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Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council
NEWSLETTER



Volume 10, Issue 03

Date: 10.20.04

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.

8 arrested in Spain for terror plot



The Spanish police have arrested eight members of cell of Islamic radicals suspected of planning a terrorist attack on Madrid's national court, and officials warned Tuesday that the alleged plot showed the country remained a target despite the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq in April. The arrests - one in Pamplona on Tuesday and seven others on Monday night in Madrid and southern Spain - were ordered by Judge Baltasar Garzón, who has been investigating cells of Islamic radicals in Spain since the mid-1990s. Police monitored telephone conversations in which members of the group were heard discussing plans for an attack. "They were talking about a terrorist attack against the national court or another judicial agency, but the police do not rule out any type of outcome," he said. Among those arrested Monday were at least three Algerians, a Moroccan, and a man who appeared to be a Spanish citizen. Interior Ministry officials said the group had ties to Islamic radicals in Australia and the United States, but the officials did not provide details. But the Spanish news service EFE reported that the group's plan included using a truck with 680 kilograms, or 500 pounds, of explosives to blow up the building that houses the national court, located in the center of Madrid. The Interior Ministry said in a statement that the seven men arrested on Monday were Muslim residents of Spain, and that most of the men had spent time in the Spanish prison system. Local news outlets reported that the investigation had also led to the arrest of a man in Switzerland several weeks ago, but the Interior Ministry said it could not confirm the report.

Full story: <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2004/10/19/news/terror.html>

Related reporting:

Madrid Breaks Up Terror Plot

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/05/06/terror/main616051.shtml>

Sydney link to Madrid plotters

<http://dailytelegraph.news.com.au/story.jsp?sectionid=1258&storyid=2113040>

Seven Arrested in 'Bomb Plot' Terror Swoop

<http://news.scotsman.com/latest.cfm?id=3643541>

COMMENT:

Should the plans of the alleged al Qaeda cell be confirmed, the arrests would illustrate how the terrorist organization continues to operate around the globe despite the challenges it faces as a result of the war on terrorism. It would also confirm a suspicion long maintained by many that Islamic terrorists would

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strike again in Spain even after the newly elected government's withdrawal of troops from Iraq. The arrests also prove that counterterrorism cooperation between Spain and Morocco is bearing fruit. Spain stepped up its collaboration with Morocco following a warning by Garzón that Morocco (and the rest of the Maghreb) was becoming a hotbed for Islamic radicalism -- which the 18 October arrests seem to verify. A 25 July report in Spanish daily El País declared that the Moroccan authorities were "unaware" of the current whereabouts of 400 Moroccan *mujahideen* believed to have trained in al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Chechnya. Pundits agree 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 collaborators of the 3-11 attacks are believed to be Moroccans, mainly from the areas around Tangier and Tetuan. Finally, the arrests seem to indicate that al Qaeda is seeking to build links with other terrorist organizations such as the ETA, something that the Spanish media have reported for some time but which until today was not lent much credence. Since 2000, a total of 126 Islamic terrorists have been arrested in Spain.

Moroccans gain prominence in terror groups



In the aftermath of Morocco's worst-ever terrorist attacks in May 2003, King Mohammed VI lifted the hopes of his most impoverished subjects last year when he toured Casablanca's sprawling slums, home to a dozen suicide bombers who had blasted targets across the city. The monarch said he was appalled at the conditions and vowed to raze the shantytowns, promising new housing for an estimated 150,000 people.

Almost 18 months later, the tin-roofed shacks and squatters'

colonies are still here. While a few families have been relocated, the most visible change is a freshly built police station that keeps a closer eye on the slums, part of an ongoing crackdown against alleged Islamic extremists that has resulted in more than 2,100 arrests across the North African nation.

Full story: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A30675-2004Oct13.html>

Officials locate mass arms cache

On Oct. 18, French officials said they found massive arms caches believed to have belonged to ETA, the Basque separatist group. Officials discovered the two large caches of arms on Oct. 17 in Urrunge and Saint-Pierre d'Irube in southwest France. Authorities found assault weapons, dynamite, rocket launchers and fake documents in the caches.

