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**Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council  
NEWSLETTER**



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## **Australian Report: Terrorists Could Target Shipping with Crude Nuclear Weapon**



Australian officials warned that terrorists could be planning to attack southeast Asia's shipping lanes with a "crude nuclear device or radiological bomb." According to an Australian government report released for the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) anti-terrorism conference in Manila, "There is clear evidence of al-Qaeda's interest in attacking economic assets as a means of undermining the global economy, including attacks against shipping." The report did not describe the evidence for its assessments nor indications of the availability of a weapon of mass destruction to terrorist groups. The ARF

conference, comprised of representatives from 23 member nations, focused on improving transport security against terrorist threats. Canberra indicated that southeast Asia remains a "front line in the fight against terrorism [and] more attacks that threaten the safety and security of regional communities are inevitable." The study concluded that regional terror group Jemaah Islamiah (JI) remains a serious threat and appears to be linked with terrorist groups from the Philippines to Pakistan. U.S. State Department Deputy Coordinator for Counterterrorism William Pope warned the ARF conference that terrorists may attack southeast Asian maritime targets, including commercial ships and ports. The area of gravest concern is the narrow Malacca Straits, which is the world's busiest shipping lane. Pope commented that terrorists may be "attracted to the softest targets of all – commercial shipping" with attacks similar to those against the USS Cole in 2000 and the 2002 bombing of a French supertanker.

### **ANALYSIS:**

Although more than 200 JI operatives have been arrested, Asian security experts warn that the organization has adopted new tactics, including decentralized decision-making that could enable it engage in a diverse attacks that would be more difficult to predict. The identification of a JI unit in Karachi, Pakistan and possibly affiliated with Pakistan-based terrorist group Lashkar-e-Tayyaba indicates the potential for greater capabilities. Acting Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Rafael Seguis, the host for the ARF conference, told reports that the member nations were examining technical, legislative and legal measures to enhance bilateral and multilateral coordination in anti-terrorism in the region. ASEAN nations, however, have been

criticized for their lax security systems and insufficient multilateral anti-terrorist structure. Singaporean and Australian officials have been the most vocal in warning of the danger of an oil tanker or liquified natural gas vessel being hijacked and used as a floating bomb to inflict cataclysmic damage on ports. Terrorists, acting in conjunction with regional pirates, could attacks ships in order to block the Malaccan Strait, a strategic target whose blockage would have worldwide economic repercussions.

*For a detail map of the area and more information on the Malaccan Strait, Malaysia, and Indonesia*

visit: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/mas/malaysia.htm>

Related reporting: <http://www.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=worldNews&storyID=4711396>

## Bombers Claim Inspiration from Osama Bin Laden

Four Malaysians who have admitted to being part of an Islamic terrorist group said on April 2 that a string of bombings and attacks against a variety of targets in Southeast Asia were inspired by Osama Bin Laden. One of the detainees, Mohamed Nasir Abbas, suggested that deadly bombings carried out in Bali in 2002 and Jakarta in 2003 were inspired by religious edicts, or *fatwas*, attributed to Bin Laden. The edicts supposedly urged followers to kill Americans. All four of the detained men have claimed to have received military training in Afghanistan. Nasir also identified Indonesian Muslim cleric Abu Bakar Bashir as the spiritual leader of JI and stated that Bashir and another JI leader, known as Hambali, relayed Bin Laden's orders. Hambali is currently in U.S. custody.

### COMMENT:

Nasir's comments, if true, support long-held suspicions by government and security officials that terrorist groups in Southeast Asia including Jemaah Islamiyah are tied to Bin Laden's Al-Qaeda network. Human rights groups, however, have suggested that the confessions may have been coerced calling into question their validity.

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## In The Spotlight: Jemaah Islamiah (JI)

<http://www.cdi.org/terrorism/ji.cfm>

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### Madrid suspects' photos released

Photos of six men wanted in connection with the Madrid train bombings have been released by Spain's Interior Ministry. International arrest warrants for the men have been issued by the judge investigating the 11 March attacks, which killed 191 people and injured around 1,800. The alleged mastermind behind the attacks, 36-year-old Moroccan Abdelkrim Mejjati, was not on the list of warrants. Mejjati (pictured with cell phone in hand) was convicted in absentia of the deadly bombings in Casablanca last year, which killed 33 people and 12 suicide bombers.

