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An untimely death



The first Czech soldier died in combat in Afghanistan, and Czech politicians reacted the only way they could. They offered condolences to the family and said the death was not in vain. "This is a war against terrorism," said Defense Minister Vlasta Parkanová. "A lost life has meaning in a battle against evil." It comes at a time when the international community is bickering over what to do in Afghanistan. The U.S. defense secretary criticized the counterinsurgency effectiveness of the allies in southern Afghanistan, and Canada threatened to pull out. Ottawa finally agreed to extend its mission to 2011 but wants the allies to send 1,000 extra troops. Some critics on both sides of the Atlantic say that the fight is hopeless and that withdrawal is the best option. As Czech politicians prepare for the Nato summit, their reaction to the untimely death of a Czech soldier makes it difficult for them to do anything other than stand on the side of committing more resources.

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