As one of the architects of the Kandahar campaign, and the senior general who presided over Canadian military efforts there, Gen. Hillier bears much responsibility for the mission. Afghanistan looms as the unknown aspect of his legacy: if the mission succeeds in the coming years, he will deserve credit; if it fails, history will hold him to account, along with others, for the outcome.

Those who know Gen. Hillier say he certainly feels keenly the loss of every Canadian killed or injured in Afghanistan.

"I think he takes a great deal of responsibility for the casualties there, and it may be one of the reasons he's leaving — because of the stress of dealing with that," said Doug Bland, a political scientist and former military officer who once commanded Gen. Hillier himself.

But Mr. Bland also says it makes sense for Gen. Hillier to step down, now that Canada has settled its commitment to Kandahar until 2011, now that the army has a clear, five-year troop rotation schedule in place, and now that helicopters and other equipment for the campaign are on their way.

His greatest accomplishment, says Mr. Bland, has been reigniting pride in a force widely disparaged, and disconnected from civilian life, following the Somalia scandal and years of government neglect.

HILLIER ON HILLIER

"In this country, we could probably not give enough resources to the men and women to do all the things that we ask them to do ... But we can give them too little, and that is what we are now doing." — February, 2005, on being named Chief of Defence Staff

"These are detestable murderers and scumbags. I'll tell you that right up front ... They detest our freedoms. They detest our society. They detest our liberties." — Discussing the Taliban, July, 2005

"We're not the public service of Canada, we're not just another department. We are the Canadian Forces, and our job is to be able to kill people." — July, 2005

"We have begun to fully realize the immense, the negative impact of the defence expenditure reductions in 1994 and the lasting, almost negative legacy that they brought into effect that has to be put right. ... [The cuts have left] some deep wounds ... in the Canadian Forces over this past, what I would call, a decade of darkness." —Referring to budget cuts under Liberal governments, February, 2007

"Gen. Hillier enjoys most recreational pursuits but, in particular, runs slowly, plays hockey poorly and golfs not well at all." — Gen. Hillier's official biography on www.army.forces.gc.ca

CRITICS ON HILLIER

"It seems incredible to me that Gen. Hillier would make these comments and I think they're quite out of line. It's so hypocritical." — NDP MP Dawn Black, Feb. 22, 2008, after Gen. Hillier suggested a roadside attack was the result of stalled discussion on the future of troops in Afghanistan

"We have a chief of defence staff who spoke about 10 years of darkness. I never thought that he would become a prop to the Conservative party." — Denis Coderre, Feb. 16, 2007

"Decisions on deployments are always made in the end by civilian authorities, the elected democratic authority of the country." — Prime Minister Stephen Harper, on Gen. Hillier's prediction that the Afghan mission would last 10 years or more, March 7, 2006

"It's fair to say that for almost a year he was the only person who was articulating the case for the mission to Kandahar, and I think he was out of line." — Liberal Senator Colin Kenny, chairman of the Senate defence and security committee, on Gen. Hillier's outspoken nature, January, 2007

THE REPLACEMENTS?

Among the leading candidates to take over as chief of defence staff from Gen. Rick Hillier

Lt.-Gen. Michel Gauthier

Responsible for all troops overseas as head of Canadian Expeditionary Force Command since September, 2005. Sublimely bilingual combat engineer with UN peacekeeping tours in Croatia and Bosnia. Was previously attached to CENTCOM, which directs the U.S. war on terror. Also headed military intelligence. Praised for Canada's Kandahar mission by General Dan McNeill, the top U.S. general in Afghanistan. Kept a low profile until recently, when he began to promote what Canadian troops were achieving in South Asia.

Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie

Commander of the army. Artillery gunner with an infantry background. His father and grandfathers have served at the top of Canada's military/ political establishment. Peacekeeping stints in Cyprus, Croatia and Afghanistan, where he was the deputy commander of NATO's International Security Assistance Force. Highly educated. Polished public performer, at ease with the media and politicians as well as with the troops, who admire his willingness to go in harm's way to get an understanding of the battle space. Lt.-Gen. Walt

Natynczyk Vice-chief of defence staff. An armoured officer and a westerner. Peacekeeping assignments in Cyprus, Bosnia (twice) and Croatia. As an exchange officer, served as deputy commander of the U.S. Army's III Corps. Deployed to Iraq for one year, where he held a senior position in plans and was deputy commanding general of the Multinational Corps. Highly respected by Americans he served with there. Popular with the troops because of his affability and magnetism. Currently helps with some of the most ticklish files, such as helicopter procurement.

