

PENNSYLVANIA ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN #30

TARGETED ACTIONABLE MONITORING CENTER

6 JANUARY 2010

ONGOING RESEARCH

1. Multiple Threats to Iranian Regime

The regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran is currently facing multiple threats from various quarters.

A. After conflicting reports of Iranian forces taking over oil fields on the Iran-Iraq border in recent weeks, the Council of Arab tribes of southern Iraq announced the formation of a militia (the "Jihadist Abbas Battalion") to "liberate the south from the American-Israeli-Iranian occupation" of the south.

B. Within Iran, in its eastern region, a Sunni Islamist group called Jund Al-Islam announced that it will initiate a campaign of suicide bombings until their area is granted autonomy.

C. On 26 December 2009 a previously unknown anti-regime group calling itself the National Iranian Armed Resistance Forces (NIRU) announced "the initiation of Operation Azadi ('Freedom')", which they said will end upon "unconditional surrender of the occupying government and leadership." The operation, the NIRU communiqué said, will involve taking control of Iranian military bases, taking over government buildings, arrest of "government-supporting agents", "seizing... military and public communication facilities, as well as other news media", "combat mission[s] at the regional level", and more. According to Iranian pro-democracy sources contacted by ITRR, the authenticity of this organization remains in question as of this writing.

D. Iran remains wary of possible military attacks or incursion by Israel, the US or some combination of forces aimed at eliminating its developing nuclear capabilities.

ITRR analysts are monitoring the situation in Iran, with particular emphasis on the potential for the Iranian regime to lash out with proxy terrorist or insurgent strikes throughout the region and beyond. A threatened Islamic Republic may attempt such destabilization either in an effort to consolidate its hold on power, by creating sufficient regional crises, or to stave off authentic external threats.

2. Intelligence Sharing for 'Jihad Al-Bahr'

Responses to the detailed requests by jihadist elements for intelligence on Western maritime assets, as cited in PAIB no. 28 (1 January 2010), continue to be shared enthusiastically. As noted, ITRR sees a clear intent by jihadist cells to begin waging a deadly form of *Jihad Al-Bahr* ("jihad at sea") as soon as operationally possible.

3. Yemen Terror and Counterterror

The Yemeni authorities are waging a battle to crush the forces of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula in their territory. They are doing so with help from elite British troops, American intelligence and air power, as well as Saudi determination to keep the "trouble" on the other side of the border. Western embassies in Yemen have closed and reopened in reaction to developments in the war on terror. In several past PAIB items, ITRR has indicated that the threat is a serious one, as AQAP sees the potential for turning Yemen into another front like Afghanistan or Somalia.

4. Anti-Abortion Extremist Moving to Next Level?

As noted in PAIB no. 25 (25 December 2009), an anti-abortion extremist was soliciting contact with "people who've been forceful" in opposing legalized abortion. He followed his request with a list of terrorists that includes murderers, indicating a potentially new level of discussions possibly aimed at initiating further terrorist actions of unknown severity.

5. Ongoing Threat to Egypt

In PAIB no. 23 (21 December 2009) ITRR analysts expressed the view that there will be international jihadist or Gaza-based attacks on Egyptian military forces, as well as possible targeting of civilians, due to Egyptian policy towards Gaza. According to the ITRR analysis at the time, attacks were likely to escalate from gunfire into rocket attacks, possibly followed by large-scale attacks on Sinai resorts and other civilian targets. As stated by ITRR analysts in PAIB no. 23, terrorists will likely seek to strike Israeli and American assets in the region, as well.

SECTOR-SPECIFIC THREATS, INDICATORS AND/OR WARNINGS

Sectors: GOVERNMENT FACILITIES; COMMERCIAL FACILITIES

6. Targeting of Spanish Assets Over 'Insult' to Muhammad

ITRR researchers have identified jihadist communications indicating the intent to target Spanish assets in response to a magazine caricature of the Islamic prophet Muhammad.

The communications call the magazine publication the part of a continuing attack "harming our prophet." The targeting communications advised the holders of Spanish hostages in North Africa to "do what you feel is right with the three rats." Spanish hostages, two men and a woman, were taken captive as they carried relief supplies in Mauritania on 29 November 2009.

***** ANALYSIS*****

T//W Rating: MODERATE

ITRR analysts believe that the potential fallout from the offending caricature will not end with the threat to the Spanish hostages currently in the hands of Al Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Students and faculty of foreign study programs such as those of the University of Pennsylvania in Alicante, Spain, should be made aware of the increased risk of lone-wolf or organized terrorist activity in the Iberian Peninsula, North Africa and elsewhere.

