



The sun sets behind the Manhattan skyline. A recent report from the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism found New York was the most targeted city in the United States for terrorist attacks. DON EMMERT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

New York top U.S. target for terrorists

By GENEVIEVE LONG
Epoch Times Staff

While terrorist attacks in the United States have steadily declined during the past 40 years, New York is still the most frequently targeted city.

Following the attempted bomb attack in New York's Times Square last Saturday evening, a report from the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) says New York City is the country's most common terrorist target.

The statistics are from the Global Terrorism Database, a START project that contains information on over 80,000 worldwide terrorist

incidents since 1970. An updated version of the open-source database, with information through 2008, will be launched in late May.

According to START, which is based at the University of Maryland, of the 1,347 attacks in the United States from 1970 to 2007, more were in New York City than the combined number of attacks in the other four most frequently targeted U.S. cities.

Miami suffered 70 attacks; San Francisco had 66; Washington, D.C., had 59; and Los Angeles, 54.

But even in 1973, at the height of the attacks, 48 percent of all terrorist attacks in the U.S. were in New York City.

In New York City's five boroughs, between 1970 and 2007, there were 284 terrorist attacks. In the same period, 2,813 people were killed by terrorist activity. Among them 98 percent were from the World Trade Center attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

The total number of terrorism casualties, including those killed or wounded in attacks, is over 4,000 people.

In addition to al-Qaeda, which is responsible for the deadliest attacks on the city, about 40 other groups have committed terrorist acts through 2007. According to START, they represent a range of goals, ideologies, and backgrounds.

For example, in the 1970s, the

worst perpetrators of violence in New York City were Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional (FALN); a Puerto Rican separatist group; The Jewish Defense League (JDL), which attacked targets it thought were anti-Semitic; the Independent Armed Revolutionary Commandos (CIA), another Puerto Rican separatist group; and Omega-7, an anti-Castro Cuban organization.

Although different targets have been singled out in the past four decades, the most common have been businesses, government offices, and non-governmental organizations. The most commonly used weapons in attacks were bombs and explosives.

Britain's deficit now worse than Greece's

By STEPHEN JONES
Epoch Times Staff

LONDON—Even before the winner of May 6's general election is announced in the United Kingdom, officials in Europe are warning about the need for the new government to tackle the country's spiralling debt.

In what has been portrayed as a damning indictment of the previous Labour government's finances, the European Commission's spring economic forecast put Britain's deficit as the highest out of its 27 regional members—even greater than that of Greece.

The EC forecast put the U.K. debt this calendar year as 12.2 percent of GDP—worse than the figures released by finance minister Alistair Darling. Last year, the U.K.'s deficit was the third worst in Europe, but this year the debt has grown to surpass that of Greece, which has a deficit of 9.3 percent of GDP.

In Europe, there is widespread concern about Britain's finances, which are in their worse state since the Second World War.

Markets fear that if the country is faced with a hung parliament, the government will lack the strength to push through wide-ranging cuts to public services.

"The first thing for the new government to do is to agree on a convincing, ambitious programme of fiscal consolidation in order to start to reduce the very high deficit and

stabilize the high debt level of the U.K.," said European economic and monetary affairs commissioner Olli Rehn.

"That's by far the first and foremost challenge of the new government. I trust whatever the colour of the government, I hope it will take this measure."

According to the EC's forecasts, the U.K.'s deficit is expected to fall from 12.2 percent of GDP this year, to 11.5 percent in 2010-11 and 9.5 percent in 2011-12.

That is far less optimistic than the figures predicted by Darling when he delivered the budget in March. The Treasury forecast that the deficit would fall from 11.2 percent in 2010-11 to 8.6 percent in 2011-12. In a statement on Wednesday, a day before the general election, shadow finance minister George Osborne said that the forecasts were

a "damning indictment of Gordon Brown's economic record."

"He has left this country with the largest budget deficit in Europe, larger even than Greece, and projections for future growth well below his own forecasts," Osborne said.

"If any more evidence was required of the need for change to get our economy back on track, this is surely it."

"Only by voting Conservative tomorrow will you get a new government that starts dealing with our debts and getting our economy moving on Friday."

'That's by far the first and foremost challenge of the new government. I trust whatever the colour of the government, I hope it will take this measure'

— Olli Rehn

Swedes fight teenage alcohol abuse

By CHOWA CHOO
Epoch Times Staff

GOTHENBURG, Sweden—The attitude of parents is a vital factor in the fight against alcohol abuse among teenagers, Swedish agencies say. The Swedish National Institute of Public Health has joined forces with national police in a year-long campaign against buying alcohol for teenagers.

The campaign, called Rethink, was launched last week just before the Walpurgis festival, a traditional celebration in Central and Northern Europe. Many teenagers taste their first alcoholic drink during this time. According to Swedish law, it is not illegal to drink alcohol under 18, but it is illegal to provide it to anyone that age.

