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Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council
NEWSLETTER



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Minneapolis FBI racks up terror arrests



Unlike many Minnesotans, Doug Domin says he's not at all surprised at the seemingly relentless string of terrorism-related arrests in the Twin Cities. He saw it coming. While heading the FBI's Minneapolis office in 1998, Domin learned that suspicious Middle Eastern figures were slipping into the state -- home to a growing Muslim population and just hours from the Canadian border. Domin formed a working group with the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office. The next year, he won FBI headquarters' approval and funding for a Joint Terrorism Task Force linking federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. "We didn't do it as a drill or to be popular or because terrorism was the flavor of the month," Domin said. "We were absolutely concerned and

needed the resources of these other departments. ... Is the threat there and real in Minnesota? It absolutely is."

Full story: <http://www.startribune.com/stories/462/4888121.html>

Related reporting:

FBI, Local Authorities Battle Terrorism in Minnesota

http://www.kare11.com/news/news-article.asp?NEWS_ID=66950

US 'Cold War' group returns to battle terrorism

Citing what they call the need for a more aggressive war of information against, and education about, Islamic extremism, two U.S. lawmakers appeared Tuesday at a news conference formally announcing the latest reincarnation of a group that had its beginnings during the Cold War. Now, the group has appeared again, this time with the objective of educating Americans and the world about what its members call the threat from radical Islamist, as opposed to Islamic, terrorism

Full story: <http://www.voanews.com/article.cfm?objectID=1067EB67-8D01-4DEE-8FF03D84D74F1B7F>

Related reporting:

Neocons revive Committee on the Present Danger

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0723/dailyUpdate.html>

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 !

Scouting jetliners for new attacks

Flight crews and air marshals say Middle Eastern men are staking out airports, probing security measures and conducting test runs aboard airplanes for a terrorist attack. At least two midflight incidents have involved numerous men of Middle Eastern descent behaving in what one pilot called "stereotypical" behavior of an organized attempt to attack a plane. "No doubt these are dry runs for a terrorist attack," an air marshal said. Pilots and air marshals who asked to remain anonymous told The Washington Times that surveillance by terrorists is rampant, using different probing methods. "It's happening, and it's a sad state of affairs," a pilot said. A January FBI memo says suicide terrorists are plotting to hijack trans-Atlantic planes by smuggling "ready-to-build" bomb kits past airport security, and later assembling the explosives in aircraft bathrooms.

Full story: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/national/20040721-101403-1508r.htm>

Idema's day in court



Three Americans went on trial Wednesday on charges they tortured eight prisoners in a private jail, with the group's leader - a North Carolina man - saying he had tacit support from senior Pentagon officials who once offered to put his team under contract. The U.S. military says the men were freelancers operating outside the law and without their knowledge. Fayetteville resident Keith Idema, Brett Bennett and Edward Caraballo were arrested when Afghan security forces raided their makeshift jail in Kabul on July 5. Standing before a three-judge panel in a heavily guarded Afghan national security court, the men listened quietly to the charges - including hostage-taking and "mental and physical torture." Three of their former captives described being beaten, held under water and left without food. The Americans didn't testify. But Idema said afterward that the abuse allegations were invented. He said his men had arrested "world-class terrorists" and said he was in daily telephone and e-mail contact with officials "at the highest level" of the U.S. Defense Department, including in Pentagon chief Donald Rumsfeld's office.

Full story: <http://www.fayettevillenc.com/story.php?Template=terrorism&Story=6466586>

Terror walked through open door



The U.S. government was utterly unprepared on Sept. 11, 2001, to protect the American people from al-Qaida terrorists, according to a searing account of failures and missteps released Thursday. Operatives outwitted and outmaneuvered a bureaucracy that had never seriously addressed them as a threat and had never fathomed the possibility of such a calamitous assault on U.S. soil, the final report of the commission investigating the Sept. 11 attacks says. The report chronicles in exhaustive detail the sporadic and failed attempts of the CIA, FBI and other intelligence agencies to track some of the Sept. 11 plotters and their associates. Although it stops short of blaming President Bush or former President Clinton for the attacks, the document concludes that both administrations were lackluster in their efforts to combat Islamic terrorism and derides congressional oversight of the issue as "dysfunctional." The panel also said it could not determine whether the attacks could reasonably have been prevented. Yet it identifies 10 "operational opportunities" that were missed in detecting the plot and identifies nine major vulnerabilities that enabled the attacks to move forward. Some of the shortcomings outlined were matters of policy, such as the failure to act on recommendations for hardening cockpit doors on jetliners or the failure to include suspected terrorists on aviation no-fly lists. Many of the vulnerabilities and missed chances outlined revolved around two of the leading Sept. 11 hijackers, Khalid Almihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi, who evaded serious detection by the CIA and, later, the FBI, despite numerous opportunities