Lt.-Gen. Angus Watt

Commander of the air force. A helicopter pilot with several graduate degrees. Worked closely for much of his career with the navy. Has held senior staff jobs with NATO and NORAD. Served for a year in Kabul as commander of NATO's complex air war in Afghanistan. Like almost everyone in the air force, he advocates giving it a bigger role in South Asia.

Vice-Admiral Drew Robertson

Commander of the navy. A graduate in engineering physics and a surface warfare specialist with numerous commands of warships. As a commodore after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, assembled the largest Canadian fleet since Korea and took it to the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea in support of operations in Afghanistan. Regarded as modest, reserved and cerebral with an ability to nourish collegial relations.

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Exit timing suits Hillier; 'We're one of the big boys now'

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OTTAWA –Soldiers are trained to follow orders. And when their chain of command reaches the top, direction comes from the reigning political masters.

But retiring General Rick Hillier ... not so much.

Canada's first Chief of Defence Staff superstar will step down this summer after three years as a defining force of military personality, a general

who worried less about the views of prime ministers than the battlefield grievances of a lowly private.

His considerable mouth was a formidable weapon, letting fly opinions like missiles that could penetrate any political flak jacket. He didn't fear the politicians. They feared him.

And with reason. Taking on Rick Hillier quickly became an unfair fight. It started the day of his appointment in early 2005 with a demand for more federal funding -- a boost promptly dropped into the budget.

Former defence minister Gordon O'Connor paid the ultimate price for losing a popularity contest against Gen. Hillier. With that relationship poisoned by friction between former general O'Connor and his once junior officer, one of the pair had to go. The unhappy loser of that showdown is now the Revenue Minister.

After that, all talk of Gen. Hillier being dumped was CTV pulp fiction. He would go at a time and on terms of his choosing.

On the eve of his retirement announcement over beer on Monday night, Gen. Hillier nicely framed his military legacy in a single sentence: "We're one of the big boys now."

With air, ground and naval equipment upgrades on order or delivered to bolster an extended Afghanistan mission fortified with 1,000 fresh American troops, Gen. Hillier has put the force back into the Forces.

That's why it was the perfect time to retire. The mission may be entering a more aggressive phase as the killing season arrives in Kandahar to coincide with the testosterone release accompanying an influx of U.S.

troops. Things could get bloody quickly. But more than re-arming Canada as a middle-power player, the success secret has been Gen. Hillier's public relations acumen, talent rarely seen in senior brass who spend too long collecting stripes while climbing through the ranks.

With carefully timed speeches and politically incorrect outbursts defending the needs of the soldier, Gen. Hillier dwarfed queasy voter opinion about the Afghanistan mission by focusing on strong public support for the military and its too-many sacrifices. It's not that Gen. Hillier shoots from the lip before his brain is loaded. He knows his limits. When pushed for parting opinions on his political masters, he laughs. "Note to your tape recorder, I'm shaking my head in the negative."

It should also be noted the pride of Campbellton, Nfld., who tried to enlist as an eight-year-old before successfully signing up at 17 to begin a 35-year rise up the ranks, had plenty of luck on his side.

His commands were a mixture of white-knight rescues and black ops. He commanded military efforts during the Red River floods of 1997 and the 1998 ice storm that blanketed Ottawa and Montreal. He commanded the 6,000-strong International Security Assistance Force as Canada prepared to shift south into Kandahar.

And then came his greatest challenge: Selling a casualty-plagued peacemaking mission to a nation accustomed to blue-helmeted peacekeepers.

Perhaps one name best defines the Hillier phenomenon: Ray Henault. The pre-Hillier chief of defence staff accepted his posting as a political puppet with nary a discouraging word.

He came and left — and nobody knew his name. Gen. Hillier shrugs off legacy talk, but there's been a profoundly positive shift in military perception since the disgrace of the Somalia scandal in the mid-1990s.

"I can't go anywhere these days — or anybody else in uniform — without somebody patting you on the head or shaking your hand and saying thank you very much," Gen. Hillier says. Even the most colourful old soldiers have to fade away eventually.

But only a very few, perhaps just this one, get to stake a legacy of their own and cash in on their four-star reputation with lucrative speaking engagements or consulting contracts.

