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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.

Sniffing out trouble

Suspicious about a new terrorist attack have U.S. spies scrambling

The chatter was persistent--and alarming. In the weeks after the deadly March bombings of four commuter trains in Madrid by al Qaeda operatives, the supersecret U.S. surveillance network, Echelon, intercepted a number of messages from suspected terrorists suggesting planning for a massive, multipronged assault on the United States. When? Between this summer's political conventions and October, one month before the presidential election. The intelligence appeared to confirm information obtained from some seized al Qaeda computers and from several human sources, government officials say. Officials at the CIA and the National Security Agency, which runs the Echelon program, believe the information is credible but worry that the human sources were on the periphery of the now widely dispersed al Qaeda network. Nevertheless, the information pointed to two, perhaps three, targets, the sources say: New York, Washington, and Las Vegas. The objective of the suspected attack, the officials continued, would be not only to cause mass casualties and devastation of U.S. infrastructure but to roil the presidential race.

Full story: <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/issue/040531/usnews/31cia.htm>

Some names of Al Qaeda terrorists plotting hot summer for America

Debka File's counter-terror sources reveal that US counter-terrorist authorities are focusing on tracking down two key suspects: a 32-year old Pakistani woman called Aafaya Siddiqui, doctor of neurology who attended a university in the Boston area, and Adnan G. Al Shukrijmah, an al Qaeda activist known to have spent time in Florida. Our sources add that American and foreign counter-terror and intelligence agencies are also hunting for Midaat Mursi, known as Abu Khabab, prominent member of al Qaeda's operational partner, the Egyptian Jihad Islami, who is considered the organization's top expert on radiological bombs. Mursi heads a number of terrorist rings who have been instructed to infiltrate the United States through Canada for a dirty bomb attack. They may have made the crossing already.



In November 2003 media reported that El Shukrijumah was believed to be working with Osama bin Laden on a plan to detonate a 'dirty bomb' in the US



Aafaya Siddiqui, doctor of neurology, Was initially sought by the FBI in early 2003, as a person of interest.

For a current list and photographs of person on whom the FBI is seeking information please visit:
<http://www.fbi.gov/terrorinfo/terrorismsti.htm>

Also visit the FBI Most Wanted Terrorist site at:
<http://www.fbi.gov/mostwant/terrorists/fugitives.htm>

**Should you have, or become aware of, information individuals or events described above please contact the FBI.
In Merrillville 219 769-3719, South Bend 574 233-4488, Ft. Wayne 260 426-5331.**

Justice Seeks More Anti-Terror Powers

The Justice Department is seeking to expand its anti-terrorism powers again, adding among other things an FBI subpoena power so secret that even a lawsuit challenging it had to be kept under wraps. Experts say the changes, which are moving piecemeal through Congress in several bills, are among the most significant since Congress passed the USA Patriot Act in the frightening days after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks. Some of the measures being sought have been recycled from a controversial Justice Department draft of a bill, dubbed "Patriot II," which was abandoned after details of its provisions leaked to the media. Daniel Bryant, the assistant attorney general for legal policy, said the Patriot Act has helped law enforcement detect and disrupt terrorist plots. "But while Congress and the administration working together have made significant strides in improving the department's capacity to gather the intelligence necessary to prevent terrorist attacks, there is still more that needs to be done," Bryant told lawmakers at a hearing last week.

Full story: <http://www.officer.com/article/article.jsp?siteSection=8&id=13048>

Americans on homeland security: Ready and willing but uninformed

A majority of U.S. citizens say they want to help prevent another terrorist attack but don't know how, according to a report released Tuesday. Most citizens would be willing to volunteer to get trained for homeland security efforts but remain uninformed about how to connect with federal, state and local emergency preparedness officials

Full story: <http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0504/052504c1.htm>

A Marine sees what defeatists don't

This is my third deployment with the 1st Marine Division to the Middle East. This is the third time I've heard the quavering cries of the talking heads predicting failure and calling for withdrawal. This is the third time I find myself shaking my head in disbelief. Setbacks and tragedy are part and parcel of war and must be accepted on the battlefield. We can and will achieve our goals in Iraq I am not ignorant of the political issues, either. But as a professional, I have the luxury of putting politics aside and focusing on the task at hand. **Protecting people from terrorists and criminals while building schools and lasting friendships is a good mission, no matter what brush it's tarred with.**

A must read.

