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**Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council
NEWSLETTER**



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Open Source News reporting Summary: This collection of open source information is offered for informational purposes only. It is not, and should not be, construed as official evaluated intelligence.

The Intelligence Mess: how it happened, what to do about it

Intelligence-gathering is something of a square peg in the round hole of contemporary political morality. It is about unearthing that which is willfully concealed, an enterprise that necessarily calls for invading privacy and inducing betrayal—discomfiting acts in an age that exalts the individual and his liberties above community and country. It is about assuming and preparing for the worst in an era that sees "bad" as an outmoded adjective for "different," another dash of enlivening spice in a rich social stew. Intelligence is gimlet eyes in a world of rose-colored glasses. Now, however, that foreign pathologies long denied have visited their excesses upon us, many among the benignly tolerant have turned overnight into the equivalent of ambulance-chasers. In particular, they have confidently laid at the door of America's intelligence apparatus the success of America's enemies on September 11, 2001.

Do not miss reading this story. Well worth the time.

Full story:

<http://www.benadorassociates.com/article/3100>

ACLU reveals secret suit over FBI powers

The American Civil Liberties Union disclosed on Wednesday it had secretly sued the government over a provision of the Patriot Act that allows the FBI to demand customer records from businesses without court approval. At issue is the power the FBI has to execute what is known as a "National Security Letter," a form of administrative subpoena used to demand confidential financial records from companies as part of terrorism investigations.

Full story:

<http://www.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=domesticNews&storyID=4977529§ion=news>

Patterns of Global Terrorism 2003

The annual "Patterns of Global Terrorism" report, released April 2004 by the Secretary of State and the Coordinator for Counterterrorism.

Read the full report at:

<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgtrpt/2003/>

Hamas agents lurking in U.S., FBI warns

Fears Rantisi's vow to attack may awaken operatives here

Hamas terrorist leader Ahmed al-Rantisi may be dead, but his vow to strike America is very much alive. Shortly before he was killed, Rantisi told an audience at the Islamic University in Gaza that President Bush and Prime Minister Sharon were "enemies of God," adding that "God declared war against America." On April 18, shortly after the Israelis killed Rantisi, another terrorist group, Hezbollah, released a statement that said: "The American administration, which provides cover, both moral and political, as well as material support to the murderous government in Tel Aviv, has direct responsibility for this crime." While that kind of rhetoric may sound typical for a terrorist leader in the Middle East today, it caught the attention of American counter-terrorist agents. In early 2002, the FBI concluded in an internal review that between 50 and 100 Hamas and Hezbollah operatives had already infiltrated America. The operatives were in America working on fund-raising and logistics, and they had received terrorist and military training from Lebanon and other countries in the Middle East, according to current and former intelligence officials. The FBI later concluded that Hamas and Hezbollah had the capacity to launch terrorist strikes on the homeland, but did not believe they intended to do so.

Full story:

<http://daily.nysun.com/Repository/getFiles.asp?Style=OliveXLib:ArticleToMail&Type=text/html&Path=NY/2004/04/29&ID=Ar00100>

Why Bin Laden's still free



In the past several weeks, international focus has returned to the dusty tribal regions of South Waziristan straddling the Afghan and Pakistani borders, long heralded as the primary lair of remaining Al Qaeda and allied Islamic militant fighters. As Pakistani and U.S. forces have squeezed these areas in a cross-border "hammer and anvil" campaign, speculation has also increased that senior Al Qaeda leaders, including Usama bin Laden and Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, have fled high into the mountains seeking sanctuary from the new coalition military threat. Any sense of relief at this news should be appropriately tempered: Bin Laden has not only trained and prepared for exactly this type of awkward confrontation for over two decades, moreover, he seems utterly convinced that he has a fair chance of eventually winning it.

Full story: <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,118550,00.html>

Panel says rail system vulnerable to attack

The region's rail system is highly vulnerable to a terrorist attack and has not received adequate federal funding to improve security, a panel of local and state officials concluded yesterday. "Five times as many people travel by train than by air, and yet airports have received \$11 billion and \$35 million has gone to rail"

Full story:

http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2004/05/01/panel_says_rail_system_vulnerable_to_attack/

Suspicious bags investigated by MTA

Five suspicious bags have been found unattended this year at Penn Station and other sensitive locations, prompting an investigation into whether they were left by terrorists attempting to gauge the city's response. The discovery of the empty bags led the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's counterterrorism task force to ask area police departments to report any similar occurrences.

Full story:

<http://www.nynewsday.com/news/local/transportation/nyc-nysuit033784047may03,0,4969441.story?coll=nyc-manheadlines-trans>

Liberal Muslim Scholar: The term 'Jihad' is misunderstood by Islamist clerics

In an article in the London Arabic-language daily Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, Dr. Abd Al-Hamid Al-Ansari, former dean of the Faculty of Islamic Law at the University of Qatar, stated that modern Islamic Fatwas (religious legal opinions) distort the meaning of Jihad to justify an aggressive ideology.

