



Advisory

Altered Bus in Fairfield, N.J. Presents Concerns

19 February 2008

(U//FOUO) Prepared by NJ ROIC Analysis Element Special Projects & Topics Desk ~ AE200801-372

(U//FOUO) The NJ ROIC produced this advisory, a compilation of available information on this potential threat, analyzed to provide situational awareness. The information is current and accurate as of February 19, 2008.

Key Judgments

- (U//FOUO) Investigators suspect the driver modified the bus to evade fuel taxes. However, the alterations demonstrate the potential for a bus to be turned into a large vehicle borne improvised explosive device (VBIED).
- (U//FOUO) A cursory inspection of the bus did not reveal the alterations.

Background

(U//LES) In December 2007, the Fairfield (New Jersey) Police Department (FPD) observed a bus, registered in Florida, at a local gas station, where the driver was pumping diesel fuel through an open window into the bus. Further investigation revealed that the driver had removed the right-side seats to accommodate eighteen 55-gallon plastic drums, which he filled with approximately 300 gallons of diesel fuel before FPD impounded the bus. There were numerous equipment violations observed and the driver was issued summonses as a result. The drums were not secured and diesel fuel apparently leaked during the fueling process. In addition, a large unsecured truck battery was on the bus steps, which can present a hazardous condition (See Appendix A for photographs). The driver, who resides in Pennsylvania, claimed he was buying the fuel in New Jersey to resell it in New York City for profit.¹

(U//LES) On the following day, the New York City Police Department reportedly stopped two similarly equipped buses near the Lincoln Tunnel.²

(U) The average price for diesel fuel in Fairfield, New Jersey, is \$3.23, which is 48 cents cheaper than the average price in New York City - \$3.71.³ This average difference in price makes it lucrative to transport the fuel across state lines, circumventing the fuel tax laws.

Potential Threats

(U//FOUO) In addition to the hazards posed by improperly transporting unsecured fuel, especially through tunnels, these simple modifications illustrate the ability to carry explosive materials in an

¹ NJSP, Hazardous Materials Transportation Enforcement Unit, 1/19/08

² NJSP, Hazardous Materials Transportation Enforcement Unit, 1/19/08

³ MapQuest Gas Prices, <http://gasprices.mapquest.com/index.jsp>, 2/14/08

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otherwise innocuous vehicle. In this instance, the motive appears to be tax evasion and profit, but similar modifications could create a large VBIED.

Conclusion

(U//LES) While the NJ ROIC has not received any specific, credible threats related to altered buses in New Jersey, this event highlights the devastating capability an altered bus could have in terms of casualties or toward infrastructure.

Request for Information

(U//FOUO) Any agency with current threat information on VBIEDs as well as comments or questions related to this document, should contact the NJ ROIC Special Projects & Topics Desk at (609) 963-6900, ext. 6266 and ext. 6246, or njroicspt@gw.njsp.org.

Appendix A

Photographs of the impounded bus.⁴



⁴ NJSP, Hazardous Materials Transportation Enforcement Unit, 1/19/08

