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Albertan held in Afghan terror probe

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An Alberta man arrested in Kabul and under investigation for possible ties to terrorism could face trial in Afghanistan depending on the outcome of the police probe, Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada said yesterday.

Sohail Qureshi, 24, who graduated with a degree in computer science from the University of Calgary last year, was taken into custody in the Afghan capital this week because of suspicions he had attended militant training camps in Pakistan.

In Halifax, Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay said the man was getting help from the Canadian embassy in Kabul. "At this point in time, for privacy reasons, we're not at liberty to say a lot about this case, but it is somewhat unusual." A Canadian citizen of Pakistani heritage, Qureshi left the country three months ago and did not return as planned in April. Omar Samad, Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada, cautioned that his government was still trying to confirm the identity of the man arrested by Afghan police.

"It seems that he may have left Canada prior to going to Pakistan and is of South Asian origin, who may have immigrated from another country to Canada," the ambassador said.

"This is not the first time that we see individuals that may have citizenship of a Western country, or any country, but also sympathies to radicalism and sympathies with terrorist organizations," Samad said.

"We've had all kinds of people in the past with this type of involvement. That's why it's so important for all of us, and for all countries to be very careful in not being too lax." He said the investigation was still in the early stages, but that if police forward the case to the attorney general for prosecution, the Canadian will be given a defence lawyer.

Albertan held in terror probe

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BYLINE: Stewart Bell
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 243

An Alberta man arrested in Kabul and under investigation for possible ties to terrorism could face trial in Afghanistan depending on the outcome of the police probe, Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada said yesterday.

Sohail Qureshi, 24, who graduated with a degree in computer science from the University of Calgary last year, was taken into custody in the Afghan capital this week because of suspicions he had attended militant training camps in Pakistan.

In Halifax, Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay said the man was getting help from the Canadian embassy in Kabul. "At this point in time, for privacy reasons, we're not at liberty to say a lot about this case, but it is somewhat unusual."

A Canadian citizen of Pakistani heritage, Qureshi left the country three months ago and did not return as planned in April. Omar Samad, Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada, cautioned that his government was still trying to confirm the identity of the man arrested by Afghan police.

"It seems that he may have left Canada prior to going to Pakistan and is of South Asian origin, who may have immigrated from another country to Canada," the ambassador said.

"This is not the first time that we see individuals that may have citizenship of a Western country, or any country, but also sympathies to radicalism and sympathies with terrorist organizations," Samad said.

"We've had all kinds of people in the past with this type of involvement. That's why it's so important for all of us, and for all countries to be very careful in not being too lax."

Canadian held in Afghan terror probe

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BYLINE: Stewart Bell
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 320

An Alberta man arrested in Kabul and under investigation for possible ties to terrorism could face trial in Afghanistan depending on the outcome of the police probe, Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada said yesterday.

Sohail Qureshi, 24, who graduated with a degree in computer science from the University of Calgary last year, was taken into custody in the Afghan capital this week because of suspicions he had attended militant training camps in Pakistan.

In Halifax, Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay said the man was getting help from the Canadian Embassy in Kabul. "At this point in time, for privacy reasons, we're not at liberty to say a lot about this case, but it is somewhat unusual."

A Canadian citizen of Pakistani heritage, Qureshi left the country three months ago and did not return as planned in April. Omar Samad, Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada, cautioned that his government was still trying to confirm the identity of the man arrested by Afghan police.

"It seems that he may have left Canada prior to going to Pakistan and is of South Asian origin, who may have immigrated from another country to Canada," the ambassador said.

"This is not the first time that we see individuals that may have citizenship of a Western country, or any country, but also sympathies to radicalism and sympathies with terrorist organizations," Samad said.

"We've had all kinds of people in the past with this type of involvement. That's why it's so important for all of us, and for all countries to be very careful in not being too lax."

He said the investigation was still in the early stages, but that if police forward the case to the attorney general for prosecution, the Canadian will be given a defence lawyer. Afghanistan has already assured the Canadian Embassy in Kabul it will have full consular rights to visit the man, he said.

Canada's intelligence service has been warning the government about what it calls the growing number of Canadians adopting extremist beliefs that advocate violence in the name of the Islamic faith.

Albertan in Afghan jail may face trial; 24-year-old terror suspect a computer science graduate

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EDITION: National
SECTION: Canada
PAGE: A6
BYLINE: Stewart Bell
SOURCE: National Post, with files from CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 779

An Alberta man arrested in Kabul and under investigation for possible ties to terrorism could face trial in Afghanistan depending on the outcome of the police probe, Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada said yesterday.

