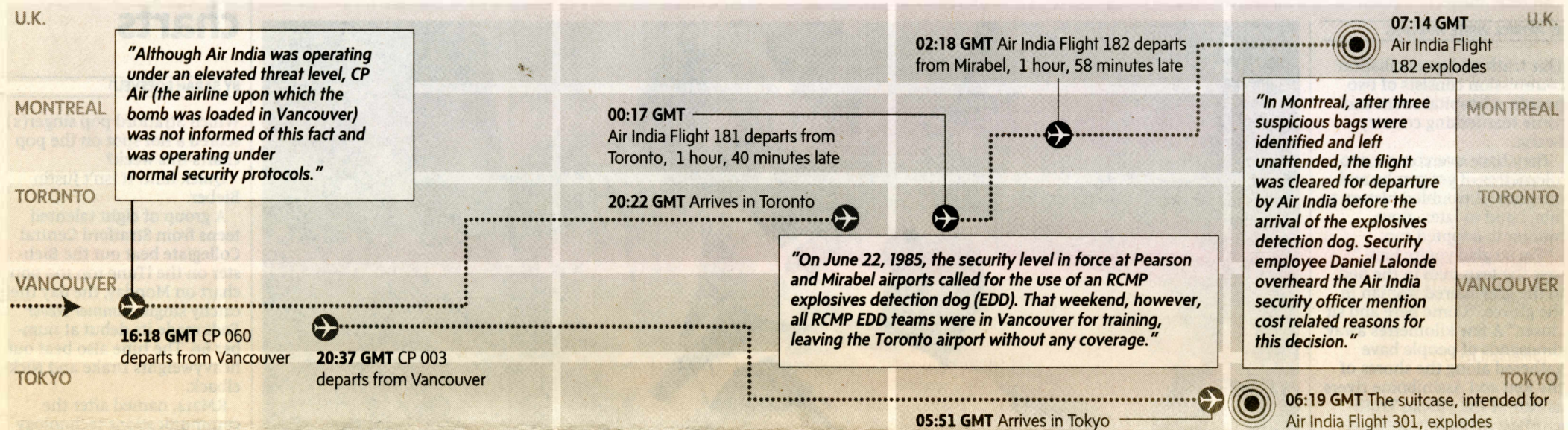


AIR INDIA REPORT

THE FINDINGS

JUNE 22

The bomb — hidden in checked baggage — goes from Vancouver to Toronto on a CP Air flight and then is loaded onto the Air India aircraft in Toronto. The flight makes a final stopover in Montreal.



JAMES BARTLEMAN

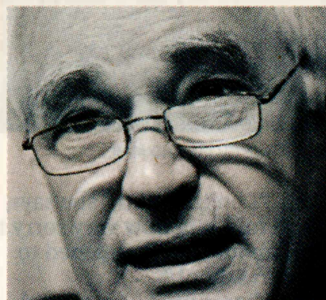
Inquiry vindicates former security director

BY BILL CURRY OTTAWA

Thanks in part to top-secret information from the government's eavesdropping agency that only surfaced after hearings closed, the Air India inquiry has vindicated the claims of former Ontario lieutenant-governor James Bartleman.

Mr. Bartleman delivered the most stunning testimony before the commission three years ago when, after nearly 23 years of silence, he disclosed that Ottawa knew days before the 1985 bombing that an Air India plane would be targeted for a flight leaving Canada.

At the time, he was director of security and intelligence for the Department of External Affairs, a position that involved reviewing reports from the Communications Security Establishment, which intercepts phone calls and other electronic signals abroad. He testified that when he took this information to the RCMP, he was "hissed" at and brushed aside.



James Bartleman's credibility was attacked after he claimed Ottawa knew days before the bombing that an Air India flight would be targeted. J.P. MOCZULSKI FOR THE GLOBE AND MAIL

In response, the government unleashed a full-throttle assault on his credibility — including critical testimony from the CSE. In their final brief to the commission, government lawyers dismissed Mr. Bartleman's story as "inaccurate."

But the head of the commission, Mr. Justice John Major, didn't buy it.

"On balance, the evidence

cited by the Attorney General of Canada to discredit James Bartleman was not persuasive," states the report. "The Commission accepts the evidence of Bartleman ... In accepting Bartleman's testimony, it is significant to note that he had nothing to gain by coming forward with his testimony, and stood only to suffer a loss to his reputation in facing government-wide efforts to impugn his credibility."

Mr. Major said the government attacks on Mr. Bartleman were "ineffectual" and the commission's lead counsel, Mark Freiman, called his testimony "courageous." Both the CSE and Public Safety Minister Vic Toews declined comment. "At this stage of the game, it's not a time for criticizing people who criticized me," Mr. Bartleman said Thursday. "I'm just very happy that I was able to be of assistance and I hope that will be helpful to the families of the victims."

In his report, Mr. Major said

Ottawa's attempt to raise questions about Mr. Bartleman's testimony through aggressive cross-examination was "entirely misguided."

"After the close of the hearings, the Commission became aware of relevant information in the possession of the Communications Security Establishment," states the report, which could not detail the information for national security reasons.

"A CSE witness who attempted to attack Bartleman's credibility asserted that he would have warned the government of any threat against an Air India flight. ... He was apparently unaware, however, of the existence of the CSE information about security measures being mandated for Air India operations ... in response to threats of sabotage by Sikh extremists..."

In the commission's view, this information led the commission to deem Mr. Bartleman's evidence as credible.

FROM PAGE 1 » ACCUSED

'I have nothing more to say'

For his co-accused, Ajaib Singh Bagri, it was just another morning to sleep, after a night shift at a mill in the B.C. interior.

For five years, Mr. Malik and Mr. Bagri have been free men. They were acquitted in March, 2005 after B.C. Supreme Court Justice Ian Bruce Josephson, hearing the case without a jury, said he did not find any of the key witnesses against the two men to be credible.

Only one man, Inderjit Singh Reyat, was convicted in the attack, linked to B.C.-based Sikh militants. Mr. Reyat was convicted of manslaughter and served five years.

Mr. Reyat was unavailable for comment on Thursday. Mr. Reyat's lawyer, Ian Donaldson, said he had not spoken to his client so could not comment on his views of the Major report. Mr. Donaldson

said Mr. Reyat, who is out on bail, has been employed in the past, but he did not know if that was still the case.

Mr. Malik said he had briskly listened to the "media" Thursday morning, but not enough to pick up an impression of the conclusions of the study, prepared over four years.

"One day, the weekend maybe," he said, reflecting on the question of when he would pay attention to the wide-ranging study that dominated official Ottawa.

Mr. Malik was less communicative when approached by a Globe and Mail at his office.

A woman manning the front desk went into his office to ask if he had more to say to the media. She then came out and said with polite resignation that he would not elaborate on his earlier comments.