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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.*

## Al-Qaida meets with Central American gang, lawmaker says

Al-Qaida may have an alliance with a violent Central American gang that has established a presence near the Texas-Mexico border, according to members of the U.S. House Select Committee on Homeland Security. Mara Salvatrucha, an El-Salvador-based gang, has met with the terrorist group and may attempt to infiltrate the U.S. border, committee member U.S. Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz, D-Texas, said Thursday at the Veterans International Bridge at Los Tomates. "We have been in contact with El Salvadoran officials and they have verified that al-Qaida has been active in these gangs," Ortiz said. "(The gang members) are all over the place. We know (they) are in the Virginia area and across the border in Matamoros and possibly here." Ortiz was joined Thursday by fellow committee members U.S. Rep. Jim Turner, D-Texas, and U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas, who each expressed their concern for more cooperation among Border Patrol, the FBI and CIA. They also pleaded with the Bush administration and fellow lawmakers to provide the funding necessary to keep the borders and country safe. The three called for an end to the practice of detaining non-Mexican undocumented immigrants — known as OTMs (other than Mexicans) — from the Middle East, Central America and South America and releasing most of them due to lack of jail space.

Full story: [http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/print.php?id=60910\\_0\\_10\\_0](http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/print.php?id=60910_0_10_0)

### COMMENT:



Mara Salvatrucha (MS), although formed in the 1980s as a result of the El Salvador violent civil war, originated in the Rampart area of Los Angeles, California and moved quickly to northern Virginia, which has the second largest Salvadoran population in the US. Since inception, membership has grown in Alaska, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, Maryland, New York, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Canada, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico. It is uniquely an international street gang that still maintains representation in El Salvador. One of the main reasons for that strong tie is that military-style weapons in El Salvador are cheap and easy to come by; conversely, handguns are easy to obtain in the US. Also, the gang is active in exporting stolen cars to South America, where they trade wares with drug cartels. MS gangs are involved in most forms of criminality, to include a common terrorist tactic: taxation of locals on their 'turf.' The gang, among others, identifies itself with the number 13 and the word "sureno" (southerner) or Sur, which tend to reference their home in southern California versus their rival northern California gangs. They do uniquely, however, also have tattoos of the letter M or MS, in addition to 13 and/or Sur, or sometimes "Salvadorian Pride." The use of M and 13 is granted by the Mexican Mafia

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(M is the 13th letter), to whom they must pay sizable protection 'taxes.' They often use occult symbols as tattoos and have led to fears of Satanic tendencies. Gang members often identify themselves by forming the letter M with three fingers pointed either upward or downward. They often wore black but increasingly wear light blue and white, the colors of the Salvadoran flag. MS gang members have been responsible for at least three federal agents' deaths and numerous law enforcement officers'

shootings. They have booby-trapped homes. And, they have been heavily involved in homicides, drug dealing, and extortion. *Al Qaeda's interest in a criminal gang like MS-13 is likely due to the composition of the gang—mostly Central Americans—and their already established networks into and throughout the US. Both groups' interest in the porous US border with Mexico is not a shocking revelation*

## Charities do detective work in war on terror

They scour watch lists to see if grant recipients turn up

From his desk in the Flint offices of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Jim Krause was about to do something he'd never done as director of grants administration for the nation's 20th largest philanthropic foundation: hunt for terrorists. Increasingly, private and corporate philanthropic foundations are checking charities and the people who run them against government watch lists before handing out a dollar.

Full story: [http://www.freep.com/news/mich/charity6e\\_20040906.htm](http://www.freep.com/news/mich/charity6e_20040906.htm)

### Related reporting:

**US Based branch of Al Haramain Foundation linked to terror**

<http://www.treasury.gov/press/releases/js1895.htm>

**Scars of terrorism**

[http://www.sptimes.com/2004/09/12/Columns/Scars\\_of\\_terrorism.shtml](http://www.sptimes.com/2004/09/12/Columns/Scars_of_terrorism.shtml)

## Yemeni forces kill rebel cleric

Yemen says its forces have killed rebel Shia cleric Hussein al-Houthi.

