

AR THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 13, 2007

WORLD

Grenade hits U.S. Embassy in Athens

No one injured; far-left militants blamed for attack

BY DEKES GATAPPOLOS

ATHENS — A rocket-propelled grenade slammed into the U.S. Embassy yesterday, causing limited damage and no injuries, but reviving fears of a resurgence of far-left Greek militant groups that carried out deadly attacks over three decades.

The shoulder-fired missile narrowly missed a large blue-and-white U.S. seal on the embassy's facade and damaged a third-floor bathroom near the ambassador's office.

U.S. Ambassador Charles Rice called the attack "very serious" and said no warning had been given.

"There can be no justification for such a senseless act of violence," he told reporters outside the embassy closed for the day. "The good news is no one was hurt and there was minimal damage."

Greek opposition blamed the attack on militant groups that have carried out a bombing campaign against police and government buildings despite crackdowns on terrorism here since the Athens Olympics in 2004.

Police are examining the authenticity of the calls claiming responsibility from the group Revolutionary Struggle, which has carried out six bombings since 2002. The ideology group has criticized the United States in its past statements, citing treatment of prisoners at the U.S. military detention centre at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

"It is very likely that this is the work of a domestic group," Public Order Minister Vangelis Dopolonas said. "We believe this effort to revive terrorism is deplorable and will not succeed."

State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said the United States also saw no early

signs of international involvement. The Pentagon received a report on the attack, but no request for any action, a U.S. military official said.

The blast shortly before 4 a.m. shattered windows in nearby buildings. Traffic in the downtown area came to a standstill for hours as police blocked streets around the building to gather evidence — dusting cars for fingerprints and gathering discarded clothing, guns and cigarette butts from the street.

The government said it was seeking permission from the courts to view video from traffic cameras, which under Greek privacy laws is officially excluded from the police investigation.

The attack resembled murders used by members of the far-left terrorist group November 17, who staged police beatings in 1975 and eventual capture and conviction in 2002.

But the type of weapon used has not been seen in previous Greek attacks. Police identified a lone perpetrator as a 34-year-old, "propaganda" graduate that was made in China in the 1970s from a Russian design.

Public opposition in U.S. officials — and the location of the attack in a particular area — has attracted strong in Greece since Washington provided support for a 1974 military dictatorship.

Government and opposition party officials strongly condemned the attack, the third against the U.S. Embassy since the mid-1970s.

Foreign Minister Demis Halkias wrote to the crime, and expressed "the solidarity of the Greek people" for the "heinous act."

State television said she wrote to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and the work of a domestic group, Public Order Minister Vangelis Dopolonas said. "We believe this effort to revive terrorism is deplorable and will not succeed."

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'I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD BE AN ISSUE'



U.S. air force staff Sgt. Michelle Manhart, above, says she didn't do anything wrong by posing in the nude for Playboy magazine's February issue.

Staff sergeant suspended after posing for Playboy

SAN ANTONIO — A U.S. air force staff sergeant who posed nude for Playboy magazine has been relieved of her duties while the military investigates.

In February's issue, hitting newsstands this week, Michelle Manhart is photographed in uniform posing and holding weapons under the headline "Tough Love." The following pages show her partially clothed, wearing her dog tags while

U.S. judge clears way to sue Vatican

Sex abuse victims' cases can proceed

LOUISVILLE, Kentucky — Three men who accuse Catholic priests of sexually abusing them in childhood can pursue damages from the Vatican in a settlement lawsuit, a U.S. federal judge ruled.

The decision by U.S. District Judge John G. Heyburn II sets the men against the Vatican's top church officials should have warned the public or authorities about priests in the Louisville archdiocese who were suspected of abusing children.

William McMurry, the plaintiff lawyer, said the ruling this week could open the way to take depositions of Vatican officials and to obtain copies of church records and documents. "Our whole purpose is to hold the Vatican accountable," Mr. McMurry said.

Many lawsuits stemming from the clergy sex abuse crisis have accused the Pope, the Vatican and other high-ranking church officials as defendants.

But the Holy See is typically immune from the jurisdiction of U.S. courts under the U.S.-Vatican Sovereignty Immunity Act. Plaintiff lawyers, who have sought to challenge that protection, might now have a way to sue Vatican officials with the paper, among other legal problems.

Jeffrey Leno, a California-based lawyer for the Vatican, said the ruling was in many respects favourable to the Holy See because the remaining allegations rely on the supposed admission that U.S. bishops are agents of the Vatican. He predicted the claim would not be borne out in the case proceeds.

Vatican officials declined to comment.

Mr. McMurry is seeking to have the lawsuit certified as a class action, which would allow other victims to join the case. Mr. McMurry represented 241 sex abuse victims that settled with the archdiocese in 2003 for \$53 million.

Open door blamed in crash of business jet

LOS ANGELES — A small business jet crashed while taking off from Van Nuys Airport Tuesday, killing two people, officials said. A witness said the door of a new compartment on the plane had been open at the time it was launched.

The plane had been carrying only its two crew members when it went down around 11 a.m., said Joe Miller, a dispatcher with Sun Quest Executive Air Charter, which operated the plane. Fire department spokesman Ron Morris said two bodies were located in the wreckage.

The pilot declined to comment on their identities.

The plane's left-hand door, which was "wide open" as it took off, and the jet was veering side-to-side at a low speed, said witness Steve Par-

win, a corporate jet pilot with 20 years experience.

Little remained of the engine. Coast Guard helicopter debris in a field near the San Fernando Valley airport. No nearby structures appeared to be damaged.

The plane had been on its way to Long Beach.

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