Spanish embassies and official buildings are at particularly increased risk; however, other Western European assets in Muslim states, particularly those of Denmark and the Netherlands, may be targeted as well. In addition, there is an increased risk of kidnapping of Westerners in North Africa.

Sectors: GOVERNMENT FACILITIES; COMMERCIAL FACILITIES

7. Caucasus Jihadists Promise Continuing Terror Campaign

The Asia Desk of ITRR noted a 3 January 2010 address by Doku Umarov, the leader of the Islamic Emirate of the Caucasus (IEC), which echoed a previous IEC threat that the 27 November 2009 double bombing of the Nevsky Express in Russia (which killed around 30 people) is only the beginning of a lengthy terror campaign deep inside Russia.

Umarov emphasized his organization's full operational readiness, as well as the numbers of would-be suicide bombers at his disposal. Among other threats to Russian "homes", he said, "Planes will be blown up... and war will be unleashed on your streets."

***** ANALYSIS*****

T//W Rating: MODERATE

ITRR analysts reiterate the analysis presented in PAIB no. 16 (4 December 2009), in which an IEC communiqué on the Nevsky bombing was seen as confirmation of a jihadist focus on infrastructure attacks, insofar as such are feasible.

Specifically named targets in December IEC communications included infrastructure assets, economically significant targets, energy assets, mass transit, power lines and energy pipelines, as well as civilians. The IEC declared that the Nevsky Express attack was part of a larger plan to strike "a number of strategically important assets" in Russia, after "it was decided to transfer the sabotage war to the territories of Russia, along with strong blows to the occupiers infrastructure in the Caucasus."

ITRR analysts see the repeat IEC announcements as authentic indications of Chechen jihadist intentions and capabilities. Terrorists will likely attempt to replicate their success in attacking the Nevsky Express with further attacks on Russian soil.

Students, faculty and business travelers from Pennsylvania in Russia are advised to take measures to reduce exposure to an attack. Students at Russian educational institutions through programs such as those of Bryn Mawr College in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Vladimir should be made aware of the current increase in risk. Researchers and linguists pursuing continuing studies through American Councils and similar programs in the Caucasus regions of Russia are particularly vulnerable to attack and abduction by local jihadist elements.

Sectors: COMMERCIAL FACILITIES

8. King of Prussia Mall 'Restricted Areas' on Youtube

A channel on Youtube dedicated to "elevator photography" includes video clips of rides on elevators at several locations on the East Coast, such as malls and universities. In several instances, the elevators are freight elevators in areas that are meant to be restricted to public access.

A clip uploaded by the Youtube and elevator enthusiast ("dieseldeucy") filmed in the King of Prussia Mall includes lengthy footage of the access areas and corridors leading to one of the mall's freight elevators. Access is named as being from "Sears & Roebuck". [The clip can be viewed here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DwloCLykWA>.]

*******ANALYSIS*******

T/I/W Rating: LOW

While the intent of the cameraman appears to be benign (aside perhaps from trespassing), the video offers a view of the lack of security in restricted areas of the major shopping complex. Such information is clearly useful to more hostile elements, from animal rights extremists planning to vandalize a shop selling fur to jihadists planning to place explosive charges without being observed. It should also serve as a fortuitous warning to security personnel responsible for the King of Prussia complex, as well as other major shopping centers in the state.

Sectors: NUCLEAR REACTORS, MATERIALS, AND WASTE; ENERGY

9. Targeting of Nuclear Power Stations Revealed

Five Muslim US citizens of various ethnic backgrounds who are about to face trial in Pakistan are suspected of plotting jihadist attacks in Pakistan and Afghanistan, including at nuclear power facilities that include a water reservoir in Punjab. The suspects, who are from the Washington DC area, were last seen in Virginia in November 2009, after having made contact with Pakistani jihadists in August.

***** **ANALYSIS** *****

T/I/W Rating: MODERATE

The revelation that the above-mentioned American jihadist cell was plotting attacks that may have targeted nuclear facilities in Pakistan is, of itself, not unexpected.

While American nuclear facilities are hardened targets, the case reinforces the need for the highest level of security at nuclear facilities such as those of Beaver Valley, Limerick, Peach Bottom and Three Mile Island. As in Pakistan, terrorists seeking to cause maximum devastation or major psychological impact place such facilities at or near the top of their "high-profile targets" list. Even an unsuccessful attempt at attacking an American nuclear power plant would succeed in causing sufficient fear to disrupt the power industry.

