

July 5, 2010  
Issue #32

## In Focus Transatlantic News Digest

### Electronic Newsletter of the Atlantic Council of Canada

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#### **In this issue:**

- G8 Leaders
- Call for a Stable Afghanistan
- Setting Pull-Out Dates Encourages Insurgents: Germany's Defence Minister
- U.S. Top Commander Rolls Out of Favour
- New Commander Arrives in Kandahar
- Recommended Readings

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### **G8 Leaders Call for a Stable Afghanistan**

**By: Monika Wyrzykowska**

G8 leaders issued a statement Saturday following the summit in Huntsville, Ontario. The leaders of the world's major industrialized nations called on Afghan National Security Forces to make concrete progress towards assuming more responsibility for the security of their country within five years.

The government must also "combat corruption, address illicit drug production and trafficking, improve human rights, improve provision of basic services and governance and make concrete progress to reinforce the formal justice system."

The G8 statement also stated that "clear steps by Afghanistan towards more credible, inclusive and transparent parliamentary elections in September will be an important step forward in the country's maturing democracy."

Prime Minister Harper said there is unanimous agreement among G8 countries that the world cannot afford to let the security situation slide in Afghanistan.

"We realize challenges remain," he said. "That said, I think there was a general recognition around the G8 table that we have to continue to put our shoulder to the wheel to ultimately ensure that what we leave behind is a stable Afghanistan that will be a positive contributor to world security and not a source of terrorism or a potential failed state. We all agree that this remains an over-riding essential objective for all of the countries of the G8."

Canada is slated to withdraw all troops in 2011.

**Sources:** [Afghan forces must show progress 'within five years': G8](#), [Stable Afghanistan a top priority for G8, PM says](#), [G8 Urges More Work on Global Economy, Criticizes Iran, North Korea](#)

### **Setting Pull-Out Dates Encourages Insurgents: Germany's Defence Minister**

**By: Monika Wyrzykowska**

In a recent visit to London, Germany's defence minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg warned that setting an end-date for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan would play into the hands of insurgents, adding that it would be a "tough summer". "Instead, it is far better to focus on a starting date, when a process of handover of security to the Afghans can begin."

Zu Guttenberg's made his comments a week after Prime Minister David Cameron said that he wanted Britain's 9,500 troops home from Afghanistan within five years. Other countries of the U.S.-led alliance, including Canada, the Netherlands, and Poland have said they stated they want their troops home in the next two years.

Polis have shown that the mission is opposed by a majority of German voters. Zu Guttenberg spoke of the difficulties of "selling" the Afghan mission to a sceptical German public. He drew lessons from the Afghanistan experience by calling for strict criteria to govern NATO missions, including a clearly defined political goal and a great and imminent danger to another NATO member. Arguably, none of these criteria were met when the Afghan operation was designated a NATO mission.

However referring to the vote next February, zu Guttenberg also warned that the German government would be looking for positive results from the mission by the end of this year. "We need to see the first results of the new strategy, while knowing how hard it will be because we have delays in [spreading security in] Kandahar".

**Sources:** [German minister warns against Afghan 'end-date'](#), [German Defence Minister questions role of Nato in Afghanistan war](#), [NATO end date "plays into hands" of Taliban](#)

## **U.S. Top Commander Rolls Out of Favour**

**By: Monika Wyrzykowska**

Top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, resigned last week after he and his staff were quoted in a Rolling Stone magazine article criticizing and mocking key administration officials. Shortly after McChrystal assumed command of NATO operations last year, Operation Khanjar commenced, marking the largest offensive operation.

McChrystal was relieved of his command of the war in Afghanistan last week after Rolling Stone printed an interview in which McChrystal made highly critical comments of President Barack Obama and his administration's handling of the war.

McChrystal was promoted to the rank of four-star general just last year. McChrystal would have needed to retain the rank for three years in order to retire with the benefits of a four-star general.

However, some observers, although critical of his remarks, have moved to defend McChrystal's policies in Afghanistan. Gen. David Petraeus, current Commander of the United States Central Command and McChrystal's designated replacement, offered his praise.

"He has made enormous contributions in leading the coalition endeavor in Afghanistan over the past year. We now see some areas of progress amidst the tough fight ongoing in Afghanistan," Petraeus said. "Considerable credit for that must go to Stan McChrystal."

General Stanley McChrystal's resignation last week comes as NATO forces mark the deadliest month in Afghanistan, in its nearly decade-long war.

**Sources:** [The aftermath of Gen. Stanley McChrystal's ouster](#), [Security Brief: Petraeus offers praise for McChrystal](#), [Gen. Stanley McChrystal retires](#)

## **New Commander Arrives in Kandahar**

**By: Tanah Sullivan**

On July 4, 2010, US General David Petraeus formally took over the NATO mission, signalling the beginning of the change of command of NATO Forces in Afghanistan. Gen. Petraeus is replacing General Stanley McChrystal, after he was dismissed in late June, 2010, by US President Barack Obama for his critical comments about Obama's administration officials in a magazine article. NATO is still gearing up for a major surge of troops in Kandahar province this fall, while the primary goal, according to Gen. Petraeus, is still the protection of the Afghan people.

Yet with countries like Canada preparing to withdraw troops next year, and with last month being the deadliest yet for the coalition, Gen. Petraeus warned that NATO troops are engaged in a "conflict of wills", as "our enemies are doing all that they can to undermine the confidence of the Afghan people".

Gen. Petraeus is credited with turning around the American war effort in Iraq, but in Afghanistan, he is faced with difficult challenges as progress has been slow stabilizing Taliban strongholds in the south and support for the war has been waning. There are also concerns regarding the Afghan government's ability to fight corruption, with Gen. Petraeus stating on his July 4, 2010, address to NATO troops that the war has reached "a critical stage".

**Sources:** [Stanley McChrystal's departure a blow to US-Muslim relations](#), [Petraeus Officially Takes Command](#), [General Petraeus in Afghanistan warns of tough mission](#), [Petraeus assumes command in Afghanistan](#)

### **Recommended Readings**


#### **Acting President in Lead in Poland**

Interim president Bronislaw Komorowski appeared Sunday to have held off a last-minute surge from the identical twin brother of the late president, who died in an April plane crash that shocked the country and forced early elections.

Exit polls showed Komorowski with a slight edge over Jaroslaw Kaczynski, who essentially conceded defeat by declaring before supporters, "I congratulate the winner."

A poll released Sunday by the TNS OBOP institute predicted Komorowski winning 53.1 per cent of the vote, and Kaczynski winning 46.9 per cent. A separate poll, by Millward Brown SMG/KRC, shows Komorowski with 51.8 per cent and Kaczynski with 48.2 per cent.

**Read the full story here:** <http://thechronicleherald.ca/World/1190547.html>



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