Gen. Hillier dismisses talk of a political career, preferring to think in terms of golf or hockey. But he insists he won't be idle. "I don't want to sit on the couch scratching my belly in my underwear watching the soaps," he smirks. "At most I'll take two or three days off."

While he doesn't get to choose his successor, Gen. Hillier has strong views on the type of person who should become his replacement. He leans over his beer, his face suddenly dead serious. "You're dealing with issues that cost men and women their lives. If you're not prepared to argue your case eloquently, articulately, occasionally aggressively but always clearly, you can't be a chief of defence staff."

That's the trouble, as you scan the lineup of potential heirs. None of them appears to have what it takes to meet Gen. Hillier's self-styled criteria. And that suggests we may not see the likes of him again.

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Editorial – Right man, right time

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Editorial Staff It often takes a crisis to identify a leader, a person of strong character who inspires others, builds confidence and charts a path forward. Gen. Rick Hillier, who submitted his resignation Tuesday as Canada's chief of defence staff, was such a man. Promoted to the top job three years ago when the war in Afghanistan was entering its bloodiest phase, he was the right man in the right job at the right time.

His political masters — he served two prime ministers — sometimes seemed uncomfortable with his outspoken manner and his pugnacious demands for more troops and more equipment, as well as his defence of Canada's combat role in Kandahar, one of the most dangerous missions in the Afghan theatre. There were even calls for the general to be reined in, lest he forget who was really in charge.

But Gen. Hillier was not intimidated by the possibility of being sacked because he believed in the importance of speaking forcefully for the troops and for Canada. In the end, he got what he wanted, revitalizing the Canadian military in the process and restoring Canada's reputation as "one of the big boys" on the world stage.

"We are not the Public Service of Canada," he reminded the country shortly after taking office. "We are the Canadian Forces and our job is to be able to kill people." A Canadian general may not have got away with such words 10 years ago, but the stakes changed with the deadly war in Afghanistan and Gen. Hillier wanted the public to understand that.

His soldiers adored him, and even Canadians who opposed the war in Afghanistan seemed to admire his blunt and colourful style, making him one of the most popular Canadian generals since the Second World War.

Canadians have been divided and ambivalent about the conflict from the start, which, in turn, has caused unease among politicians sensitive to the public pulse. Gen. Hillier understood those divisions, which is why he spoke forcefully and often about the courage of the troops and the value of the work they were doing. He may not have convinced everyone he was right, but he can be credited with stirring a tingle of patriotism that has not been evident in Canada in two or three generations.

Without the war, he probably would have toiled in semi-obscurity, much like his peacetime predecessors. Even the Defence Department was a junior ministry, starved for funds and attention, until the world changed following the terror attacks on the United States in 2001. The Defence Department was suddenly thrust into a role for which it was not prepared, a role, in fact, it was barely capable of performing after four decades of neglect.

Once a political decision was made to support the international coalition in Afghanistan, Canada needed a general who could lead and talk to Canadians in a way they would trust. Gen. Hillier met that test and, in the process, restored the pride and dignity of the country's once-beleaguered Armed Forces.

List of replacements includes ex-Winnipegger

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Geoff Kirbyson Geoff Kirbyson He's a former Winnipeg Free Press carrier, a star football player for Daniel McIntyre Collegiate and now he's in line to head Canada's Armed Forces. A pair of military experts thinks Lt.-Gen. Walt Natynczyk is one of the top two or three leading candidates to replace Gen. Rick Hillier, who announced his retirement Tuesday.

Scott Taylor, a former professional soldier and current editor of Ottawa-based Esprit de Corps, a Canadian military magazine, said the selection of Natynczyk by Prime Minister Stephen Harper would mean the government wants the military to "stay the course." He said Natynczyk has also endeared himself to the Harper camp through attending numerous gala events.

"He's popular with Harper," he said.

David Bercuson, director of the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary, said Natynczyk is currently the de facto chief financial officer of Canada's forces, responsible for paying the bills and ensuring money is allocated to the right place at the right time.

"It also means he has a thorough knowledge of the Canadian Forces.

He's dealing with the navy, air force and army all the time," he said.

Bercuson said Natynczyk's battlefield involvement, particularly in Iraq, gives him experience at a "very senior" level.

"He knows how to command and he knows how an army works, which is very important because we're dealing with the U.S. military in Afghanistan and in defence of North America. He has all the experience one could want for the position," he said.

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