Hundreds of people have been killed since he launched a revolt against the authorities two months ago. Sheikh Houthi and his men had been hiding in caves in a mountainous area close to the border with Saudi Arabia.

Full story: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/3643600.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3643600.stm)

### Related reporting:

**Timeline: Yemen**

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/country\\_profiles/1706450.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/country_profiles/1706450.stm)

## Russia considers color-coded alert system

A color-coded alert system, tighter controls on foreigners and restoring the death penalty are among the proposals to strengthen Russian security after a series of terror attacks, culminating in a deadly siege of a school, dubbed "Russia's Sept. 11." Several of the measures - particularly the color-coded alert system - echo those adopted by the United States after the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. When Russia's lower house of parliament, the State Duma, returns to session Sept. 22, it will consider a package of measures that includes tighter rules for registering foreigners' addresses and their transit in and out of the country, as well as closer controls on car registrations.

Full story:

[http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/national/apeurope\\_story.asp?category=1103&slug=Russia%20Terror%20Proposals](http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/national/apeurope_story.asp?category=1103&slug=Russia%20Terror%20Proposals)

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## BWIA mum over Russian terror link

Flagship carrier BWIA has taken a "no comment" stance on security and other public concerns over the use of the image of an exploding Tri Star jet on a terrorist website. The organisation is said to be a mouthpiece for Al Qaeda. An Arabic message on the photo refers to Chechnya's ten-year war with Russia and loosely translates to "the group seeking martyrdom for the females who are engaged in Jihad in Chechnya".

Full story: [http://www.trinidadexpress.com/index.pl/article\\_news?id=36801121](http://www.trinidadexpress.com/index.pl/article_news?id=36801121)

### ANALYSIS:

The use of a Caribbean passenger air carrier on a Chechen terrorist website is unusual and may merely be coincidence. However, the recent downing of two Russian passenger airliners by Chechen "black widows" makes the downing of Caribbean air carriers a viable threat, particularly in a region geographically close to the continental U.S. and with less stringent airport security. The unusual nature of the images may also raise speculation that the images hold a hidden message, as steganography is believed by some to be a common practice of terrorist organizations.



### Related reporting:

**Caribbean airline on terror website**

<http://www.travelwirenews.com/cgi-script/csArticles/articles/000016/001663-p.htm>

**Aviation Threat Posted to Internet**

<http://www.kestrelconsulting.com/>

## Russians may try to kill Chechens abroad

Russia may try to assassinate Chechens in the West after announcing it reserved the right to attack "terrorist bases" anywhere in the world, the spokesman for the rebel region's main separatist leader says. "It is a threat toward Europe," Akhmed Zakayev, envoy of



the rebel leader Aslan Maskhadov, told Reuters in London, where he has lived since receiving asylum last year after Moscow failed in a bid to extradite him. The chief of Russia's general staff, Yuri Baluevsky, said on Wednesday Moscow would "carry out all

measures to liquidate terrorist bases in any region of the world". The statement implies a threat of military strikes, rather than assassinations, and experts said a target could be Georgia, which Moscow has long accused of harbouring rebel bases. Roy Allison, analyst at Britain's Royal Institute of International Affairs, said any Russian attempt to assassinate Chechens in the West would be "risky". Zakayev and Maskhadov, on the run from Russian forces for five years, have both condemned last week's siege of a school in southern Russia in which at least 326 people died. But Moscow says Maskhadov is responsible and has offered \$10 million (5.6 million pounds) for information leading to his arrest and that of a renegade warlord, Shamil Basayev.



Full story: <http://www.swissinfo.org/sen/Swissinfo.html?siteSect=143&sid=5200877>

### ANALYSIS:

The promise of global hunts and preventive strikes on terrorists may be attributed to the post-crisis atmosphere, in which all the responsible military and security organizations are trying to blame each other and survive the political fallout. The absence of real military anti-terrorist operations may also be explained by a lack of preparation and true coordination among the "Siloviki" - or the "power ministries" - and general unreadiness of the Russian military to carry out a global anti-terrorist operation.