Full story: <http://www.tribnet.com/news/story/5332300p-5270332c.html>

Related reporting:

Why al-Qaida might have canceled 9/11 attack

<http://msnbc.msn.com/id/5497606/>

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The al-Tawhid Piece in terror puzzle

The Islamist militant group calling itself al-Tawhid and claiming to be the "European cell of al-Qaeda" appeared to be less unknown than it was initially announced amid terror threats against Bulgaria and Poland. Bulgaria's reconnaissance services have confirmed that the al-Tawhid terror group had passed through the Balkans over previous years. The activities of the terror group in the Balkan region have been tracked down and under checking as far as in 2001. German Prosecutors' office has also confirmed for their Bulgarian colleagues that members of the al-Tawhid group had been checked and even arrested in Germany. Last year, several members of an Islamic group have been charged in Germany for suspected links to terrorist network al-Qaeda and plotting anti-Jewish attacks. In September 2004 German prosecutors filed charges against two Jordanians and a Palestinian for being members of al-Tawhid, a Palestinian group suspected of planning attacks on Jewish targets. An Algerian was also charged with supporting the group. He was accused of trying to obtain a crate of hand grenades and a pistol with a silencer for the al-Tawhid members.

Full story: http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=37287

Related reporting:

Al-Tawhid Group Located "in the Balkans"

http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=37263

Background:



Jamaat al-Tawhid wa'l-Jihad / Unity and Jihad Group

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/zarqawi.htm>

Al-Qaeda chief reportedly negotiating surrender as amnesty expires



The Al-Qaeda chief for Saudi Arabia, Saleh Mohammad Al-Qofi, is reportedly negotiating his surrender to Saudi authorities, mediators involved in the talks announced July 22. The news, which followed the surrender of the fifth Al-Qaeda militant to authorities since late last month, came just hours before a month-long amnesty offer for Islamic militants was set to expire. Clerics mediating the surrender said at least two other militants on the Saudi government's most wanted list declared their willingness to turn themselves in before the amnesty offer expired. Officials are sorting out details of their surrenders. Saudi officials refused to extend the month-long amnesty, under which Islamic militants who turned themselves in would be spared the death penalty and activists without "blood on their hands" would receive a full pardon.

COMMENT:

Mediators involved in negotiating the surrender of several alleged Al-Qaeda followers claim approximately 15 other militants not on the most wanted list declared their willingness to turn themselves in before the amnesty deadline expired and are preparing to surrender. Reports that Al-Qaeda leader Saleh Mohammad Al-Qofi is preparing to surrender likely stem from the detention of his wife and three children by Saudi security forces. The incarceration of Al-Qofi and other high profile militants would serve another tough blow to Al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia, where a 15-month crackdown on Islamic militants has fractured terrorist cells and forced militants to spend more time on evading capture than planning attacks.

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Hamas began targeting US long before Sheik's assassination

The March assassination of Hamas' spiritual leader, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, outside a mosque in the Gaza Strip allowed members of the terrorist group to accuse the U.S. of collaborating with Israel in the killing and to vow revenge. But there are indications that Hamas had begun eyeing American targets long before that incident. But according to a November 2003 "White Paper" issued by Jess Sadick of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies (FDD) and quoting Israeli government officials, a Canadian citizen was charged in Israel "with receiving training from Hamas to conduct terrorist attacks in Canada and New York City."

Full story:

<http://www.cnsnews.com/ViewSpecialReports.asp?Page=%5CSpecialReports%5Carchive%5C200407%5CSPE20040723a.html>

Canada on the wrong track

Recent reports indicate that two Canadian officials met with members of the terrorist Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) in Iraq from May 31 to June 1. The Canadian daily the National Post recently confirmed the news in an official report. Over the past year, the Canadian government, which enjoyed an appropriate relationship with Iran during the years after the Islamic Revolution due to its reasonable and balanced policies, was influenced by the media propaganda about the death of Zahra Kazemi. Canada immediately abandoned its logical and realistic approach in favor of impulsive reactions. It seems that Canada's diplomacy toward Iran is currently moving swiftly downhill and has also influenced the country's internal affairs and has caused certain changes in the cabinet. This has led the Canadian government to choose the wrong course of action, namely playing with dead pieces like the MKO.

