

## INFORMATION BULLETIN

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**DATE: May 27, 2009**

**SUBJECT: Napolitano's Visit to Canada**

**SOURCE: CBC News**

Federal Public Safety Minister Peter Van Loan defended his U.S. counterpart on Wednesday after a meeting on joint border security, saying Canadians would be naive to think the threat of terrorism is behind them.

Van Loan's comments came during a press conference in Ottawa, shortly after U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano again corrected herself on earlier comments she made suggesting some of the hijackers in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks entered the U.S. through Canada.

Van Loan said the latest bombing in Pakistan shows "terrorism is the reality of the world right now."

"I do want to caution people that they would be naive to believe that these threats of terrorism are behind us," he said.

The minister then cited the convictions of Ottawa software engineer Momin Khawaja and the first of the so-called "Toronto 18" trials alleged as examples of extremist plots emerging within Canada.

"There are very real terrorist threats and some of them, we have to confess to ourselves in Canada, are homegrown," Van Loan said. "That's evidence we cannot ignore."

### **9/11 comments, Khadr not discussed with PM**

Napolitano made the comment in an interview last month with CBC's Washington correspondent, Neil Macdonald.

Speaking on Wednesday, Napolitano said her earlier comments were not brought up during her meeting with Canadian officials or Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

"We know, and I know that 9/11 terrorists did not cross the Canadian border," she said. "I regret that the Canadian media only seems to hear that earlier misstatement by me to that effect."

"But what you also need to hear are all the things we are doing with Canada and continue to do with Canada to further our joint security."

Van Loan said the Canadian government has accepted Napolitano's clarification.

"I think the secretary has made her position quite clear and she corrected earlier on, and we've moved on," he said.

Napolitano also said neither Harper nor Canadian officials brought up the case of Toronto-born Omar Khadr, the only Westerner remaining at the U.S. detention centre at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

"That matter did not come up and I don't think it would be appropriate for me to comment on any case right now, thank you," she said.

Khadr, 22, a Canadian citizen, has been at the Guantanamo Bay facility since 2002, when he was picked up by U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan. He's alleged to have thrown a grenade that killed an American soldier during a battle.

Since 2002, more than 500 Guantanamo Bay detainees have been transferred to at least 30 nations to be prosecuted, rehabilitated or released.