Sohail Qureshi, 24, who graduated with a degree in computer science from the University of Calgary last year, was taken into custody in the Afghan capital this week because of suspicions he had attended militant training camps in Pakistan.

"I knew him as an acquaintance," said Shiraz Khan, president of the Muslim Students Association (MSA) at the Calgary campus. "I'd see him in the hall, say 'Hi,' talk to him now and then.

"I didn't know him that well. He wasn't that involved in MSA. He would just help out in events, that was pretty much it. He was a quiet guy, mostly, kept to himself ... He wasn't too talkative or anything like that."

In Halifax, Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay said the man was getting help from the Canadian embassy in Kabul. "At this point in time, for privacy reasons, we're not at liberty to say a lot about this case, but it is somewhat unusual."

A Canadian citizen of Pakistani heritage, Mr. Qureshi left the country three months ago and did not return as planned in April. Omar Samad, Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada, cautioned that his government was still trying to confirm the identity of the man arrested by Afghan police.

"It seems that he may have left Canada prior to going to Pakistan and is of South Asian origin, who may have immigrated from another country to Canada," the ambassador said.

Throughout the 1990s, thousands of foreigners made their way to Afghanistan to train at the network of paramilitary and terrorist camps run by Osama bin Laden and affiliated anti-Western terrorists.

Since the collapse of the Taliban in 2001, the training camps have shifted across the border to the lawless tribal areas of Pakistan and to Kashmir. Several Canadians are believed to have trained in recent years at camps run by Pakistani-based Islamist groups such as Lashkar-e-Tayyiba.

"This is not the first time that we see individuals that may have citizenship of a Western country, or any country, but also sympathies to radicalism and sympathies with terrorist organizations," Amb. Samad said.

"We've had all kinds of people in the past with this type of involvement. That's why it's so important for all of us, and for all countries to be very careful in not being too lax."

He said the investigation was still in the early stages but that if the police forward the case to the attorney general for prosecution, the Canadian will be given a defence lawyer. Afghanistan has already assured the Canadian embassy in Kabul it will have full consular rights to visit the man, he said.

Alberta was home to one of Canada's most notorious terror suspects, Kassem Daher, a former cinema owner who is wanted in Florida for his alleged role as a terrorist financier and recruiter in the 1990s. He now lives in Lebanon.

Canada's intelligence service has been warning the government about what it calls the growing number of Canadian adopting extremist beliefs that advocate violence in the name of the Islamic faith.

The dangers of so-called homegrown terrorism were highlighted following last summer's arrest of 17 suspects charged with belonging to an "al-Qaeda inspired" terrorist group that was allegedly planning truck bombings in downtown Toronto.

"The threat to Canada from homegrown Islamist extremism has been on the rise," says a "secret" report prepared for Prime Minister Stephen Harper last year. The report said those undergoing radicalization often display physical and psychological changes such as criticizing anyone who does not share their views and withdrawing from the larger community.

Imam Reda Bedeir of the Calgary Islamic Center said yesterday he recalled a father coming to him last year to ask for help with his son.

"I think I saw the man," the imam said. "He said 'my son has some strange ideas,' because in the mosque where I am leading, we never get the kids to think in such a way.

"We're always trying to tell them Islam means peace and what's going on in the world is not going to be stopped with more violence. Our message is very clear to them but unfortunately some young people, they become desperate and they have bad company and then they end up, they have certain beliefs in their minds and it's very hard for you to argue with them."

He said he had agreed to help the man and his son but that it never went any further. "I talked to him. I said, 'What happened, are you serious about the appointment?' He said, 'Yes but I am trying with my son,' and nothing happened after that. He never came back to me again. Maybe by that time he had already gone or something."

Foreign Affairs said consular officials had already visited the man. A Defence Department spokesman said Kabul police arrested the man.

KEYWORDS:

WAR; TERRORISM; CANADIANS; PRISONERS OF WAR;
CRIME; AFGHANISTAN; CANADA; ALBERTA

Alberta man may be tried in Afghanistan; Former U of C student suspected militant

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BYLINE: Stewart Bell
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 257

An Alberta man arrested in Kabul and under investigation for possible ties to terrorism could face trial in Afghanistan depending on the outcome of a police probe, Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada said Friday.

Sohail Qureshi, 24, who graduated with a degree in computer science from the University of Calgary last year, was taken into custody in the Afghan capital this week because of suspicions he had attended militant training camps in Pakistan.

Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay said the man was getting help from the Canadian embassy in Kabul. "At this point in time, for privacy reasons, we're not at liberty to say a lot about this case, but it is somewhat unusual."

A Canadian citizen of Pakistani heritage, Qureshi left the country three months ago and did not return as planned in April. Omar Samad, Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada, cautioned that his government was still trying to confirm the identity of the man arrested by Afghan police.