Full story: <http://www.tehrantimes.com/Description.asp?Da=7/25/2004&Cat=14&Num=001>

Related reporting



Iran court issues acquittal in murder of photojournalist Zahra Kazemi

A court has acquitted the defendant in the murder of photojournalist Zahra Kazemi, a case which has severely threatened diplomatic ties between Canada and Iran, the chief lawyer for the slain woman's mother said Saturday. Shirin Ebadi, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate who led the four-member legal team, said the court was not competent and the legal proceedings were flawed. She threatened to take the matter to international organizations if the Iranian judiciary fails to carry out justice in Kazemi's murder.

Full story: <http://www.canada.com/news/world/story.html?id=c8c168e7-08e4-472b-aa6e-b0166b920ac3>

Related reporting

Canada should rethink its attitude toward Iran

On the day U.S. President George W. Bush gave a speech in which he called Iran a member of the axis of evil, certain countries agreed with him, something which runs contrary to all the norms of international relations and diplomacy. Canada, too, was unable to conceal its inclinations and took unwise measures. The plan to offer asylum to the terrorist Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO), efforts to encourage the ratification a United Nations resolution condemning Iran for alleged human rights violations, dissemination of propaganda about Iran's peaceful nuclear program, mistreatment of Iranians residing Canada, and the inconsistencies in the investigation into the murder of Keyvan Tabesh are among the measures taken by Canada.

Full story: <http://216.239.41.104/search?q=cache:RXjq0nd0R8sJ:www.tehrantimes.com/Descript>

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Related reporting

Iran demands justice for Iranian teen killed by police in Vancouver suburb



Iran accused Canadian police on Thursday of killing an Iranian in the sleepy Vancouver suburb of Port Moody and said those responsible should be punished, a demand that echoes Canadian protests over the treatment of Montreal photojournalist Zahra Kazemi, who died in Iranian custody. Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi was quoted by the official Iranian news agency saying that Canadian police killed an Iranian national and injured another, and imposed a news blackout on the "criminal act."

Full story: http://www.thewe.cc/contents/more/archive/july2003/iran_man_shot_in_port_moody_bc4.htm

Related reporting

Guerrillas claim links to Canada

Iranians captive in Iraq

Canadian government officials visited a former Iranian guerrilla base north of Baghdad last month and met with dozens of detained members of a militant group who say they come from Canada. After reports U.S. troops were holding several Canadian members of an outlawed faction called Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), Ottawa dispatched two envoys to the group's headquarters.

Full story:

<http://www.canada.com/national/nationalpost/news/story.html?id=8471ceb7-8894-49fe-bed7-75d8f7f30b00>

Related reporting

Mujaheddin-e Khalq (MEK)

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

Related reporting

The MKO (MEK) and the war on Iraq

http://www.meib.org/articles/0302_iraq.htm

Morocco reports 400 Mujahideen 'Missing'

According to a 25 July report in Spanish daily *El Pais*, Moroccan authorities are "unaware" of the current whereabouts of 400 Moroccan mujahideen, believed to have undergone training in al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Chechnya. Morocco maintains a watch list of 600 suspected Islamic militants, only 200 of whom are confirmed as "identified and controlled" (*El Pais*). Spanish authorities received the information in early July, leading investigative judge Baltasar Garzón -- responsible for counter-terrorism within the Audiencia Nacional, Spain's highest judicial body -- to claim on 15 July that an estimated 100 radical Islamic cells in Morocco are ready to stage an attack on Europe (Publico). Interior Minister José Antonio Alonso refused to confirm the report but stated that "it is essential to cooperate with Morocco and the other Maghreb countries in the fight against Islamic-based terrorism" (Reuters).