COMMENT:

The combination of arrests made during raids on Oct. 3 and 6 in France and Spain and the discovery of the arms caches marks a significant step in French and Spanish officials' efforts to crack down on ETA.

Egypt to host conference on Iraq in November

Egypt will host a conference to discuss Iraq's reconstruction and upcoming elections sometime around Nov. 25, most likely in the Red Sea coastal city of Sharm El-Sheikh. The conference likely will include representatives of Iraq's interim government, the U.S., G8 countries, Iran, and the Arab League. The conference agenda has not yet been drawn up.

COMMENT:

The Egyptian government's decision to host such a conference - rather than holding the meeting under United Nations auspices in New York - is likely to draw criticism from parties that oppose the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq, including Islamic militant factions that blast Hosni Mubarak's regime for being a "U.S. lackey" in the region. Authorities will impose extreme security measures for the conference, especially in light of the triple car bombings that killed 35 people in the northern Sinai Peninsula Oct. 7.

FBI: al-Qaida operative posed as student while living in N.J.

A senior al-Qaida operative lived in New Jersey and posed as a student while conducting surveillance of

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financial institutions as possible targets for a terror attack, according to a published report. Authorities believe Barot was dispatched by Osama bin Laden himself to conduct the scouting mission in New Jersey, the newspaper reported. Barot was arrested by British authorities in August and remains in custody there. The British say Barot had reconnaissance reports for the Prudential building in Newark, the New York Stock Exchange and the Citigroup building in Manhattan and the International Monetary Fund headquarters in Washington. The Record, citing "an official familiar with the matter," said the al-Qaida survey on the Prudential building contained minutely detailed information, including an observation that a van carrying explosives probably would not fit into its underground parking garage. The report recommended using limousines instead.

Full story: <http://www.newsday.com/news/local/wire/ny-bc-nj--terrorthreats-pru1014oct13,0,7718586.story?coll=ny-ap-regional-wire>

El Salvador enlists U.S. to fight gangs

Police in El Salvador are establishing better contacts with their counterparts in California to gain leverage against gangs involved in smuggling, extortion and other crimes in both nations, officials said. The national police chief of El Salvador, Ricardo Menesses Orellana, is meeting this week with law enforcement officials in Southern California to arrange a new system to share information about notorious multinational street gangs such as the Mara Salvatrucha and the Mara 18.

Full story:

http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/national/apus_story.asp?category=1110&slug=International%20Gangs

Bashir officially charged for terror attack



Indonesian authorities have officially charged Abu Bakar Bashir in connection to the 2003 Marriott hotel bombing in Jakarta. According to Indonesian prosecutors, Bashir is charged with leading Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), a violent militant Islamist group that's closely linked with the Al-Qaeda network. JI is believed to be responsible for the 2002 Bali bombings, the 2003 Marriott bombing, and the recent attack at the Australian embassy in Indonesia. His trial is scheduled to begin Oct. 28.

COMMENT:

Bashir, a militant cleric, had earlier evaded charges when the Indonesian Constitutional ruled that retroactive use of a 2003 terror law for prosecuting the 2002 Bali bombings was unconstitutional. He will now be charged under the same law that holds a maximum penalty of death. Bashir was in jail during the Marriott bombing and claims he had nothing to do with the attack but authorities claimed he provided guidance to his followers from behind bars. The U.S. and Australia, both of whom have pushed for Bashir's prosecution, will support the authorities' decision but Bashir's attorney warns that the government does not have a strong case. Expect growing tension among the government and Bashir's supporters.

IARA longtime focus of federal scrutiny



Since 1985, Columbia's Islamic American Relief Agency, or IARA, has promoted itself as a charitable organization benefiting needy children in war- and famine-torn countries. The group's stated goal is to provide relief to refugees and disaster victims in Africa, Asia and Bosnia. Patrons can sponsor children with donations of money, food, clothing and medical supplies. But in recent years the IARA has fended off allegations it secretly funds terrorism via an elaborate network of dummy corporations orchestrated by Osama bin Laden. Yesterday, the United States accused the IARA of supporting terrorist groups, including al-Qaida.

