



Reuters  
**ON PATROL IN ZHARI**

directly north of Kandahar, has lush orchards providing plenty of cover for fighters. It was a Mujahideen stronghold during the anti-Soviet jihad of the 1980s. Western officials insist the Taliban fighters are incapable of developing such a stronghold today.

They argue that with the exception of Musa Qala, a town in Helmand province in anti-government hands for most of 2007, the militants do not have the capacity to hold ground.

The well-irrigated district of Arghandab, which sits

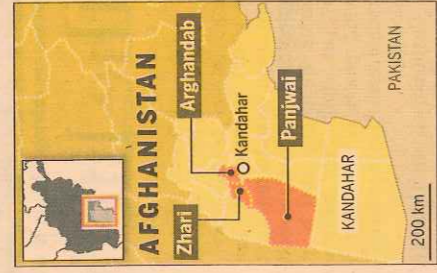
of the sudden release of hardened fighters from the prison. "We've spent the last five years putting these people behind bars and now they are out again," said one soldier.

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Mohammad, one of the Taliban fighters who was sprung from jail on Saturday by 30 of his heavily armed fellow insurgents, told the FT that he and 210 other fighters were lying low in neighbouring Zhari district, where Canadian forces have been conducting clearing operations this week.

He said they planned to join their fellow fighters in Arghandab by this morning and plans were afoot to attack Kandahar, spiritual home to the Taliban movement.

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**An Afghan soldier keeps watch as villagers flee Arghandab district after being warned by Nato to vacate the area**

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## ers fight to damp militant hotbed

determined but they are fighting completely differently," he said. "Now they just fire shots, drop their weapons and move away, because they know that we will only fire if they are carrying weapons."

He has much greater faith in the contingent of Afghan National Army soldiers who fought alongside the Canadians this week. They still have a rag-tag air, with their mismatching helmets and the occasional aged AK-47 slung over their shoulders, rather than the more modern Canadian-provided C7A1 assault rifle. But Sgt Patterson says they are "10 times better" today.

"Last time we cleared the area and set up police stations everywhere but the ANA just couldn't hold them. They weren't ready." Nonetheless, progress is painfully slow and the Canadians admit they are under-resourced to tackle a complex insurgency. Canada, which has 2,500 soldiers deployed to Afghanistan, has lost 85 of its troops since 2002 - the highest proportional death toll of any of the 40 countries fighting in the Nato alliance.

Saturday's skirmish led to a Canadian soldier being evacuated by helicopter after the blast from a rocket-propelled grenade snapped his femur. In general the deadliest threat is from roadside bombs blowing up even the most heavily armoured Canadian vehicles. Canadian commanders know they reap greater rewards from dismounted troops on foot, even though it increases the risk of injuries during firefights.

"They [the Taliban] are more scared by the infantry than when we are in vehicles," says Lieutenant Victor Mover.

secretive staff monitoring via closed circuit cameras. In addition, prosecutors are investigating evidence that hundreds of Germans hid tens of millions of euros in Liechtenstein, a tax haven. "Business leaders must be an example to society," said Mr Köhler, whose role, while largely ceremonial, carries moral weight and influence in policy debates. He complained about companies paying "salaries out of proportion to business performance", but said a welcome "process of rethinking this issue" is entering company boardrooms.

## warning to German 'elite'

former head of the International Monetary Fund - said it would "take a long time to repair the damage done to public trust in the business elite by incorrect behaviour by leaders of some German companies".

He did not name any companies but the country has this year seen a series of scandals that have shaken support for Germany's social market economy. Telecommunications group Deutsche Telekom is facing a probe over allegations that it spied on its supervisory board and journalists. Several well-known supermarket dis-

counters have admitted

and took over large parts of the country. But since the expansion of Nato forces into the south in 2006, the area has seen a bitter insurgency that Canadian, and other troops, have struggled to control.

In 2006 Canadian troops mounted a large operation to clear the Taliban from areas west of Kandahar, including Zhari and Panjwai. Two years on they are still struggling to do so. Taliban fighters can easily conceal themselves from the Nato spy drones by hiding under the canopies of trees.

On Saturday, an hour-long gun, artillery and rocket-propelled grenade battle followed the Taliban attack, with insurgents encircling

the PPCLI platoon, firing at them from north and south. The Taliban fighters undermined any advantage they might have had by spraying fire wildly and inaccurately. For some of the young Canadians it was their first "TIC", or troops in contact, and many bellowed with laughter, shouting "You're useless," as they returned fire.

Sergeant Jason Patterson, who fought in the same village in 2006 during Operation Medusa, says there are big differences between today and the enemy they faced two years ago. Then, they occupied and attempted to hold fortified positions. These days insurgents prefer ambushes and attempts to encircle Nato forces. "They are still gutsy and

### Manipulation:

Bioethanol is not a real alternative fuel for the future.

### Evidence:

Bioethanol is currently the only real alternative for eliminating our addiction to oil. It improves energy independence and diversification, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and guarantees fuel supply. (\*)

### \*Sources:

- [1] European Federation for Transport and Environment, "Greenhouse gas emissions from transport in the EU25", 2004.
- [2] Commission of the European Communities, "An EU Strategy for Biofuels-Impact Assessment, Communication from the Commission", 2006.



Biofuels are under attack. The claim "Bioethanol is not a real alternative fuel for the future" is just one of the many false statements being spread to the general public. We have decided to stand up and contest these falsities with supported evidence. We believe it is the right thing to do.

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