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Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council
NEWSLETTER

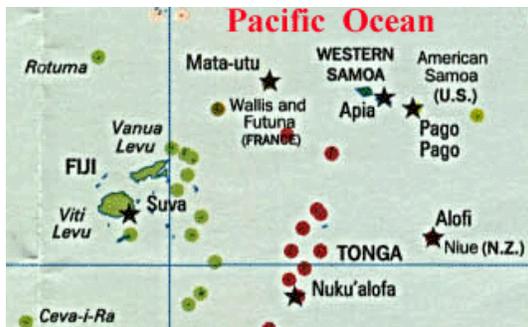


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Drug deal disrupted



Close, clandestine coordination between Australia, Fiji and New Zealand culminated June 9 in a massive drug bust in Suva. Classified as one of the largest methamphetamine operations in the world, the lab produced drugs for Australia, Europe, New Zealand and the U.S. Three Fijians and four Chinese nationals were arrested in the raid of a local warehouse appearing to store imported food products from Asia

COMMENT:

The fact that these transnational criminals chose Fiji as their base of operations is significant and points to the possibility that other criminals and terrorists may be conducting their illegal drug and money laundering activities from the South Pacific region. Australia and New Zealand have recently intensified their efforts to assist smaller island nations in improving their economies and law enforcement efforts. Their aim is to reduce corruption and discourage a tendency of impoverished countries to court outside criminal elements for financial gain.

Related reporting:

Police shut down massive illegal drug factory on Fiji

<http://www.canada.com/national/nationalpost/news/story.html?id=aa240b8d-656b-4227-a051-57265453935d>

Six in court over record Fiji drug haul

<http://www.nzherald.co.nz/storydisplay.cfm?reportID=1162612&storyID=3572070>

Police have arrested six foreigners and a Malaysian over the past 24 hours here in a follow-up operation to the discovery of one of the world's largest drug production facilities in Fiji.

http://www.emedia.com.my/Current_News/NST/Friday/National/20040611083850/Article/indexb.html

Customs and police to have more power

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=3205>

AFP plays key role in Fiji drug seizure

<http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2004/s1128393.htm>

Vow to smoke out al-Qaeda tobacco bandits

It's not so much *what folks don't know* that's the problem.
It's that *they know too much... that ain't so ...* that's the problem !

Smugglers with ties to terrorist groups are acquiring millions of dollars from illegal cigarette sales and funnelling the cash to organisations such as al-Qaeda and Hezbollah, United States law enforcement officials say. The discovery is prompting a crackdown on black market tobacco throughout the US. The federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives says it is investigating more than 300 cases of illicit cigarette trafficking - including several with evidence of terrorist links - compared with only a handful five years ago. "The deeper we dig into these cases, the more ties to terrorism we're discovering," said the bureau's assistant director, Michael Bouchard. The lucrative trafficking of cigarettes, known as cigarette diversion, is a simple scheme but difficult to stop, law enforcement officials say. The traffickers buy a large volume of cigarettes in states where the tax is low, such as Virginia and North Carolina, transport them to states such as Maryland, New York, and New Jersey, then sell them at a discount without paying the higher cigarette taxes in those states.

Full story: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/06/11/1086749895004.html?oneclick=true>

Iran backed terrorism, a more immediate threat

The International Atomic Energy Agency's board of governors is meeting on 14 June to discuss Iran's nuclear ambitions and its lack of cooperation with the nuclear watchdog. While the world worries about a nuclear-armed Iran in the future, it must not forget about a terrorist Iran today. The U.S. State Department first designated Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism in January 1984, and it has been on the list ever since. Indeed, "Iran remained the most active state sponsor of terrorism in 2003," according to the State Department. By now, Tehran has learned to take the annual designation in stride and, as it has every year, it responded with denials and counteraccusations. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman described the charges as "repetitive, demagogical, and worthless," and he added, the U.S. "has had an active role in spreading murder and terrorism and is not in a position to assess the record of others."

Full story: <http://www.rferl.org/reports/iran-report/>

Report indicates diplomats targets for assassination

A report in the June 10 edition of The Wall Street Journal stated that Western intelligence organizations have information that a group of assassins trained by regional terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) has infiltrated Indonesia to carry out assassinations of high-ranking foreign diplomats, including ambassadors. The report indicated that the assassins likely intend to target diplomats from the U.K., U.S. and Australia. Authorities are also concerned that assassins may target high-level foreign business executives, especially those engaged in extraction industries. The report stated that the assassins entered Indonesia's Borneo island from the southern Philippines.