Full story: <http://www.showmenews.com/2004/Oct/20041014News001.asp>

Related reporting:

Agents raid local Islamic charity

<http://www.showmenews.com/2004/Oct/20041014News003.asp>

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Feds raid Islamic relief agency

<http://digmo.org/news/story.php?ID=9943>

Treasury Designates Global Network, Senior Officials of IARA for Supporting bin Laden, Others

<http://www.ustreas.gov/press/releases/js2025.htm>

Officials broaden inquiry into charity

<http://www.kansascity.com/mld/kansascity/news/local/9921926.htm>

Government warns charity cash might go to terrorists

Saudi authorities warned citizens and expatriates to refrain from giving cash at mosques or making donations of any kind of at any unregistered charities upon the start of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan Oct. 14. Interior Ministry officials said confessions from jailed terrorists confirm that such funds have been used by extremists targeting Westerners in the kingdom. Saudi officials recommend that donors give to licensed charity organizations to ensure that their gifts reach needy people rather than militants.

COMMENT:

Millions of dollars in terrorist funding has reportedly been raised in Saudi Arabia, occasionally with donors aware that their "charity" is bound for Islamic militant groups. Moreover, even registered charities (such as the Haramain Foundation, which the Saudi government ordered to close last week due in part to allegations of terror financing) have been accused of funneling money and supplies to Islamic militant organizations, usually outside of Saudi Arabia.

Feds bust bogus butts ring

An Asian organized crime group teamed up with a group of Armenian and Polish immigrants to smuggle millions of dollars worth of counterfeit Marlboro cigarettes into Brooklyn and Queens from China, federal prosecutors charged yesterday. The cigarette smuggling led to cigarette tax losses of more than \$1 million to New York State, officials said. A total of 13 people, including alleged ringleader Azat Oganessian, 33, an Armenian immigrant who had been living in Brooklyn, were charged yesterday in an indictment filed in Federal Court in Brooklyn with conspiracy to smuggle the cigarettes as well as narcotics trafficking. The investigation, which involved a special FBI-NYPD task force on Eurasian crime, lasted 19 months and was sparked by an informant who had information about suspected cigarette smuggling and narcotics in the New York Polish immigrant community, federal law enforcement officials said. The task force focuses on immigrant groups from the former Soviet Union and East Asia.

Full story: <http://www.newsday.com/news/local/newyork/nyc-cigs1014,0,6056938.story?coll=ny-nynews-headlines>

COMMENT:

Although this story makes no reference to terrorism, we include this clipping to demonstrate the unusual alliances among criminal groups, and we note that cigarette smuggling, counterfeiting, and drug sales are known sources of terror financing. Also see: ***Cigarette Smuggling Linked to Terrorism***

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A23384-2004Jun7.html>

Terror alert issued to school bus drivers

Department of Public Safety authorities have put school bus drivers from around the state on a heightened state of alert regarding the possibility of terrorist activity, including those in Payson, Pine and Tonto Basin. A Sept. 28 information bulletin from DPS Student Transportation Supervisor Vicki Barnett to PUSD Director of Support Operations Joe Martin, directed bus drivers to "pay particular attention to any unusual activity around school buses; to unusual vehicles; to vehicles repeatedly seen in the vicinity; and, to any vehicles or individuals in unauthorized locations." If any of those situations are observed, the letter asks drivers to "follow your school bus security plan, advising the appropriate authorities."

Full story: http://www.paysonroundup.com/section/frontpage_lead/story/16872

Beslan terrorists high on Heroin, Morphine — Blood Tests

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Blood tests showed high levels of heroin and morphine in most of the militants, who were killed when federal forces and angry parents stormed the school at the end of a three-day hostage drama. The tests "indicate that they were long-term drug addicts and had been using drugs permanently while preparing for the terrorist attack,"

Full story: <http://www.mosnews.com/news/2004/10/18/beslandrugs.shtml>

Also see related links at the end of the article.

