



(U//FOUO) Ten-Year Anniversary of 9/11 Attacks: No Specific Threats, but a Potentially Attractive Terrorist Target

10 August 2011

(U) Scope

(U//FOUO) This Joint Intelligence Bulletin (JIB) highlights potential terrorist threats related to the 10-year anniversary of the 11 September 2001 (9/11) attacks. This JIB provides perspective on the threat to the Homeland and US interests overseas from al-Qa'ida, al-Qa'ida affiliates and allies, and al-Qa'ida-inspired homegrown violent extremists (HVEs).^{*} FBI and DHS are providing this information to support their respective activities and to assist federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial government counterterrorism and law enforcement officials, as well as first responders and private sector security officials, in effectively deterring, preventing, or disrupting terrorist attacks against the United States. Unless otherwise noted, this JIB uses the FBI's definitions of terms, which may differ from the definitions used by DHS.

^{*} (U//FOUO) DHS and FBI define an HVE as a person of any citizenship who has lived and/or operated primarily in the United States or its territories who advocates, is engaged in, or is preparing to engage in ideologically motivated terrorist activities (including providing support to terrorism) in furtherance of political or social objectives promoted by a foreign terrorist organization, but is acting independently of direction by a foreign terrorist organization. HVEs are distinct from traditional domestic terrorists, who engage in unlawful acts of violence to intimidate civilian populations or attempt to influence domestic policy without direction from or influence by a foreign actor.

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(U) Key Findings

(U//FOUO) We have no indication that al-Qa'ida, its affiliates, or its allies are plotting Homeland attacks to coincide with the 10-year anniversary of 9/11.

(U//FOUO) As of February 2010 al-Qa'ida was contemplating large attacks in the Homeland on symbolic dates, to include the 10-year anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, but we have no specific, credible information to indicate al-Qa'ida's aspirations have evolved into an active Homeland plot.

(U//FOUO) Although we have not detected plots by HVEs targeting the 9/11 anniversary, we remain concerned that HVEs—motivated by al-Qa'ida propaganda that increasingly encourages them to act independently—could try to stage an attack with little or no warning.

(U//FOUO) Al-Qa'ida Interest in Staging Attacks on the 9/11 Anniversary

(U//FOUO) As of February 2010, al-Qa'ida was reportedly contemplating large attacks in the Homeland timed to symbolic dates, to include the 10-year anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. We are uncertain, however, how widely this interest in timing an attack to coincide with the anniversary and other symbolic dates has been accepted within al-Qa'ida and have no specific, credible information to indicate an active plot to target the Homeland was developed based on al-Qa'ida's February 2010 intent.

(U//FOUO) We also remain concerned that the May 2011 death of Usama bin Ladin (UBL) could further contribute to al-Qa'ida's desire to stage an attack on a symbolic date, like the 10-year anniversary of 9/11, as a way to avenge UBL's death and reassert the group's relevance. Despite al-Qa'ida's reported preference to conduct attacks that coincide with symbolic dates and the potential for the group to be motivated by UBL's death, we continue to assess that operational readiness remains the primary driving factor behind the timing of al-Qa'ida attacks.

(U//FOUO) No Specific 9/11 Anniversary Threat from Al-Qa'ida Affiliates and Allies, but Intent to Attack the United States Remains

(U//FOUO) We have not identified any specific threats from al-Qa'ida affiliates and allies to attack the United States or US interests overseas on the 9/11 anniversary. We assess, however, that affiliates and allies such as al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) or Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)—both having demonstrated the intent and capability to stage attacks against the United States—remain intent on attacking the Homeland and are almost certainly plotting attacks against US interests, although not necessarily tied to the 9/11 anniversary.

- (U//FOUO) AQAP—al-Qa'ida's most active affiliate—has attempted two attacks against the United States in the past two years: the 25 December 2009 attempted attack on a Detroit-bound commercial airliner, and the October 2010 plot to send explosive-laden packages aboard aircraft destined for the United States. We remain concerned that the group continues to pursue innovative attack methods designed to overcome Western security measures.

- (U//FOUO) TTP, which sponsored the 1 May 2010 attempted car bombing in Times Square, has repeatedly threatened additional Homeland attacks and publicly vowed to avenge UBL's death.

(U//FOUO) Al-Qa'ida-Inspired HVEs Remain a Concern, Despite Lack of Specific Threat

(U//FOUO) There is no intelligence that HVEs are actively plotting or planning to attack the United States on or around 9/11. We remain concerned that HVEs could conduct an attack with little warning because of the individualized nature of the radicalization process, which makes it difficult to determine those HVEs with the greatest propensity to take violent action. Moreover, HVEs who act independently—lone offenders—present law enforcement with limited opportunities to detect plots.*

- (U//FOUO) We assess HVEs may seek to retaliate for UBL's death by launching a 9/11 anniversary attack because of widespread press coverage that UBL himself supported such an attack. HVEs might regard such attacks as glorifying the cause and demonstrating their allegiance to al-Qa'ida.

(U//FOUO) Al-Qa'ida Propaganda as Potential Inspiration for 9/11 Anniversary Attacks

(U//FOUO) We are concerned that recent public messages from al-Qa'ida and its affiliates that encourage independent attacks may increase the threat from HVEs. Both video and print propaganda from al-Qa'ida and AQAP have encouraged violent extremists in the West who lack formal ties to al-Qa'ida to follow the example of alleged Fort Hood shooter Major Nidal Hasan^{USPER} and carry out small-scale attacks wherever they are, with whatever means they have available.

- (U//FOUO) Al-Qa'ida has released two videos in the past 16 months with statements by al-Qa'ida spokesman Adam Gadahn^{USPER} that encourage individuals in the West to obtain convenient weapons and attack familiar targets.
- (U//FOUO) Several editions of AQAP's English-language magazine, *Inspire*, provide both encouragement and advice for carrying out independent attacks in the West, including practical instructions for constructing homemade explosive devices and a two-part series on how to use and maintain an AK-47 assault rifle.

(U) Outlook

(U//FOUO) FBI and DHS have no specific, credible information on any threats related to the 10-year anniversary of the 9/11 attacks or indications that al-Qa'ida has acted on its apparent February 2010 aspiration to advance Homeland plots coinciding with the anniversary. We nevertheless remain concerned that terrorists not yet identified by the Intelligence Community and law enforcement could seek to advance or execute attacks with little or no warning. In advance of and immediately following the anniversary, we

* (U//FOUO) FBI defines a "lone offender" as a violent extremist who commits terrorist attacks alone and without direction from a group or another individual. The perpetrator may have contact with others, but those other individuals are not aware of the perpetrator's plans or intentions.

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urge federal, state, and local law enforcement to maintain increased vigilance for indications of preoperational planning and suspicious activity.

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