Full story: http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2004-05-18-connable_x.htm

Workers in Mercantile Exchange Building fall ill, report strange odor

Six workers in Chicago's Mercantile Exchange Building became ill in their telecommunications office May 19 and were taken to the hospital. The workers reported feeling dizzy and noticing a strange odor in the office, which is on the second floor of the Wacker Drive building. Fire crews initially suspected a gas leak; however a hazardous materials team performed tests in the building and did not detect any toxic or flammable material in the air or a lack of oxygen. The facility managers immediately shut down the ventilation system but decided not to evacuate the building. The problem in the telecommunications office did not affect any of the trading floors and did not disrupt trading in the Mercantile Exchange.

COMMENT:

In the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks and the anthrax incidents that occurred later, facility managers and emergency responders must take these types of incidents very seriously. However, the resources and costs involved in such a response may be quite high. The fire crews responded with a "Level 1" hazardous materials response, which calls for two fire engines, two fire trucks, one squad, one hazardous incident team, one deputy district chief, one battalion chief, one safety officer, one ambulance and a command van to be sent to the scene. In the end, the authorities were not able to determine what caused the workers' sudden illness. All the workers were said to be in fair or good condition after being taken to various area hospitals.

COLOMBIA: Police Forces v/s FARC Insurgent Forces

POLICE FORCES

Colombian Air Force Intercepts 25 Illegal Airplanes in 2004: Military authorities said May 21 that this year the Colombian Air Force has intercepted 25 illegal airplanes. Most of the airplanes were intercepted near the Venezuelan, Brazilian and Peruvian borders, where drug traffickers use them to exchange drugs for money or arms. Edgar Lesmez, Commander of the Colombian Air Force, said that the number of intercepted flights has more than doubled compared to the same period last year. *(These drug traffickers have been linked to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrilla group.)*

Police Foil Bomb Plot: Acting on a tip, Colombian police intercepted an explosive-laden van and arrested the 19 year-old driver just south of Bogota on May 21. Authorities believe that the driver, reported to be a FARC member, planned to blow up a highway tunnel south of Bogota with approximately one ton of ANFO, a mining explosive comprised of ammonium nitrate and fuel oil. Police believe that the bombing was planned to commemorate the FARC 40th anniversary. *(FARC activity is increasing in the run-up to their 40th anniversary next week. More attacks are likely as the anniversary date draws closer.)*

Police Thwart FARC Attack. Colombia's Secret Police claims to have foiled an attack on the 9th Army Brigade barracks in the southern city of Neiva when they captured two presumed Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrillas and seized 100 kg (220 lbs) of TNT explosives May 23. Officials claim that the detained insurgents had gained access to the military base and were planning to smuggle the explosives inside the facilities. *(Although specific threats have not been made toward major urban centers throughout Colombia, the increasing frequency of the attacks and thwarted attempts suggests that the FARC is planning additional attacks in larger population centers as May 27th nears.)*

FARC INSURGENT FORCES

Two bombs went off in front of Antioch University in Medellin, killing four and wounding 15. Also, three homemade bombs detonated in Cali, causing minor property damage.....

A bomb exploded at a crowded discotheque in the Colombian town of Apartado 450 km (280 miles) northwest of Bogota late May 22. Reports indicate the bomb was detonated by remote control after being placed under a table at the La Barra Cervecera club. The explosion killed at least five people and injured at least 90 others.....