Russian investigation reveals at least 5 Arabs at Beslan

Russia has concluded that at least five Arab nationals participated in the bloody takeover of a high school in August. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov said an investigation determined that five Arab nationals participated in the Beslan attack by Al Qaida-aligned insurgents. Ivanov, in an address to the NATO-Russia Council in Romania on Oct. 14, would not identify the Arab nationals or their native countries. In September, Russian officials said that at least 10 of the 32 attackers in Beslan were Arab nationals. The Arabs were identified as coming from Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Syria.

Full story: http://www.worldtribune.com/worldtribune/front_3.html

Tension high as Muslims start Ramadan

Month-long period of fasting, cleansing of the soul

The Islamic holy month of Ramadan began on Friday, signaling the start of a four-week period during which Muslims across the world seek to cleanse their souls and come together. Muslims believe that their holy book — the Quran — was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad during Ramadan about 1,400 years ago. During the month-long holiday, Muslims traditionally refrain from eating, drinking, smoking, and having carnal relations from dawn to dusk.

Full story: <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/6253929/>

Also see sidebar links and feature boxes.

Terror-harboring group recruits students at Duke

University hosts organization that supports violent jihad operations



Speakers at a controversial Duke University Palestinian solidarity conference, which concluded yesterday, recruited students to join a terrorist-harboring organization. The [Palestinian Solidarity Movement](#), which reportedly works closely with the International Solidarity Movement, an organization outlawed in Israel, held its fourth annual conference to "put pressure on the Israeli government, partly by urging universities to sell their stock in companies with military ties to Israel." Some PSM members at this year's conference suggested the group should change its public stance toward terrorism. Two motions regarding the "fifth guiding principle" were

put to vote Saturday — one to alter the principle, another to remove it altogether. Both motions were voted down, with the PSM still officially refusing to condemn terrorism. The delegates erupted in cheers when the vote's results were announced yesterday.

Full story: http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=40973

Counterfeit operation



Colombian police in Bogota on Oct. 17 arrested one person and confiscated USD 2 million and EUR 2 million in counterfeit money. Authorities say that this is the the largest amount of fraudulent bills ever confiscated in Latin America. French and U.S. specialists apparently helped Colombian authorities in the operation.

COMMENT:

Colombian authorities in the last months have discovered several other counterfeit operations. The U.S.

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Government recently designated Colombia as the primary source of counterfeit U.S. dollars.

5 dead, 22 injured in Sierra Vista crash

Emergency personnel tend to the injured after the crash at the east gate to Fort Huachuca. The out-of-control pickup was packed with border crossers. Five people were killed and 22 others were injured Saturday when a speeding pickup truck crammed with illegal entrants flipped at a busy Sierra Vista intersection, striking 10 other vehicles, police said. The collision occurred about 11:45 a.m. on Arizona 90 at Buffalo Soldier Trail in front of the east gate to Fort Huachuca,

Full story: <http://www.dailystar.com/dailystar/dailystar/43866.php>

Related reporting:

Illegal immigrant apprehensions double at Fort Huachuca

<http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/1006az-immigration-huachuca06-ON.html>

US Army Intelligence Center and Fort Huachuca

<http://usaic.hua.army.mil/>

MS-13 gang took a vote on slaying, court told

Earlier this year, a prosecutor said yesterday, members of the violent Mara Salvatrucha gang gathered at a secret location in Fairfax County to cast a vote: Should they kill fellow member Jose "Snoop" Escobar? The hands went up. The vote to kill Escobar came after gang leaders in Los Angeles approved the execution -- or "greenlighted" him -- saying he had helped immigration agents deport a Northern Virginia gang leader so Escobar could ascend the ranks.

Full story: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A43685-2004Oct18.html?referrer=email>

Featured Internet Site: C.O.P.S.



<http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/Default.asp?Item=34>

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And more....

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