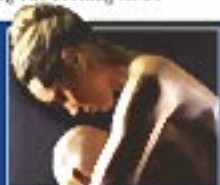




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HEALTH &amp; FITNESS: PAGES 34 &amp; 35



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PAGE 3



# BOMBER IN BID TO KILL U.S. LEADER

## Cheney is target as Taliban suicide blast kills soldiers

NICHOLAS COLE, Political Correspondent

**A TALIBAN suicide bomber was stopped just before he got near US vice-president Dick Cheney in Afghanistan today.**

Mr Cheney is due just 10 minutes' travel east of the firing point inside the US military base at Bagram when it was rocked by a massive explosion which killed at least 13 people.

The bomber is believed to have wanted the three security checkpoints on the main gate and was charged just before he got to the main gate.

The Taliban claimed they had specifically targeted the Cheney. There were reports that at least four US soldiers are among the dead.

The attack will be a huge embarrassment to security officials and raises the possibility of a leak. Mr Cheney was on an unannounced visit. The British have 40,000 troops based in one of the most heavily populated places in Afghanistan. A US spokesman



Continued on Page 2



Deadly: armed members of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Today they attacked a US military base

## Make London green capital of world says Ken

ROSS LYONS  
City Hall Editor

**KEN LIVINGSTONE today calls for more green spaces in the planet and calls London the greenest city in the world.**

He aims to put the capital's green spaces on the 2012 Olympic bid - even as last year's environmental targets for 2012.

■ An immediate increase in the amount of green spaces in the city would be a major benefit.

■ Environmental groups are likely to demand more green spaces during the Olympic bid.

■ The use of solar and wind power and possibly wave power from the Thames.

■ Making Londoners to think their cars and travel to work by bike or public transport.

Today a climate change action plan was unveiled for London, aimed at world leaders to help with government backing.

Mr Livingstone says at the Liberal Democrat conference in London yesterday: "Without a radical change of heart from the Labour government this action plan is barely worth the paper it's written on."

Mr Livingstone said his message was green in 2012.

He said the plan is based on the idea of green development in London.

The action plan "imposes the idea of green children and grandchildren that we can all get behind."

The message is that we have to act with great speed on environmental issues.

The plan is to deliver three key areas in London with the message that is required.

The message is that we have to act with great speed on environmental issues.

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# Innovation is the name of our game

Accenture sets the pace in the fast-growing consulting sector

By Mike James

**A**CCENTURE has set the pace in the consultancy market place since it began life as Andersen Consulting. The former provider of the audit function continues to be one of the best to work for, its staff proud and the walls red in colour in one area and an independent office.

It has led the consultancy industry into profitable areas such as IT in the 1980s and e-business. This is not to say that the firm has not continued to diversify in both the traditional model and the new frontiers.

Now Accenture faces a different set of challenges, in order to grow from a position of market leadership. In a market that is becoming more competitive, it is currently expanding US and across 50 States, becoming regional. "It's very important when you're the market leader to always be innovative," says Mike James, the former head of global public sector services, who has now moved to head global.

As a result, Accenture is reducing its operating costs, which in some ways has been a real challenge, indeed it's not easy to do.

There has been a "We are in the process of moving to a new model which will look at growth in the three dimensions of our business: business, technology, systems integration and customer relationships," he says.

This new Accenture will not only be concentrating its resources into three "growth platforms", but also diversifying into areas of the market that were not in its core portfolio.

It has a number of initiatives in place to support this, including a geographical one. "We're expanding our



Global public sector services head David Thomason

global services but global clients too. Some 200,000 is a common number."

Mark of innovation is client growth. A number of business units have been established, and with many that have a history of revenue within the public sector. Thomason is aware that it can be seen as the dominant provider of the regulatory support to industry and remains one part of the group.

"Our policy, with our clients is delivering value performance and we do this by bringing all of our capabilities to bear on our clients. In business, we believe we do this with great success because human performance and energy that's driving different parts of our firm are getting together with systems integration. We have the global expertise to give them the support they need. Our intention is to deliver and we go to our clients to deliver."

