

C-FAR NEWSLETTER

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Fly ME To The Moon

Canada's *bien pensants* would not dream of criticizing any country for how it spends its own money, unless that country is the U.S. and that spending is military. A curious state of affairs given that the U.S. is not in the habit of coming cap in hand for charity. Those who have perfected the art -- China, India -- crave endless foreign aid even as they devote scarce resources to bulking up military might. With the biggest army in the world, China has scheduled an unmanned moon shot next year, while neighbouring nuclear power, India, says its "space agency is ready to send a man to space within seven years if the government gives the nod. ... The mission, to place a 525-kilogram orbiter using an indigenously built polar satellite launch vehicle, is slated to cost the agency US\$83-million." (**National Post**, November 23, 2004) Last year Canada sent China \$65-million, with \$25-million more for India. Ironically, Canada now has grassroots literacy, development and democratization problems of its own.

You Shouldn't Have

Never mind the old-fashioned kind, you can't even enjoy a decent "made in China" Christmas anymore. A moaning pre-feast item in the **Globe and Mail** noted that persecuted Christians have been put to work as in China's *lao gai* system (hundreds of gulag prison camps parading under such cheerful monikers as **Sunshine Shoe Factory** or **Bright Prospect Hairpin Factory**, where prison, or slave, labour undercuts even the lowest of low-wage Third World competitors). According to the report, pastors preaching outside state-approved Christian facilities have been rounded up to work tortuously long hours stringing the nearly invisible wires that go into the making of Christmas lights for the Western market. Then, "a sharp piece of metal was found in a candy cane sold in a Brampton, Ont., store police said yesterday. **Peel Regional Police**, west of Toronto, said the treat was bought on Tuesday at an **Everything for a Dollar** store. A child was eating the candy cane when the metal was discovered embedded within it. ... The candy cane was made in China. The company that imports and supplies the candy has distributed the confection to stores across the country. ... On the wrapper is **Bal Globe Fine Foods**." (**National Post**, December 23, 2004) And lots of luck relaxing with your new "made in China" Christmas tree: "There may be an unwanted present under some Canadians' Christmas trees this year, prompting the **Canadian Food Inspection Agency** to recall a brand of artificial trees that may contain Chinese beetles. Last month, a Michigan woman saw brown bugs crawling out of the base of her newly purchased Christmas tree. She took it back to the store and contacted the state's department of agriculture, who discerned the bugs were *Calidiellum villosulum*, or **brown fir long-horned beetles**, a species not [yet] established on this continent. ... The trees, which are made from a mix of natural and artificial elements [artificial boughs on natural trunks], were not dried at a high enough heat to kill the bugs before being exported by **Polytree Hong Kong**. They are sold across Canada as '**Cascade Pre-lit Alpine Christmas Tree**,' or '**Dakota Alpine Christmas Tree**.'" (**National Post**, December 24, 2004) The brown fir long-horned beetle is deemed more dangerous than the gypsy moth, Dutch elm disease and chestnut blight combined, and poses a unique danger to arborvitae, cypress, juniper and cedar, among other plants. This is presumably distinct from the garden variety Asian long-horned beetle, which introduction has already caused vast swaths of Toronto's old growth trees to be felled in the northwest region of the city. This import was introduced when China

belatedly planted fast-growing poplars to stabilize deforested and eroding river banks. When the trees were seen to be riddled with the pest, they were felled, economically converted into shipping pallets and exported around the globe. Canada, here they come!