"It seems that he may have left Canada prior to going to Pakistan and is of South Asian origin, who may have immigrated from another country to Canada," the ambassador said.

Throughout the 1990s, thousands of foreigners made their way to Afghanistan to train at the network of paramilitary and terrorist camps run by Osama bin Laden and affiliated anti-Western terrorists.

Several Canadians are believed to have trained in recent years at camps run by Pakistani-based Islamist groups such as Lashkar-e-Tayyiba.

The dangers of so-called homegrown terrorism were highlighted following last summer's arrest of 17 suspects charged with belonging to an "al-Qaida-inspired" terrorist group that was allegedly planning truck bombings in downtown Toronto.

U of C grad terror suspect; Afghanistan police probe man's ties to terrorist camp

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KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM; CANADIANS; PRISONERS OF WAR; FOREIGN AID; CRIME; AFGHANISTAN; CANADA; PAKISTAN

BYLINE: Stewart Bell

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 404

A Calgary man arrested in Kabul and under investigation for possible ties to terrorism could face trial in Afghanistan depending on the outcome of the police probe, Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada said Friday.

Sohail Qureshi, 24, who graduated with a degree in computer science from the University of Calgary last year, was taken into custody in the Afghan capital this week because of suspicions he had attended terrorist training camps in Pakistan.

In Halifax, Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay said the man was getting help from the Canadian Embassy in Kabul.

"At this point in time, for privacy reasons, we're not at liberty to say a lot about this case, but it is somewhat unusual."

A Canadian citizen of Pakistani heritage, Qureshi left the country three months ago and did not return as planned in April.

Omar Samad, Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada, cautioned that his government was still trying to confirm the identity of the man arrested by Afghan police.

"It seems that he may have left Canada prior to going to Pakistan and is of South Asian origin, who may have immigrated from another country to Canada," the ambassador said.

"This is not the first time that we see individuals that may have citizenship of a western country, or any country, but also sympathies to radicalism and sympathies with terrorist organizations," Samad said.

"We've had all kinds of people in the past with this type of involvement. That's why it's so important for all of us, and for all countries, to be very careful in not being too lax," Samad said.

He said the investigation was still in the early stages, but that if police forward the case to the attorney general for prosecution, the Canadian will be given a defence lawyer.

Afghanistan has assured the Canadian Embassy in Kabul it will have full consular rights to visit the man, he said.

Throughout the 1990s, thousands of foreigners made their way to Afghanistan to train at the network of paramilitary and terrorist camps run by Osama bin Laden and affiliated anti-western terrorists. Since the collapse of the Taliban in 2001, the training camps have shifted across the border to the lawless tribal areas of Pakistan and to Kashmir.

Several Canadians are believed to have trained in recent years at camps run by Pakistani-based Islamist groups such as Lashkar-e-Tayyiba.

Canada's intelligence service has been warning the government about what it calls the growing number of Canadians adopting extremist beliefs that advocate violence in the name of the Islamic faith.

The dangers of so-called homegrown terrorism were highlighted following last summer's arrest of 17 suspects charged with belonging to an "al-Qaeda-inspired" terrorist group that was allegedly planning truck bombings in downtown Toronto.

The Department of Foreign Affairs said consular officials had already visited the man.

A Defence Department spokesman said Kabul police arrested the man.

Alberta man held in Afghan terror probe; Suspect getting help from embassy in Kabul

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BYLINE: Stewart Bell
SOURCE: National Post, with files from CanWest News Service
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An Alberta man arrested in Kabul and under investigation for possible ties to terrorism could face trial in Afghanistan depending on the outcome of the police probe, Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada said yesterday.

Sohail Qureshi, 24, who graduated with a degree in computer science from the University of Calgary last year, was taken into custody in the Afghan capital this week because of suspicions he had attended militant training camps in Pakistan.

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"It seems that he may have left Canada prior to going to Pakistan and is of South Asian origin, who may have immigrated from another country to Canada," the ambassador said.

Throughout the 1990s, thousands of foreigners made their way to Afghanistan to train at the network of paramilitary and terrorist camps run by Osama bin Laden and affiliated anti-western terrorists.

Since the collapse of the Taliban in 2001, the camps have shifted across the border to the lawless tribal areas of Pakistan and to Kashmir. Several Canadians are believed to have trained there in recent years.

Mr. Samad said the investigation was still in the early stages, but that if police forward the case to the attorney general for prosecution, the man will be given a defence lawyer. Afghanistan has already assured the Canadian Embassy in Kabul it will have full consular rights to visit the man, he said.