Full story: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3589399.stm>

Related reporting:

*Bombers warn of Spanish inferno*

<http://www.themercury.co.za/index.php?fSectionId=284&fArticleId=394134>

*Spain on Terror Alert Ahead of Easter Rush*

<http://news.scotsman.com/latest.cfm?id=2747430>

## Secret bunkers held chemical weapons, says Iraqi exile

A scientist describes Saddam's weapons and stealth technology programs, reports Russell Skelton. For seven years, before he was tortured and sentenced to death, Rashid (not his real name) worked at the top of Iraq's scientific establishment. He says he regularly met Saddam Hussein and his cousin and strongman deputy prime minister Abdul Tawab Huweish. After the Gulf War he was put in charge of a taskforce code named "Al Babel" to develop stealth technology to make aircraft and missiles undetectable on radar. Rashid, who now lives in Melbourne, also claims to have had access as a trusted insider to secret underground bunkers where chemical weapons were stored. "Saddam gave me access to everything, he was so desperate to perfect the stealth technology," he says. Now Rashid's great fear is that Saddam loyalists still active in postwar Iraq may get to the chemicals and weapons he saw hidden away before fleeing for his life.

Full story: <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/03/31/1080544556813.html?from=storyrhs>

## City's terror threats probed

In a small South Texas town, an illegal immigrant managing a convenience store aroused suspicion by asking customers about explosives -- enough to detonate several city blocks. Investigators said he was also collecting photos of skyscrapers, including ones in Houston. In Corpus Christi, investigators found 30 illegal immigrants from the Middle East hidden in the bowels of a large ship. The stowaways refused to say why they had come. And in The Woodlands, the owner of a \$350,000 house is about to be sentenced for leading a double life as an arms dealer for terrorists.

Full story: <http://www.chron.com/cs/CDA/ssistory.mpl/topstory2/2483164>

## Colombian arrested in deal to buy arms

A Colombian who allegedly tried to buy more than 6,000 machine guns, rifles, grenades, grenade launchers and pistols for the FARC guerrillas has been arrested in Tampa, U.S. authorities announced Friday. Carlos Gamarra-Murillo, 53, of Bucaramanga, was taken into custody Thursday by agents of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement after trying to complete the \$4 million transaction with U.S. agents posing as arms suppliers. The undercover operation began a year ago.

Full story: <http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/news/world/americas/8344676.htm>

## DHS, FBI warn of plot to attack U.S. mass transit this summer

The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a 1 April bulletin to officials and first responders nationwide warning of a plot to target mass transit in major U.S. cities this summer. The note, intended to be "law enforcement sensitive," was obtained by several news agencies the day after issuance and disseminated to the public. The note came in light of the 11 March attacks in Madrid and the recent discovery of a bomb, made from the same material as the March bombings, on train tracks from Madrid to Seville, CNN reported. The note specifically mentioned the targeting of buses and railways by using "improvised explosive devices, possibly constructed of ammonium nitrate and diesel fuel." The memo also noted that such devices are likely to be concealed in luggage, carry-on bags, and duffel bag and backpacks. The memo specifically noted that mass-transit attacks have occurred in Spain, Greece, Israel, and Turkey and also mentioned the 30 March London raids that resulted in the seizure of a thousand pounds of ammonium nitrate and the apprehension of eight terror suspects. In addition to the FBI/DHS memo, DHS issued an informational bulletin to law enforcement and private sector security authorities that provided suggested protective measures, such as random passenger inspections, security sweeps of stations, careful inspection of luggage and other items, checking parking lots for suspicious loitering, stolen or abandoned vehicles or vehicles left for extended times, and to removed trash receptacles from passenger terminals

### ANALYSIS:

The FBI/DHS bulletin will likely increase the daily security protocol for transit systems in the nation's largest cities. Although the memo mentions the specific targeting of railways, there is particular concern for the targeting of buses, the most abundant transportation method used in urban areas throughout the country. Since the attacks in Spain, U.S. railway security has been greatly criticized. Although DHS spent more than

\$115 million on rail and transit security in 2003, significantly higher figures were spent on aviation security as well as maritime and port security. Security chief for the American Public Transportation Association Greg Hull said on 2 April that the transit systems are at “code yellow-plus” following the bulletin, as reported by MSNBC. Officials said the message was pre-cautionary and based on “somewhat credible” threats, but would not likely raise the nation’s terror level. Another concern receiving less attention from authorities are the risks taken from leaked official memos, *The security bulletin specifically mentioned that the memo was to be issued only to the appropriate agencies yet several media outlets gained access to it. Such occurrences could potentially compromise security planning and preparations as well as tip-off potential terrorists.*