Read the full article at: http://www.virtualjerusalem.com/news/infocus/?disp_feature=rZnuRl.var

Enemy casing Texas for attack, U.S. fears

Intelligence reports indicate that some "Middle Eastern men" are casing big coastal oil refineries in Texas, leading some intelligence analysts in Washington to be fearful of a strike on one of the oil facilities before Election Day. According to raw intelligence reports obtained by The New York Sun — along with information from industry and law enforcement sources — dozens of individuals have been caught photographing or filming the perimeters of Texas oil facilities along the Gulf of Mexico in the last two years.

Full story:

<http://daily.nysun.com/Repository/getFiles.asp?Style=OliveXLib:ArticleToMail&Type=text/html&Path=NY/2004/04/30&ID=Ar00100>

High-speed ferry draws crowds in Rochester

A few thousand people lined the pier Tuesday for their first glimpse of the Spirit of Ontario 1, an Australian-built, twin-hulled catamaran that could be the first of several deluxe, high-speed, car-and-passenger ferries plying the Great Lakes. Two more high-speed car ferries will be launched in late spring -- one in Alaska, the other on Lake Michigan between Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Muskegon, Michigan -- and itineraries are under review in Hawaii; Cleveland, Ohio; Erie, Pennsylvania; Racine, Wisconsin and along the East and West coasts.

Full story: <http://www.cnn.com/2004/TRAVEL/04/28/high.speed.ferry.ap/>

Related reporting:

Terrorists blamed for deadly ferry fire in February

Philippine authorities have blamed a militant working with the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group for a Feb. 26 bombing and fire on board a ferry in Manila Bay that resulted in the deaths of 116 people. The Al Qaeda-linked group initially claimed responsibility for the attack, but authorities doubted the veracity of the claim as Abu Sayyaf has a history of claiming responsibility for the crimes of others. Authorities determined that an extremist, Redendo Cain Dellosa, planted explosive material inside a television that he placed aboard the ferry causing an explosion and fire. Dellosa was arrested on March 30 along with three other Abu Sayyaf militants on suspicion of plotting a large terrorist attack in Manila. He claimed responsibility for the ferry attack during intense questioning by police and intelligence officials. Investigators subsequently obtained information and testimony from others corroborating Dellosa's claim.

ANALYSIS:

The ferry attack represents the second deadliest single terror attack in Asia, behind the 2002 Bali bombing that killed 202 people. The attack also represents a significant success for Abu Sayyaf and demonstrates the group's evolution from a ragtag group of kidnappers operating primarily in the southern Philippines into an more effective terrorist organization. The confirmation of Abu Sayyaf involvement also renews concerns about Philippine authorities' ability to protect the country, especially the Manila metro region.

Related reporting:

Bomb threat received; ferry terminal evacuated

<http://www.silive.com/news/advance/index.ssf?/base/news/108376302859100.xml>

Los Angeles - D.C. flight may have been targeted for terror

Officials with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) announced May 3 that they have been scrutinizing United Airlines flight 200 for the past two weeks as a "flight of interest." The flight is scheduled to depart Los Angeles International Airport daily at 1555 local time and arrive in Dulles International Airport near Washington, D.C. at 2346. The TSA is reportedly "sanitizing" the flight with intensive searches and secondary security screenings of the pilots and flight attendants before they report to the flight deck.

COMMENT:

The level of security on the flight is comparable to that assigned to some international flights during the Christmas holiday period, even to the extent that TSA officials have posted bomb-sniffing dogs at the passenger gate. The TSA has not said why they are paying so much attention to flight 200.

Also see the following Related Reporting:

This is the first time that such security measures, including having pilots empty their pockets and scanning them with hand-held metal detectors, have been employed on domestic flights in the United States.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20040504-121635-1825r.htm>

Report warns of infiltration by Al Qaeda in U.S. prisons

Groups promoting extremist brands of Islam have gained a foothold in American prisons, and counterterrorism officials believe Al Qaeda are likely to try to use the prisons "to radicalize and recruit inmates," according to a Justice Department investigation. In a report from the Justice Department inspector general's office, investigators said safeguards were so loose in the 105 federal prisons that inmate chapels "remain vulnerable to infiltration by religious extremists." A copy of the report, to be released on Wednesday, was obtained by The New York Times

Full story:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/05/national/05CHAP.html?ex=1084334400&en=28a95a3f8ae91efd&ei=5062&partner=GOOGLE>

Featured Internet Site

MI5

This is the official website of the UK Security Service (MI5).

The Service is responsible for protecting the UK against threats to national security. This website provides information on the current major threats to UK security and expert security advice designed to help businesses and organizations protect against them.

<http://www.mi5.gov.uk/>