In a different type of incident, as noted PAIB no. 16 (4 December 2009), dozens of employees at a nuclear plant in India were apparently deliberately poisoned with tritium in their drinking water. The sabotage was blamed on disgruntled employees; however, the possibility of a far worse scenario involving radicalized jihadist employees at East Coast nuclear plants should not be ruled out.

Sectors: COMMERCIAL FACILITIES; EMERGENCY SERVICES; GOVERNMENT FACILITIES

10. Series of Possible Probing, Surveillance Events

As reported by Washington DC-area authorities, there have been a series of suspicious events in the Mid-Atlantic Region involving imposters posing as federal and local law enforcement, as well as firefighters. While imposters acting for criminal gain or for personal reasons is far from a new phenomenon, some of the more unusual recent incidents include:

- An imposter claiming to represent the Department of Homeland Security entered several facilities seeking information.
- A vehicle was discovered with markings and counterfeit government tags indicating it was an FBI vehicle.
- Fire department officials have been receiving an overseas e-mail from a person claiming to be "a fire brigade enthusiast who recently developed a keen interest in US fire departments" requesting information on their department's resources.
- A phone call to a fire station requesting specific department emergency response information.
- Several instances of imposters presenting themselves to building managers as fire prevention inspectors.

While not involving impersonation of state employees, per se, the following items were reported by Washington DC-area law enforcement:

- A suspicious individual claiming to be a "tourist" was stopped by officers while filming with a camera phone. The investigation revealed footage of mass transit stations, cafes and bars, including the locations of security cameras.
- In jurisdictions outside the DC area, parked fire department vehicles and fire stations have seen an increase in break-ins and illegal entry. Portable radios have been stolen.

*******ANALYSIS*******

T/I/W Rating: MODERATE

ITRR analysts believe the nature and extent of some of the aforementioned spate of events indicates the possibility of more serious adversarial probing and intelligence gathering underway.

ITRR analysts reiterate that jihadist communications cited in PAIB no. 19 (11 December 2009) advised and provided guidance for attacks targeting US police stations and law enforcement. (See PAIB no. 29 for analysis of the attempted bombing of a police task force HQ in California last month.) Another possibility, also discussed in jihadist forums, is a multi-pronged attack emulating that carried out in Mumbai in November 2009, killing nearly 200. Such plans would include attacks intended to occupy responders in many locations simultaneously.

First responders and law enforcement personnel are advised to increase situational awareness for actions revealing pre-operational intelligence gathering. Fire, police and EMS chiefs should review policies for securing their facilities and sensitive communications. In this regard, ITRR notes that there are several online free access sites carrying round-the-clock live feeds from police, fire and EMS scanners throughout the US. The most complete and organized of such sites includes multiple feeds from all but 14 of 67 Pennsylvania counties.

No actionable intelligence at this time for the following sectors:

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD
DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASES
HEALTHCARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH
NATIONAL MONUMENTS AND ICONS
BANKING AND FINANCE
WATER
CHEMICAL
CRITICAL MANUFACTURING
DAMS
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
COMMUNICATIONS
POSTAL AND SHIPPING
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

THREAT / INDICATOR / WARNING RATING	DESCRIPTION
LOW (Level 4)	Available intelligence and recent events indicate that hostile elements currently have little capability or intent to take action against the target. It is assessed that, although it cannot be ruled out, an attack or action is unlikely to be mounted based on current available intelligence.
MODERATE (Level 3)	Available intelligence and recent events indicate that hostile elements have the capability to take action against the target and that such action is within the adversary's current intent. It is assessed that an attack or action is likely to be a priority and might well be mounted.
SEVERE (Level 2)	Available intelligence and recent events indicate that hostile elements have an established capability and current intent to take action against the target and there is some additional information on the nature of the threat. It is assessed that an attack or action on the target is a priority and is likely to be mounted.
CRITICAL (Level 1)	Available intelligence and recent events indicate that hostile elements with an established capability are actively planning to take action against the target within a matter of days (up to two weeks). An attack or action is expected imminently.

END-CLASSIFIED-TAM-C-

For additional information, please contact the TAM-C of the Institute of Terrorism Research and Response at: +1.215.922.1080 or info@terrorresponse.org

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