The Numbers Tell the Story

1. Canada's ranking in Osama bin Laden's "hit" parade : 5th of 7 "Crusader" enemies
2. Number of those countries to so far escape an attack : one, Canada
3. Number of Canadian land border crossings : 147
4. Number of these patrolled by a single guard : 92
5. Estimated amount of cargo actually inspected in our ports : 1%
6. Ratio change in suspected terror funding finance activity in Canada this year : threefold increase, to \$70-million
7. Estimated cost of carrying out the 9/11 terror attacks : \$500,000
8. Year in which the **Tamil Tigers** were outlawed by Cabinet : still waiting
9. Cost to Canadian taxpayers for **Paul Martin's** electioneering air travel : approximately \$1-million
10. Cost to taxpayers for a poll seeking means to limit sponsorship scandal damage : \$127,000
11. Percentage of halfway house parolees that escaped in 2002/03 : more than one-third
12. Percentage of those who committed new, violent crimes : at least 33%
13. Canada's overall recidivism rate : 43%
14. Canada's ranking among 100 most lenient countries in criminal sentencing : No 1
15. Number of houses, apartments and commercial units across Toronto known to have been used as large-scale grow operations this year : well over 1,000
16. Incidence of date-rape drugging assaults against teenage girls, 1998 : 15 per 100,000
17. Incidence of date-rape drugging assaults against teenage girls, 2002 : 59.3 per 100,000
18. Amount Ottawa spent on the residential school claim file last year : \$61-million
19. Amount actually paid out on claims : \$16.5-million
20. Ratio of dollars spent on payouts against administration costs : \$1 to \$4
21. Liquor prices to consumer in Ontario's government-run stores : next to highest (Manitoba)
22. Liquor prices to consumer in Alberta's privately owned stores : lowest
23. Net 2002 revenue generated by Ontario liquor retailing : \$0.93 per litre
24. Net 2002 revenue generated by Alberta liquor retailing : \$1.77 per litre
25. Quebec's **GDP** performance over the past 20 years : 20% decline
26. Alberta's **GDP** performance over the past 20 years : 51% growth
27. Public safety as a stated priority for the **Canadian Firearms Centre**
28. Amount the Centre has budgeted for safety education next year : \$0
29. Amount the Centre has budgeted for public relations communications strategies, salaries, travel, conferences, hospitality, professional services : \$3-million

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Meet The Takfirs

"I will do such things ... What they are yet I know not -- but they shall be the terrors of the earth." The vague menaces of **King Lear** make an appropriate introduction to **Takfir** ideology. There are indications that **Mohammed Bouyeri** (the man arrested for the grisly dispatch of **Theo van Gogh**) was an adherent much given to hosting get-togethers of immigrants influenced by **Takfir** ideology. When the apartment of two members of his study circle was raided, a grenade was lobbed at police. And yet, the Amsterdam-born Bouyeri has been described as "a typical second-generation child of Moroccan parents, "a good student," whose "family attended a moderate mosque." (TIME Europe, November 22, 2004) This apparent contradiction -- of outwardly assimilated operatives waging *jihād* -- was noted when the 19 suicide hijackers (kitted out in a style more reminiscent of **Ted Turner** than **Osama bin Laden**) spent their last night on earth yukking it up at various strip clubs and watering holes. Just what, and who then, are the **Takfirs**? "In existence since the 1960s, **al-Takfir wa al-Hijra** has offered intellectual inspiration to **al-Qaida** and other militant groups [Takfir's] ultra-radical Islamic ideology mixing zealot-like devotion and holy war creed is drawing more scrutiny in anti-terrorist probes from the Middle East to Europe -- with increasing indications that its base on the fringes of Islamic extremism could be widening. ... The uncompromising **Takfir** doctrine has been around for decades -- denouncing even moderate Muslims as 'infidels.' But global communications and louder militant voices could be offering fresh energy. It's part of larger worries about rising Islamic extremism in an **Internet** age when texts and sermons reach nearly everywhere and peripheral movements can quickly gather momentum. 'Authorities are looking in the wrong direction,' said **Azzaz Tamimi**, head of the **Institute of Islamic Political Thought** in London. 'Many Muslims feel under pressure. This pressure and anger can make people radicalized.' Extremism is not just with big terrorist groups. It's out on the streets and radical movements are easily tapping into it.' **Freedom House**, a New York-based human rights group, is preparing a report that it says examines documents distributed in some