Thomason says that while other firms offer these services, Accenture remains in them. "We're not a one-off in any of these areas but it's how

**"We help with strategy, human performance and supply chain"**

David Thomason, Accenture MD

we integrate them to deliver high performance that makes us unique," he says. "We serve our clients across traditional and alternative platforms."

It is this breadth of capabilities that Thomason believes will help drive new and old customers to an interest in global public sector.

Not the least of these comes from the "big five" proprietary firms who are still their competitors but who are now trying to compete in alternative areas.

"I don't see those trends in public sector as a challenge because we are in a very different proposition for the individuals concerned," he says. "Are you in one area with reports or a delivery value?" he comes from the background of the advisory business but now he has the global breadth and depth to deliver results.

**O**NE OF the challenges that Accenture faces is public sector IT. In the public sector, Thomason joined the firm in 1988 and was able to establish himself with every partner and manage operations for the next 10 years to support 10,000 people worldwide, more than one of every four in the UK one way or the other. The firm intends to add 1,000 in that area this year.

"I have just launched a new vision for our operations drive across all our services," says Thomason. Although Accenture has traditionally had a very strong policy to start a new job in government, it will now

be a balance. "If you're a bank that has revenue growth and we see some revenue in public sector, it could be one way you come out of business in our competition."

A new programme, Accenture Careers Trust, will promote the firm across the market. In one Accenture initiative to grow and maintain its lead in consultancy in the industry? "It is very optimistic about our business in the UK and Ireland and that's why we're having this investment drive," says Thomason. "It's about the confidence of significant growth is that we have delivered our clients and delivered best value to them."

## CONSULTANTS DRIVING CHANGE

**IMPLEMENTING** the Government's change agenda has created huge amounts of work for the consultancy industry. With so many projects underway, it's inevitable that some will run into trouble. Unfortunately, press coverage has tended to focus on a high-profile failure, without any counterbalancing reports of success. However, the facts have been looking up every year since we last reported on the sector.

As the recent public sector secretary David Davies and his backbench body bludgeoned the public sector, it's easy for the issue to become a political football.

Fortunately, a recent report from the National Audit Office (Central Government's use of Consultants) has put the issue in a different perspective, and also set out a path for more effective partnership between the public sector and the consultancy industry.

Noting that the sheer range of work that consultants do "cannot be fit a widespread form by government bodies to assess projects makes it hard to obtain an accurate assessment of the benefits government has so far achieved in using consultants."

The report nonetheless noted that the best practice in the purchase of consultancy was gradually, if slowly, spreading through departments. "While there have been some important improvements in using consultants... there is still some way to go before central government overall is achieving good value for money."

The NAO estimates that by continuing to adopt best practice, the government could achieve savings and benefits equating to 10 per cent of the consultancy spend in the last year, rising to 30 per cent over a three year period.

It is an approach that has been welcomed by trade bodies, which have been working behind the scenes for years to

promote best practice in the procurement of major IT projects. Indeed it is to be hoped that the NAO's findings will be taken up by other stakeholders such as civil service unions to understand both the possibilities of including and the procurement environment. Taking a "technology neutral" position, it has looked more than 10 concept visibility workshops, helping to release opinions on what public sector customers want.

"I think we must encourage dialogue between customers and suppliers at a much earlier stage," says National Director Nick Bagnall. "If you don't have those discussions at the procurement stage then it prevents a smooth implementation."

Many suppliers believe we are now entering a new period of public sector projects.

"I'm very upbeat about what's been happening over the past couple of years. There's been a radical change in government," says Gareth Bates, head of Public Sector Consulting services at

Capgemini.

"We're seeing increasing professionalism within the public sector and central government... with initiatives such as the creation of the Government chief information officer role and the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit. The Government is really jumping up and trying to do things better. One of the results of this increasing focus on professionalisation has been to get more senior officials to take charge of projects."

"You now have the role of the sector responsible senior manager projects, an expert level person who's not stopped in IT at all but focused on policy and business change," says Bates.

"They are teamed with a 'sector responsible executive' on the supplier side, and what that does is create a trusting relationship which is far more focused on outcomes and where realisation of contracts can be discussed and shared."



Upbeat Gareth Bates

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