ANALYSIS:

Many authorities have conceded that the gravest terrorist threat to Spain and the rest of Europe currently originates from Morocco, due to the ease for potential terrorists of crossing into Spain and moving freely across the EU. Forty of the 61 presumed authors or collaborators of the 3-11 attacks (*March 11 2004 attack on Madrid's Atocha station*), are believed to be Moroccans, mainly from the areas around Tangier and Tetuan (*El Pais*). Morocco itself is working hard to dispel its image of harboring terrorists, having jailed an estimated 1000-2000 alleged terrorists so far. It was able to give a relatively reliable estimate of the number of Moroccan al Qaeda members due to the discovery of meticulously kept, although only partially recovered, al Qaeda membership lists in Afghanistan. Other countries, such as the UK, are developing such watch lists of suspected Islamic militants. Spain still does not possess such a list. The 3-11 commission has

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already highlighted the shortcomings of Spanish law enforcement regarding Islamic terrorism, even though investigations into sleeper cells were underway as early as the 1990s in Spain. Spain and Morocco are presently cooperating closely in the 3-11 investigation; they agreed to the exchange of counter-terrorism experts in May. Moroccan militants have been the focus of worldwide counter-terrorism operations since the May 2003 suicide attacks in Casablanca. Moroccan security forces have detained more than 2,000 alleged militants since those attacks and the kingdom has taken significant steps to weaken the power and appeal of Islamic extremist groups. But the fear in Europe is that Moroccan militants are active in West European countries. The March Madrid attack was planned and executed by Moroccan men who lived in Spain for a long period. The current fear is that many of those 400 "missing" militants are in European and U.S. cities and planning additional attacks. It is quite possible that many of the missing men are in other Arab countries. For example, Hussein Mohammed Al-Hassak, a Moroccan national is among Saudi Arabia's most-wanted terrorists. Many others may be fighting in Iraq, Afghanistan or Chechnya, and some may have gotten married and settled in Bosnia - as many Arab fighters engaged in that conflict did. The report does provide clear indication that the threat of terrorist attacks similar to those that took place in Casablanca and Madrid is real and that additional attacks are likely - whether by Moroccan nationals or other Arab militants.

America hosts 76 percent of Islamic terrorist websites

While America and the world combat terror, it appears that the terrorists and their supporters themselves are tapping into America's booming web hosting industry to spread their venom. With the war on terror in full swing and terrorists scrambling to reorganize and regroup, the anonymous nature of the Internet has become an essential tool. As we often hear in news reports terrorists and their supporters have become more reliant on websites, message boards and chat rooms to communicate, rally supporters, and grotesquely display their barbaric acts of beheading to the world. We in the western world generally assume that these sites are set up and run in some remote Middle Eastern country spewing their hate to the world from afar. However, the first instalment of new report by MEMRI (Middle Middle East Media Research Institute) has a shocking revelation. The Middle East Media Research Institute has released part one of it's [report](#) on terror-affiliated Websites. In a special report *entitled Islamist Websites and Their Hosts Part I: Islamist Terror Organizations*, which they state is to be the first of many reports on the topic. MEMRI has listed 25 terror affiliated or official Websites active as of July 16, 2004. Based on the information shown, 20 of the sites are hosted in North America, 19 in the United States and 1 in Canada. The remaining sites were from the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Russia, United Arab Emirates, and Iran.

Full story: http://www.canadafreepress.com/cover_storys.htm

The Purse-Party Blues

Fake luxury handbags have never been better — or more tempting. But now the crackdown has begun

Authorities recognize that counterfeit trafficking is part of a broader, organized-crime problem. In June, U.S. immigration and customs-enforcement agents busted 17 people for smuggling tens of millions of dollars' worth of bogus Louis Vuitton, Prada, Coach, Chanel, Christian Dior and Fendi merchandise in thirty 40-ft. containers through Port Elizabeth, N.J. According to the customs officials, 15 of the defendants are Chinese nationals who are part of two separate crime networks that use shell companies to import counterfeit luxury goods from China and distribute them through storefronts on Canal Street. Each organization paid undercover agents \$50,000 a container to look the other way. These might be run-of-the-mill crime rings, but both customs and Interpol have warned in recent months that counterfeit merchandising is also being used to fund terrorist groups.

Full story: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1101040802-672631,00.html>

Featured Internet Site

American Red Cross

Terrorism, Preparing for the unexpected

http://www.redcross.org/static/file_cont21_lang0_15.pdf

Shelter in Place, Fact Sheet

<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/shelterinplace.pdf>

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