American mosques containing denunciations against non-Muslims and fellow Muslims who show religious tolerance. **Takfir**, literally 'excommunication,' refers to scorning societies perceived as corrupt and deserving retribution. *Hijra* refers to withdrawing from anything considered against Islam. The name was coined by Egypt's government-controlled press in the 1970s in an attempt to make it scary and alien to mainstream Muslims. **Takfir** is often described as part of the founding forces for today's major terrorist networks. But it's not easy to draw clear connections. Islamic researchers and scholars say terror groups may draw general encouragement from **Takfir's** militant dogma. But **Takfir's** core followers -- an unknown number that could be in the thousands, experts say -- are too renegade and insular to offer practical support to networks such as **al-Qaida**. **Takfir** denunciations, in fact, often cover anyone who is not a committed follower, including **al-Qaida** leader **Osama bin Laden** -- although his chief lieutenant, the Egyptian-born **Ayman al-Zawahri**, is reportedly a **Takfir** follower and has lectured on its tenets. [Where, we can't help but wonder, do the Khadrs -- Canada's self-professed al-Qaida family -- stand on Takfir ideology? The now-deceased father was likewise Egyptian-born] 'They consider themselves the only Muslim group,' said **Diaa Rashwan**, a Cairo-based expert on Muslim militants. And here lies a serious challenge for authorities. The **Takfir** movement's limitless suspicion of outsiders and elusive tactics create huge complications for monitoring and infiltrating. Among **Takfir** precepts is '*taqiyya*,' or use of deceptions that include blending into non-Muslim societies. ... There's also worry about a trend toward smaller, independent **Takfir** cells that follow their own random agendas. 'Now we have a new generation of fundamentalists,' said **Mohamed Salah**, an expert on Islamic radicals and the Cairo bureau chief of the pan-Arab newspaper **Al-Hayat**. 'The atmosphere in the world now makes it easy for someone to get two or three people together and form a group.' **Takfir** has cropped up on the fringes of recent terrorist probes. In Jordan, one of 13 suspects accused of plotting to bomb American targets earlier this year is an alleged **Takfir** adherent. Moroccan officials have targeted **Takfir** followers in raids. Last year, French anti-terrorist agents detained more than a dozen suspected **Takfir** members. Also last year, Lebanese forces arrested dozens of suspects accused of planning to assassinate the U.S. ambassador and other plots. Some suspects were reportedly **Takfir** followers. Belgian investigators, meanwhile, are looking for possible ties between the Van Gogh slaying and threats against political figures including the justice minister and a lawmaker with Moroccan parents, **Mimount Bousakla**, who has challenged conservative Muslim social codes. Bousakla went into hiding after receiving anonymous calls that included a threat 'to ritually slaughter her,' Belgian officials said. ... 'You can't dismiss the influence of **Takfir** on contemporary terrorism at some level,' said **Omid Safi**, a religion professor at **Colgate University**. 'It brands everyone it opposes as an infidel -- including Muslims -- and that makes it that much easier to inflict violence on them.' But he cautioned against making direct bonds between **Takfir** dogma and terrorist networks. 'It's there as part of the overall pathology of radical thinking. ... **Takfir** is just part of the destructive tendencies occurring now in Islam,' Safi said. There is no direct evidence showing how deeply **Takfir** ideology has infiltrated **al-Qaida** and other major Islamic radical factions, said **Peter Wright**, a lawyer and researcher at the **University of North Carolina** who has studied the movement's influence on terrorism. But **Takfir** could be increasingly squeezed by authorities struggling to control radical Islam and wage 'a pre-emptive war,' said Wright. 'In the present political climate, guilt by ideological association appears to be the path of least resistance ... if you express certain thoughts or maintain an association with individuals who do, you are a suspect.'" (Newsday, November 20, 2004) Thus do our freedoms vanish. Was it worth it?