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## Recent Use of Female Terrorists Renews Concerns



The recent spate of terrorist attacks on two Russian airplanes, a subway station, and an elementary school in Beslan -- all of which were in part perpetrated by women -- have raised awareness of the potential use of female terrorists in an attack on the United States, but perhaps not enough, according to some experts. "We're used to profiling potential terrorists as a certain group of people, and that group of people is generally male," says Olga Oliker of RAND Corporation. Oliker believes it will require a dramatic psychological shift in the mindset of security forces of both genders to start viewing women

as much of a potential threat as men. "People aren't used to looking at women as potential bombers ... you need to train people to pay attention to girls as well as boys and to see women as potential attackers," Oliker asserted (Voice Of America).

### ANALYSIS:



In March 2003, the FBI expressed its concern over the possibility of extremists using female terrorists, asserting that increased security and profiling techniques in place following the 9-11 attacks might lead al Qaeda to shift its tactics; questions remain on whether the threat is being fully addressed. In the wake of the Russian attacks, American officials have increased security on flights from Russia to the U.S. and ordered a review of the government's hostage-taking response plans, but there have been no public indications of formal efforts to caution against the use of female terrorists and the degree to which the U.S. trains its security personnel to overcome these psychological barriers is unclear.

To assume that the use of female terrorists would not be attempted by terrorist organizations intent on attacking America disregards recent events. As demonstrated in Russia and the Middle East, terrorist organizations have demonstrated sophistication in both depth and planning in order to exploit security lapses in the past

### Related Reporting:

The spectacular rise of the female terrorist  
<http://www.iht.com/articles/537338.html>

## Group says it bombed embassy in Indonesia

Police released a grainy photo Friday of a white delivery truck taken by a security camera just before it blew up outside the Australian Embassy and said they suspect two suicide bombers in the vehicle set off the explosion, killing seven other people. As details emerged in the attack, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said at a Jakarta news conference that Indonesian police had received a mobile phone text message 45 minutes before the bombing, warning that foreign missions in Jakarta would be attacked unless the alleged head of al-Qaida-linked Jemaah Islamiyah was freed from prison. A claim of responsibility in Jemaah Islamiyah's name was posted Thursday on an Internet site known for carrying extremist Islamic content. Its authenticity could not be verified.

Full story:

[http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20040910/ap\\_on\\_re\\_as/indonesia\\_blast&cid=516&cid=716](http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20040910/ap_on_re_as/indonesia_blast&cid=516&cid=716)

### Related Reporting:

**Australia Embassy bombing suspect**

<http://www.ds-osac.org/view.cfm?key=7E435641425C&type=2B170C1E0A3A0F162820>

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## Second Group May Be Planning Another Terrorist Attack



Intelligence suggested a second group of suicide bombers was at large in Jakarta and may be preparing for another attack in the wake of the Australian Embassy bombing, Australian Federal Police Commissioner Mick Keelty said today. Mr Keelty said intelligence received in the past 24 to 48 hours suggested the second group of terrorists had been recruited by alleged Jemaah Islamiah (JI) bomb maker Azahari Husin, suspected of organising Thursday's attack.

Full story:

<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/09/11/1094789728503.html?oneclick=true>

## FMCAT: We Are So Sorry for 9/11

After September 11, many in the Muslim world chose denial and hallucination rather than face up to the sad fact that Muslims perpetrated the 9-11 terrorist acts and that we have an enormous problem with extremism and support for terrorism.

***As to apologizing, we will no longer wait for our religious leaders and "intellectuals" to do the right thing. Instead, we will start by apologizing for 9-11 . . .***

Full story and more information about the 'Free Muslim Coalition Against Terrorism' visit:

<http://www.freemuslims.org/>

## Jordan Islamists say crackdown fuels extremism

A government crackdown on Muslim clerics critical of U.S. policies in the Middle East may push activists to join militants who espouse violence, the head of Jordan's biggest moderate political group said on Sunday. Authorities in Jordan have arrested or sought to round up at least 30 mosque imams, preachers and scholars since Thursday in a nationwide crackdown it says aimed to penalise violators of a law that bars unlicensed Muslim sermons. Abdul Majeed Thunaibat, head of Jordan's Muslim Brotherhood, told Reuters in an interview that the arrests targeted mainly leading members of his movement which renounces violence.