## **G8 Summit's impact on Georgia tourism, tranquility unclear**



Along the tree-canopied streets of Sea Island, helmeted children pedal bikes on perfect sidewalks past professionally landscaped homes that start at \$1 million. But in two months, this posh seaside community built for peace and relaxation will teem with armed security personnel as the world watches. The Group of Eight Summit descends on Georgia's coast June 8-10. The world's most powerful leaders, including President Bush, will meet at Sea Island while more than 1,000 delegates meet 60 miles away in Savannah. About 3,000 journalists also will come to Savannah, making the summit Georgia's largest media event since the 1996 Olympic Games. Thousands of federal, state and security personnel will be assigned to the summit. The wild card is protesters, and no one is quite sure how many of them will show up, but it also could be thousands.

Full story: <http://www.macon.com/mld/macon/news/8350526.htm?template=contentModules/printstory.jsp>

### ***Read the Anarchists perspective on the G8***

The G8 is coming back to the United States. Tens of thousands of people will converge once again on Georgia for mass protests against the G8, neoliberalism at home and abroad, and capitalism.

### ***Global Action Against Capitalism***

***“Nothing ever burns down by itself – Every fire needs a little bit of help”***

<http://www.infoshop.org/octo/index.html>

## **E.U. includes ELN in terrorist list**

Representatives from the European Union (E.U.) announced April 5 the inclusion of Colombia's National Liberation Army (ELN) guerrilla group on the E.U.'s terrorist list. The E.U. list includes the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrilla group and the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) paramilitaries. An E.U. official said the member nations delayed placing the ELN on the list until the group released a British citizen last December after holding him captive along with four Israeli tourists since September.

### **ANALYSIS:**

In the past several years, many European governments have facilitated negotiations between the ELN and the Colombian government. The inclusion of the ELN in the E.U. terrorist list, however, prevents the ELN from participating in similar negotiations as their status changed from a freedom fighter organization to a terrorist group. This classification essentially closes Europe's borders to the ELN leadership and prevents the organization from receiving international recognition and protection. The ELN's inclusion in this list, created after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the U.S., empowers E.U. member countries to seize the group's financial assets and bank accounts and initiate judicial proceedings against its members. The ELN was formed in 1965, and authorities estimate that approximately 5,000 militants comprise the organization, making it the second-largest guerrilla group in Colombia after the FARC.

## **Potential Bomb Plot Involved Deadly Chemical**

British authorities believe terror suspects arrested last week were planning to make a bomb that would include a highly toxic, easily obtained chemical called osmium tetroxide. Used primarily in laboratories for research, osmium tetroxide is known to attack soft human tissue and could blind or kill anyone who breathed its fumes. According to the New Jersey Department of Health, it is a colorless to pale yellow solid with a strong, unpleasant odor. "It's a nasty piece of work," said Dave Siegrist, a bioterrorism expert at the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies in Arlington, Va. "It irritates the eyes, lungs, nose and throat. It leads to an asthma-like death, what we call a 'dry-land drowning.' "

Full story: [http://abcnews.go.com/sections/WNT/Investigation/poison\\_bomb\\_plot\\_040405-1.html](http://abcnews.go.com/sections/WNT/Investigation/poison_bomb_plot_040405-1.html)

## **Despite successes against terrorism, new combatants still popping up worldwide**

The war on terror keeps rounding up terrorists, yet every day there appear to be more. Some 3,400 al-Qaida-linked operatives have been captured or killed in 100 countries since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on America, the State Department said last week. Now, officials believe, a new wave of threats is coming from dozens of smaller groups only loosely connected to the network but inspired by al-Qaida's message and methods. In the last week alone, authorities made arrests in the Philippines, Britain, Turkey and France, but new threats have been reported in the United States and Spain and deadly attacks occurred in Uzbekistan. The seemingly endless cycle of progress and setbacks stokes the debate over whether the Bush administration is using the proper strategy to fight the global battle

Full story: <http://ap.tbo.com/ap/breaking/MGAWTP2KPSD.html>

## **Featured Internet Site**

### ***The Great Lakes Information Network (GLIN)***

The Great Lakes Information Network (GLIN) is a partnership that provides one place online for people to find information relating to the binational Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region of North America.

<http://www.great-lakes.net/>