

## Canadian soldiers track border-crossing insurgents



**Cars and trucks cross the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan in the community of Spin Boldak.**

*CTV.ca News Staff*

*Updated: Tue. Jun. 24 2008 10:24 PM ET*

Canadian soldiers have quietly walked across the Afghanistan-Pakistan border in a mountainous region dense with insurgents, to collect information from the Pakistani Army about suicide bombers and weapon smuggling.

Thousands of people cross between the two countries every day at the border community of Spin Boldak. Many often go unchecked and undetected.

The area is a critical trade route for the Taliban. According to intelligence officials, militants get sanctuary and training in Pakistan, and then cross into Afghanistan to attack NATO forces.

There has been a 40 per cent jump in the number of insurgent attacks in eastern Afghanistan this year, according to the U.S. military, and NATO countries are pressuring Pakistan to tighten the border.

Pakistan has assured NATO that it's tightening its grip on the area and may even build fences and lay mines at the most critical points.

U.S. Maj.-Gen. Jeffrey Schloesser told reporters in Washington on Tuesday there have been 40 deaths among uniformed and civilian coalition members in eastern Afghanistan since April.

He said the military is tracking insurgents, some of them Taliban members, who frequently move between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

This week, Afghan police captured two men from Pakistan who they accused of being would-be suicide bombers.

"(Police) stay on high alert and if they have any suspicions they'll take some action at the border," said Canadian soldier Capt. Francois Laroche. "It's part of their job."

Also on Tuesday, insurgents set ablaze a convoy transporting military supplies just south of Kabul.



**A Canadian soldier speaks with a Pakistani official near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. The Canadians have been collecting information about suicide bombers and weapon smuggling.**

According to Afghan officials, gunmen on motorcycles attacked the convoy as it passed near the town of Saydabad, located about 65 kilometres from the capital. The convoy was transporting food, water and fuel.

According to The Associated Press, nearly 2,000 people have died this year from violence linked to insurgents. That number includes more than 100 foreign troops, including Canadians.

*With a report from CTV's Janis Mackey Frayer in Spin Boldak*

© 2008  All Rights Reserved.