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Britons too lax: Expert

'They were caught with their pants down'

By KEVIN CONNOR, TORONTO SUN

BRITISH OFFICIALS are to blame for allowing the terrorist attacks in London's subway system this week, a U.S. security expert says.

"They should have known something was going to happen with the G8 summit and the Olympics announcement," said Ty Fairman, a terrorism expert with the U.S.-based National Security and Intelligence Society.

He's a keynote speaker at the 15th World Conference on Disaster Management being held in Toronto next week.

"The Olympics are a political issue and the perfect time to hit a country. They should of had a condition orange for at least a week.

"No one attacks during condition orange. I'm surprised at the lack of security. They weren't vigilant and had a total disregard for the terrorist movement. They were caught with their pants down."

Fairman said Londoners can share some blame because public vigilance was lacking.

"They became calm and put their hands down and simply relied on the police, which isn't fair," Fairman said.

Ontarians must learn from what happened in London, said Chief Armand La Barge, president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police.

THREAT WITHOUT BORDERS

"(We) must be vigilant in light of the attacks ... those who perpetrate terrorist acts operate across political and cultural borders," La Barge said.

"While there is no information at present that would indicate that Ontario is at risk from a terrorist attack, we must remain vigilant in our efforts against terrorism."

Experts from 50 countries planning to attend next week's disaster conference will stress the importance of investing in disaster prevention and mitigation, and raise the bar in emergency management.

Although the issue of the London bombing can't be avoided, the topic won't be on the conference's agenda until next year.

"We are still in the early days to be able to discuss an event like London. It takes a while to get sufficient information to discuss the event properly," said Adrian Gordon, executive director of the Canadian Centre for Emergency Preparedness.

"We have folks coming in (to the conference) from the U.K., including a senior officer with London's anti-terrorism branch, who will give us an update."

Lessons will be learned from the London attack and will be applied to Canadian security measures, said Cherie Traverse with Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada.

The disaster management conference starts Monday and runs until Wednesday at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, south building.

To obtain more information, go online to wcdm.org.