A car laden with 20 kg (45 lbs) of explosives blew up May 22, killing three people in the town of San Carlos, located 125 km (200 mi) northwest of Bogota..... *(Stay tuned!)*

Human smuggling a National Security Risk

Human trafficking "pipeline" could serve terrorists

"We know that these smuggling and trafficking pipelines serve as a conduit for undocumented aliens and criminals seeking entry into the United States. However, they could just as easily be exploited by terrorist and extremist organizations seeking to gain entry into the United States in order to carry out their own destructive schemes," Torres told members of Congress during a May 18 hearing on "Alien Smuggling:

New Tools and Intelligence Initiatives."

Full report: <http://164.109.48.86/gi/Archive/2004/May/21-306471.html>

Drug smuggler claims he may have snuck 9/11 hijackers into US

An Iranian man recently convicted of drug trafficking, is also suspected of money laundering and smuggling people from Iraq, Iran, Syria and Jordan into the United States. According to federal court documents, Mehrzad Arbane also told a former associate turned government informant in October of 2001 that he "may have smuggled two of the hijackers who flew the planes into the towers in New York on September 11, 2001." In the shadowy world of terrorist groups and those who enable their activities, it's doubtful that any comprehensive records are kept on the identities of people secreted into the United States, thus the uncertainty over whether Arbani actually did help members of the 9/11 terrorist team.

Full story:

<http://www.cnsnews.com/ViewSpecialReports.asp?Page=%5CSpecialReports%5Carchive%5C200405%5CSPE20040524a.html>

Terror suspect surrenders at Metro

A former Ford Motor Co. engineer who fled to Lebanon in 1998 after becoming the first person to be charged under a 1996 antiterrorism law has surrendered to federal authorities. Fawzi Mustapha Assi, 44, of Dearborn was taken into custody Monday night after arriving at Detroit Metro Airport on an overseas flight, according to his lawyer. Attorney Douglas Mullkoff of Ann Arbor said Tuesday that Assi was accompanied on the flight by an FBI agent. "Fawzi Assi is a U.S. citizen," Mullkoff said after Assi was arraigned in U.S. District Court in Detroit on Tuesday. "He has been attempting for several months to arrange for a voluntary return to deal with this case -- to put it behind him and to get on with his life." Mullkoff said Assi has been teaching physics in Lebanon. Mullkoff wouldn't comment on the substance of the charges or elaborate on Assi's reasons for returning to the United States to face charges or why he fled. Customs agents allegedly found two global positioning satellite modules, seven pairs of night-vision goggles and a thermal imaging camera in his checked baggage as he prepared to board a flight to Lebanon on July 13, 1998. He allegedly told them he was planning to deliver the equipment to Hizballah, which has been designated by the U.S. State Department as a terrorist group. Assi allegedly told agents that the global positioning modules were to be used to navigate unmanned aircraft to spy on Israeli forces in southern Lebanon.

Full story: http://www.freep.com/news/locway/fawzi19_20040519.htm

Morocco connection is emerging as sleeper threat in terror war



They speak in an ever changing code. The word for prison might be hospital. Passport becomes book, or sometimes djellaba, the simple robe worn by men in North Africa. Explosives is honey or sneakers. And when someone says "the soccer team is ready," an illegal operation is about to start. The Moroccan branch of militant Islam is not new. But intelligence officials here and in Europe say that until this past year they failed to penetrate its communications and missed its significance. The French worried about Algerians and Tunisians; the Spanish focused on Basques. Belgium, whose Muslim population is largely Moroccan, had fewer than three dozen counterterror specialists in its police force.

Full story: <http://www.ds-osac.org/view.cfm?key=7E42504B4552&type=2B170C1E0A3A0F162820>

Spanish police link Hashish trade, North African enclaves, terrorism

Madrid's El Pais (in Spanish) reported on 15 May that the drug trafficking gangs, which operate in the Spanish North African enclave cities of Ceuta and Melilla, (see map in previous story) bringing hundreds of tons of hashish into Europe, probably divert part of their profits to the financing of Islamist terrorism,

according to police reports sent to the government. The trafficking in hashish from Morocco and Al-Qa'ida sleeper cells in Europe seem increasingly linked.