Full story: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L12231310.htm>

### ***Related Reporting:***

**Kuwait steps up anti-jihad activities**

<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/infocservice/secwatch/index.cfm?service=cwn&parent=detail&menu=8&sNewsID=9606>

**Syria arrests 25 linked to radical Muslim group**

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost/JParticle/ShowFull&cid=1092107166552&p=1006688055060>

## Jailed Sheik: kill the Jews



A blind terrorist sheik was able to issue an order to his militant Islamic followers from prison — calling for the "killing of Jews" everywhere just a year before the Sept. 11 attacks — thanks to help from a Staten Island postal worker, Manhattan jurors were told. Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman is serving a life sentence for conspiring to blow up city landmarks. He's barred from contacting anyone except his wife and legal team. But Ahmed Abdel Sattar, the postal worker who also serves as Abdel-Rahman's paralegal, delivered the sheik's chilling *fatwa*, or edict, to terrorists over the phone and via e-mail, according to calls intercepted by federal authorities.

Full story: <http://www.nypost.com/news/worldnews/30214.htm>

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## DHS to push counterterror info

Homeland Security Department Secretary Tom Ridge said the proposed National Counterterrorism Center will use a push system to get threat assessment information to intelligence analysts. The NCTC would allow intelligence analysts to operate from a consolidated database and create a centralized threat assessment for the country "as opposed to integrating perhaps individual assessments from multiple departments." It "will become our nation's shared knowledge bank for intelligence information on known or suspected terrorists." The proposed center previously has been described as a "TTIC on steroids" or a "Super TTIC" referring to the Terrorist Threat Integration Center, which is a multiagency entity created last year.

Full story: <http://www.fcw.com/fcw/articles/2004/0913/web-ridge-09-13-04.asp>

### ANALYSIS:

The Executive Order establishing the NCTC echoes much of the same language used when the TTIC was created. Both were created with the intention of serving as a consolidated intelligence center for terrorism and counterterrorism where representatives of all government agencies involved with terrorism would be present and engaged. The only unique NCTC responsibility appears to be that the NCTC has delegating functions, such as assigning operational responsibilities. Though Secretary Ridge described the NCTC as "more robust" and as more of a "push system" (meaning its function would be proactive, disseminating pertinent information that may not have been known or was previously tasked to other authorities), the TTIC was also meant to be proactive. The TTIC is the institution responsible for many of the threat warnings divulged to the public (*FCW*). It is not yet certain whether the NCTC will employ newer or more powerful technology to create stronger streamlining capabilities than TTIC possesses. Currently, the TTIC's key information sources include its secure website, TTIC Online, as well as over 24 searchable government networks.

## New scam tactic hits online

In the escalating clash between online scammers and security vendors, the attackers have once again developed new tactics that give them the upper hand in bypassing filters and infiltrating corporate networks, experts say. The new techniques, which experts began seeing sporadically earlier this year and in large waves in recent weeks, involve the use of a process called steganography, or embedding or hiding text in an image.

Full story: <http://www.eweek.com/article2/0,1759,1644828,00.asp>

## Featured Internet Site

### *Federal Aviation Administration*

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is responsible for the safety of civil aviation. The Federal Aviation Act of 1958 created the agency, under the name Federal Aviation Agency. We adopted our present name in 1967 when we became a part of the Department of Transportation.

Home:

<http://www.faa.gov/>

Search FAA Aircraft Registry information at:

<http://162.58.35.241/acdatabase/acmain.htm>

*Also see:*

### *Pilot Gateways*

Searchable data bases at:

[http://www.landings.com/evird.acgi\\$pass\\*66476189!\\_h-www.landings.com/\\_landings/pages/search.html](http://www.landings.com/evird.acgi$pass*66476189!_h-www.landings.com/_landings/pages/search.html)

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