Youngsters get their alcohol, one way or another, through adults. Some parents buy alcohol for their underage children under the pretext that they would have control over their children's consumption.

Swedish chief of police, Bengt Svenson, said alcohol consumption and violent crime are connected, and that reducing drinking among underage youngsters is an important part of crime prevention.

The campaign, called Rethink, was launched last week just before the Walpurgis festival, a traditional celebration in Central and Northern Europe

Research shows that alcohol intoxication is harmful to children. According to the Swedish National Institute of Public Health, parents who set strict rules for their children's alcohol consumption could see their offspring lead a healthier life.

The Rethink campaign aims to inform parents with teenage children about their responsibilities as well as strengthen their ability to influence their children.

Darfur rebel group ends peace talks

By PETER VALK
Epoch Times Staff

One of Darfur's largest rebel groups, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), ceased peace talks with the Sudanese government on Monday. The group says the Sudanese government breached a ceasefire by carrying out attacks on villages and military targets in Darfur over the past few weeks.

"Now the [Khartoum] regime either has to choose the path of war or the path of peace. If the offensive continues against our people we [will] consider taking further measures as well," JEM spokesman Ahmed Hussein Adam told Reuters news agency.

A spokesperson for the Sudanese army denied there has been any military activity in recent weeks in Darfur.

Lawrence Cannon, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, said in a statement on Wednesday that Canada "regrets the breach of the ceasefire agreement" which was signed in Doha, Qatar, on

February 23.

"The recent attacks in Darfur, which led the Justice Equality Movement to walk away from the peace talks in protest, are not in keeping with the ceasefire," Cannon said.

"Canada is concerned by reports of aerial and ground troop attacks in the Darfur region of Sudan. Such attacks increase the hardship suffered by war-affected populations in Darfur."

He called on signatories of the ceasefire agreement to return to the negotiating table in Doha. Canada has contributed \$760 million since 2006 toward peace and humanitarian goals in Sudan, and is engaging actively in the Darfur peace process, Cannon said.

In 2003, rebel groups in Darfur, a region in Sudan, clashed with the Sudanese government because of alleged oppression of black Africans in favour of Arabs. An estimated 300,000 people have died and 2.7 million have become homeless as a result of the conflict.

In April, peace talks between the Sudanese government and the JEM began, under the mediation of Qatar, to find a compromise. The talks, however, quickly reached an impasse and JEM's withdrawal is therefore said to be largely symbolic.

In March, the Sudanese government signed another peace framework with another major rebel group, the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), an umbrella organization of 10 splinter factions.

The Sudan Liberation Army is the only influential rebel group the Sudanese government didn't sign a peace deal with before the elections. They have so far refused any negotiations.

Commentators say the talks paved the way for a smooth election this year. President Omar al-Bashir was re-elected despite being indicted by the International Criminal Court on charges of crimes against humanity for his role in the genocide in Darfur. Bashir has been in power since his military coup in 1989.



STOPPED NEGOTIATIONS: Khalil Ibrahim, leader of the Sudanese rebel group the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), speaks during a press conference in Doha on March 29. JEM has said that the Sudanese government has broken a ceasefire by attacking villages and other targets. KARIM JAAFAR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Shia Muslim parties announce coalition

Epoch Times Staff

Iraq's Sunni-backed secular political party, which won the country's recent election, faces a new challenge after two minority Shia Muslim parties announced a coalition on Tuesday.

The coalition, composed of the Iraqi National Alliance and the State of Law bloc led by incumbent Prime Minister Nouri Maliki, is four seats short of the 163 seats needed to form a majority government.

However it will deal a serious blow to the Iraqiyya bloc, led by former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, which won a two-seat victory in the March 7 general election in the war-torn country.

The new alliance also threatens to increase the alienation of the minority Sunnis and bring Iraq under greater influence from the Shia regime in Iran.

The coalition has not yet agreed

on who will become the next prime minister.

"An agreement was reached to form the largest parliamentary bloc through the union of the two blocs," said Abdul Razzaq al-Kadhafi, an adviser to Ibrahim Jaafari—the favourite to become next prime minister.

"The most important thing is to form an Iraqi government, to establish a government programme and to nominate the next prime minister."

'Truth drug' declared illegal by court

By JASPER FAKKERT
Epoch Times Staff

Drugs used by Indian police and intelligence in questioning suspects were declared illegal by India's Supreme Court on Wednesday.

According to the court, the "truth drugs" which supposedly makes it more difficult

for the suspect to lie are a violation of personal liberty.

The case came to light after petitions were filed questioning the validity of the tests.

While the verdict was hailed by the lawyers of the petitioners opposing the use of the techniques, a former top police official described it as a "major setback for law

enforcement agencies."

"These techniques are used the world over," Maxwell Pereira told AFP.

While the tests, in which sodium penthalol is injected, has never been admissible in court as evidence, Indian police used it to gain information on cases, according to the BBC.