COMMENT:

The report has increased jitters in an already tense environment. Many Western governments have already issued warnings urging their citizens to avoid non-essential travel to Indonesia. This latest report will likely convince many senior business and government leaders to avoid Indonesia all together. On June 10, the Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer cautioned that JI could strike again in the country, though he apparently made no mention of the possible threat to diplomats.

RELATED:

The Philippines faces ongoing threats from terrorism, some directly targeting foreigners. Kidnapping of foreigners by Muslim extremist groups, particularly Abu Sayyaf, is a continual threat. Authorities on June 7 raised the security alert level in the country amid fears that the Abu Sayyaf group is planning an attack on the capital Manila in the near future. A Feb. 26 bomb attack on a ferry in Manila Bay that killed 116 people has been attributed to the group. Risk of attack is greatest in the southern areas of the country particularly the areas of Mindanao, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, Palawan, the Sulu Archipelago and Jolo. The New Peoples' Army and Moro Islamic Liberation Front are continuing negotiations with the government, but still remain a threat. Authorities have named several locations as potential "hotspots" prone to violence. These include: San Andres in Tondo; Barangay in Santa Mesa; Brgy North Pier, Sitios Del Pan and Baseco in Binondo and Brgy Maharlika in Taguig.

Tourists escape kidnapping

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Two U.S. tourists June 9 escaped a kidnapping attempt near the city of Barranquilla, when criminals boarded their boat. Criminals apparently attacked U.S. citizens Robert Hudnal and Danna Cannon when their boat had mechanical problems. Hudnal and Cannon allegedly fought off the criminals, who were apparently trying to kidnap them, and were also able to call for help. The criminals fled with some stolen property when the coast guard came to rescue the couple.

COMMENT:

Colombia has the highest kidnapping rate in the world with 2,000 to 3,000 kidnappings a year. Most kidnappings in Colombia are perpetrated by the FARC and ELN guerrillas and, to a lesser extent, paramilitary groups. Common criminals are also responsible for hundreds of kidnappings each year.

US 'meddling in Australian vote'

Australia's main opposition party has accused the US of meddling in upcoming elections by criticising plans to withdraw troops from Iraq if it wins.



Labor president Carmen Lawrence said she believed the Bush administration was trying to help conservative Prime Minister John Howard win the election. Australian voters do not like being told how to conduct themselves by other governments, she added. President Bush has said an Australian withdrawal would be "disastrous".

Full story: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3802247.stm>

UN inspectors: Saddam shipped out WMD before war and after

The United Nations has determined that Saddam Hussein shipped weapons of mass destruction components as well as medium-range ballistic missiles before, during and after the U.S.-led war against Iraq in 2003. The UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission briefed the Security Council on new findings that could help trace the whereabouts of Saddam's missile and WMD program.

Full story: http://www.worldtribune.com/worldtribune/breaking_1.html

Related reporting:

The Latest Report of WMDs; A SOP TO IGNORANCE AND MALFEASANCE

What a deceptive news article this is, and a report for the United Nations to release!

The use of the acronym "WMD" in the article almost invariably refers to mere "COMPONENTS" of, or potentially or alternatively usable in, such weapons.

http://www.opednews.com/gunkel_0601304_wmds.htm

Despite controversy, destruction of deadly nerve agent VX to proceed



In a cavernous, pipe-filled structure known simply as the Utility Building, Army contractors in western Indiana are preparing to destroy a lethal Cold War-era concoction that's the human equivalent of bug spray. This summer, after years of controversy, they will begin chemically neutralizing 1,269 tons of the ultra-deadly VX nerve agent stockpiled at the Newport Chemical Depot about 70 miles west of Indianapolis. Residents who have spent four decades near this weapon of mass destruction are ready to see it go. But a dispute over what will become of the project's wastewater could leave them stuck with the nerve agent's legacy

Full story: <http://www.tribstar.com/articles/2004/06/08/news/news11.txt>

Cameroon-Chad oil pipeline inauguration



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President Paul Biya of Cameroon and Chad's President Idriss Deby officially inaugurated the oil pipeline terminal at Kribi port 250 km (155 miles) from Yaounde, Cameroon on June 12. The 1,070 km (633 mile) underground pipeline, with 900 km (560 miles) inside Cameroonian territory, will transport oil from 320 oil fields in Doba, Chad to loading facilities on Cameroon's Atlantic coast. The pipeline, estimated to have a 25-year life span, is financed by ExxonMobil, ChevronTexas and Petronas of Malaysia and is one of sub-Saharan Africa's largest projects to date, at a cost of USD 3.7 billion.