Full story: <http://www.ds-osac.org/view.cfm?key=7E4253424554&type=2B170C1E0A3A0F162820>

Related reporting:

Jihad's Unlikely Alliance

Muslim extremists who attacked Madrid funded the plot by selling drugs

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-terrcrime23may23.story>

Judge lets one alleged Internet terror recruit testify

A Virginia man serving time for supporting terrorism will testify about the role the Internet played in his recruitment as the government wraps up its terrorism case against a University of Idaho graduate student, a federal judge ruled Monday. But U.S. District Judge Edward Lodge said Khjawa Hasan will be prohibited from mentioning the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., unless defense attorneys for Sami Omar Al-Hussayen bring up the issue. Lodge did refuse to permit testimony from a second man, Yahya Goba of Lackawanna, N.Y., who the government claims was recruited to train as a terrorist as a result of Internet material, because Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda and members of the Taliban were involved in his recruitment.

Full story: <http://www.kgw.com/sharedcontent/APStories/stories/D82P2UTO0.html>

Terror alert level raised to red

France raised its terror alert level May 24 to "red," the second-highest level, in the area of the D-Day 60th anniversary ceremonies. The terror alert level will be raised in the rest of France on June 6, the day of the ceremonies. Expect tight security nationwide during the May 24-June 6 period. Stricter border controls, additional checkpoints and thorough passenger screening may cause longer than normal transportation delays.

COMMENT:

French authorities are changing the alert level because the ceremonies marking the June 6, 1944 landings on the Normandy beaches will be a large international event, but not due to any specific threat against France. Among the foreign leaders expected to attend the ceremonies are German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Britain's Queen Elizabeth and U.S. President George Bush. On March 11, France raised the nationwide alert level from "Yellow" to "Orange," in reaction to the March 11 terrorist attacks in Madrid, Spain.

Related reporting:

French seek potential bomb matter. <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-nitrate14may14,0,6359679.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

Frenchman with alleged Al-Qaeda link hid in Japan after 9/11

A Frenchman allegedly linked to the Al-Qaeda network hid in Japan for about a year after the September 11 attacks, suggesting the existence of terror-linked networks here, according to press reports. Japanese police suspect that Lionel Dumont, 33, was involved in raising money and forming a terrorist network in Japan, all major papers including Japan's top-selling daily Yomiuri Shimbun said, quoting unnamed police sources. Kyodo News agency said Dumont belonged to Al-Qaeda's logistics arm and Japanese authorities were shocked to learn that the country could have become "a breeding ground for terrorist acts."

Full story: <http://www.ds-osac.org/view.cfm?key=7E4253424753&type=2B170C1E0A3A0F162820>

COMMENT:

The latest information about Dumont, if confirmed, suggests the possible existence of a terror-linked network in Japan. In early 2004, Al-Qaeda's number three leader Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, told U.S. security authorities that Al-Qaeda sought to attack Japan during the 2002 World Cup, but that the lack of a network in Japan prevented an attack from taking place. Further investigations into Dumont's connections in Japan will likely increase fears of a terrorist attack in Japan due to its deployment of Self-Defense Forces

in Iraq.

TSA releases new security guidelines for general aviation airports

Agency Outlines Targeted Security Enhancements for a Wide Range of GA Airports

"The new guidelines were developed from industry best practices and provide a tool for operators to assess an airport's characteristics and determine which security enhancements are suitable.

Full story: <http://www.tsa.gov/public/display?theme=44&content=09000519800a5197>

Featured Internet Site

Identifying Hoaxes and Urban Legends

US –cert	http://www.us-cert.gov/cas/tips/ST04-009.html
Urban Legends and Folklore	http://urbanlegends.about.com
Urban Legends Reference Pages	http://www.snopes.com
Hoaxbusters	http://hoaxbusters.ciac.org
Stiller Research Virus Hoax News	http://www.stiller.com/hoaxes.htm
TruthOrFiction.com	http://www.truthorfiction.com
Symantec Security Response Hoaxes	http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/hoax.html
McAfee Security Virus Hoaxes	http://vil.mcafee.com/hoax.asp