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Dutch government collapses over Afghanistan troops

The [Dutch](#) coalition [government](#) has collapsed over "irreconcilable differences" between the two largest parties over [Afghanistan](#) troop deployments.

According to prime minister [Jan Peter Balkenende](#), the [Labour Party](#), the second largest party in the government after the ruling [Christian Democratic](#) party, was resigning from the government, effective immediately. Balkenende said, "You could see from the last few days that we couldn't come up with an agreement." He added, "Where there is no trust, it is difficult to work together. There is no good path to allow this cabinet to go further."

The split occurred after 16 hours of talks over the future of the Dutch presence in the [Afghanistan War](#), which ended early Saturday. While the Christian Democratic Party supported keeping a reduced military presence in the [Uruzgan Province](#), the Labour Party demanded the immediate return of all Dutch troops in August.

With the resignation of the Labour Party, the Christian Democratic Party is left with an unworkable majority in the government. While Prime Minister Balkenende made little mention of the future of the government, saying only that the remaining two parties would continue in office, with the Labour Party's seats being "made available."

According to the leader of the Labour party, [Wouter Bos](#), the third party in the Dutch government, the [Christian Union](#) Party, would also resign its seats along with the Labour Party's seats when he offered the resignation of the party to [Queen Beatrix](#) later on Saturday. Despite Balkenende's statements, political analysts said that early elections seemed inevitable, despite a year remaining in the current term.

Dutch troops were deployed to Afghanistan in 2006, and were originally intended to return in 2008, but were forced to remain as no other nation was willing to provide replacement troops. Under the new commitment signed in 2008, Dutch troops were to return in August, a stance reinforced by a Dutch courts' ruling in October 2009 requiring that all troops return by that time, although that ruling has yet to be ratified by the government.

Former US Secretary of State Alexander Haig dies at age 85

Retired four-star general and former [US Secretary of State Alexander Haig](#) died Saturday morning of complications from an infection at [Johns Hopkins Hospital](#) in [Baltimore, Maryland](#) at the age of 85.

A [West Point](#) graduate and decorated veteran of both the [Korean](#) and

[Vietnam](#) wars, Haig served as commander of US forces stationed in [Europe](#) and supreme allied commander of [NATO](#). He also held top advisory posts in the [Nixon](#), [Ford](#), and [Reagan](#) administrations. Haig furthermore unsuccessfully sought the [Republican](#) presidential nomination in 1988.

Despite his distinguished military and political career, Haig was never able to fully live down his internationally televised response to the [assassination attempt](#) on President Ronald Reagan in 1981.

"As of now, I am in control here in the [White House](#), pending the return of the Vice President," Haig said hours after the shooting.

Some saw the comment as a calculated usurping of Vice President [George H.W. Bush](#)'s authority and as a purposeful disregard of the overall chain of command.

In his own defense, Haig later told the media that what he said earlier was done "to reassure Americans" that the White House was functioning during the absence of Vice President Bush whom was flying back to [Washington, D.C.](#) from [Texas](#) at the time of the shooting.

In a press conference on Saturday, US President [Barack Obama](#) described Haig as a valued public servant who "exemplified our finest warrior-diplomat tradition of those who dedicate their lives to public service."

Haig "served his country in many capacities for many years, earning honor on the battlefield, the confidence of presidents and prime ministers, and the thanks of a grateful nation," US Secretary of State [Hillary Clinton](#) later added.

At least one dead, eighteen injured after grenade attacks in Rwanda

According to reports, at least one person has been killed and a further eighteen wounded after multiple grenade attacks in [Kigali](#), the capital of the [African](#) country of [Rwanda](#).

The attacks occurred at a train station, restaurant, and building housing businesses. According to the [Al Jazeera](#) news agency, five of those hurt were in serious condition.

A police spokesman commented that it was not immediately clear who was responsible for the attacks or whether they were coordinated. Spokesman Eric Kayiranga noted that "[t]here is a possibility of it being the FDLR [Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda], or criminals, or an accident. It can be any of that. We can't confirm that for now." He did, however, confirm the death toll, saying: "There was one death and eighteen injuries."

Kayiranga also reported that two people had been taken into custody following the incidents. "Two suspects were apprehended, they belong to the Interahamwe militia," he said to [Agence France-Presse](#), referring to a militia of the [Hutu](#) ethnic group, considered responsible for the 1994 Rwandan genocide of [Tutsis](#). "We are continuing the investigation and questioning the two suspects," the spokesman added.

Inventor Ronald Howes dies at age 83

Ronald Howes died at the age of 83 on Tuesday. Howes was best known for his invention of the [Easy-Bake Oven](#). As director of research and new product development for [Cincinnati](#)-based [Kenner Products](#), Howes made his famous invention in the early 1960s. The inspiration came from hearing the sentiment of a Kenner salesman returning from a trip to [New York City](#). Kenner

engineers concluded that the safest and most practical method of heating the Easy-Bake would be to use a light bulb. The bulb was later replaced by a [heating element](#).

Howes was raised by his German grandmother and her American husband, as his mother died soon after his birth. He attended [Walnut Hills High School](#) but left during [World War II](#) to enlist in the [United States Navy](#). Nancy Howes remarked that his grandmother assisted him in, "fib[bing] about his age". Howes later attended the [University of Cincinnati](#). According to Christopher Howes, his son, one of his first jobs at Kenner was to remove potentially poisonous chemicals from the toy [Play-Doh](#). Howes also contributed to what would later become a modern version of the [Spirograph](#).

Christopher Howes said, "He had a fondness for the innocent, simple things in life." Howes continued to consider possible product designs even outside of work. His wife remarked, "We no longer have a garage in our house – it's a physics lab". Howes was also a spiritual man and often taught Catechism classes for the [Catholic Church](#). He had six children and fourteen grandchildren during his lifetime.

A memorial will be held in his honor next Monday, at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church.

Commons Picture of the Day



Sphaerophoria scripta on a Hawkweed flower (*Hieracium* sp.)

Wikipedia Featured Article

Panzer I

•The **Panzer I** was a [light tank](#) which was produced in [Germany](#) in the 1930s. Design of the [Panzer I](#) began in 1932 and mass production in 1934. Although intended only as a training tank to introduce the concept of armored warfare to the [German Army](#), the [Panzer I](#) saw combat in Spain during the [Spanish Civil War](#), in Poland, France, Soviet Union and North Africa during the [Second World War](#), and even in China during the [Second Sino-Japanese War](#). Based on experience gathered during the Spanish Civil War, the Panzer I helped shape the German armored corps used to invade Poland in 1939 and France in 1940. By 1941, the Panzer I chassis were being reused for production of [tank destroyers](#) and [assault guns](#). Ultimately, the Panzer I's performance in combat was limited by its thin [armor](#) and light [armament](#), consisting of only two [general purpose machine guns](#). Because it was designed solely for training, the Panzer I was not as capable as other light tanks of the era, such as the [T-26](#). Although weak in combat, it formed a large proportion of Germany's tank strength on paper and was used in all major campaigns between September 1939 and December 1941. Inevitably, the small, vulnerable light tank would be overshadowed in importance by better-known German tanks such as the [Panzer IV](#), [Panther](#), and [Tiger](#), but its contribution to the early victories of [Nazi Germany](#) during the Second World War was significant. ([more...](#))

Quote of the Day

*All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky:
There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone;
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police;
We must love one another or die.*
~ [W. H. Auden](#) ~

Word of the Day**bronze** *v*

1. To plate with bronze metal.
2. To colour like bronze metal.
3. (*of the skin*) To change to a darker, tanned colour due to exposure to the sun.

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