COMMENT:

The pipeline will generate significant yearly revenue (USD 80 million and USD 20 million for Chad and Cameroon, respectively) for the two of the world's poorest countries. The project has already strengthened bilateral cooperation and will likely pave the way for increased regional growth. The immediate benefits of the pipeline include the creation of new jobs and businesses and recently built roads and bridges that will facilitate trans-border trade by easing the movement of people and goods. In addition, the set up of a 18 optical fiber network along the length of the pipeline will have a vast improvement on interstate communications, which are dismal and heavily reliant on European satellites.

RELATED:

U.S. Marines to Train Chad's Army

A group of 30 U.S. Marines arrived in Chad June 11 to train the army in counter-terrorism tactics as part of the U.S. State Department's Pan-Sahel Initiative. While details of the training, slated to last eight weeks, are vague, it is noteworthy that the exercise is getting underway following a victory by Chad's forces against Algerian terrorists belonging to the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat. This training follows successful counter-terrorist programs in Mali and Mauritania. Counter-terrorism training is planned in Niger for August and September

RELATED:

GSPC Leader Declares War on Foreign Citizens and Interests in Algeria

In a statement dated June 6, Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) leader Nabil Sahraoui (nom de guerre: Abou Ibrahim Mustapha) declared "war" on all foreign citizens and interests in Algeria. The statement was posted on a GSPC Web site June 13. According to Reuters news agency, the GSPC statement "declares war on everything that is foreign and atheistic within Algeria's borders, whether against individuals, interests or installations."

COMMENT:

While the authenticity of the GSPC statement cannot be immediately verified, the tone is similar to recent proclamations attributed to Al-Qaeda leader Abdul Aziz Al-Moqrin in Saudi Arabia who has called for a purging of Westerners from the kingdom. The GSPC declared its alliance with Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in a September 2003 communique. With the exception of the kidnapping of European hostages in 2003 - all were eventually released unharmed - there have been no recent reported attacks directly targeting foreigners in Algeria.

Joint military operations in Chad and Mali have reportedly forced GSPC elements back into Algeria. The Algerian government claims a near-victory against the GSPC elements, which authorities report have been severely weakened. The group's second-in-command, Amari Saifi (nom de guerre: Abdelrazak Al-Para), who along with a number of other GSPC militants was taken captive by Chadian rebels in March, was turned over to police custody in Algeria June 4. There have also been numerous reports that as many as 300 GSPC members were negotiating terms of surrender with the government. Yet, despite these apparent setbacks, the GSPC continues to engage the military in guerrilla-style warfare on a near daily basis, frequently inflicting casualties, as happened in a June 2 attack that left 11 soldiers dead and 16 wounded.

By a back door to the U.S. a migrant's grim sea voyage

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A red light, barely visible on the horizon, made the captain of the William turn as mean as the devil. It was the fourth day of an illegal sea voyage. Héctor Segura was at the helm of a creaky old fishing boat overloaded with 205 passengers: all migrants from Ecuador, all hoping to reach the United States. The distant flicker, Mr. Segura thought, was the law on their tail.... To them, he was a coyote, or coyotero, an operative in a chain of smugglers who guide migrants from the highlands of Ecuador up the Pacific Coast to Guatemala, then overland across Mexico and through border deserts into the United States. Many of the travelers on his ship were headed to QueensThe United States Border Patrol reported in June that the number of migrants detained along the border with Mexico over the six months ended in April had jumped to nearly 660,000, from 505,000 a year earlier. The United States government often cites detention numbers as a way to measure illegal migration. "We are basically swatting flies," said one high-level official in the United States Department of Homeland Security. "Essentially we are completely overwhelmed by the numbers. They're just running over us."

Full story: <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/13/international/americas/13ECUA.html?hp>

Frustrated intelligence reformers see window of opportunity

Advocates of intelligence reform saw their stock skyrocket on June 3 when George Tenet announced his resignation as director of central intelligence. Tenet's impending departure opens a long-awaited and potentially fleeting window of opportunity for a fundamental overhaul of the U.S. intelligence community's command structure. Frustrated for decades, the reformers want to ensure that the answer to "Who's in charge?" stops being "Nobody." No fewer than 40 studies of the U.S. intelligence infrastructure -- some of them dating back almost to the CIA's birth in 1947 -- have lamented that no single person really runs the nation's intelligence efforts and have declared that the lack of clear leadership is a huge problem with enormous consequences.

Full story: <http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0604/061104nj1.htm>

Featured Internet Site

Stop Eco-Violence! (SEV)

SEV provides the media, legislators and government officials, law enforcement and the public at large with valuable information about radical activist activity and the harm it inflicts.

<http://www.stopecoviolen.com/about.htm>

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