



Intelligence Advisory

Potential Concerns for Transportation Security

March 24, 2016

(U//LES) New Jersey Regional Operations Intelligence Center (NJ ROIC) Intelligence & Analysis Threat Unit ~ ROIC201603-02652T

NJ ROIC SIN: NJ-TER-0200 (targets/vulnerabilities)/ DHS SIN: HSEC 8 (Terrorist Operations)

NJ ROIC SIN: NJ-TER-0300 (suspicious events)/ DHS SIN: HSEC 8 (Terrorist Operations)

Summary

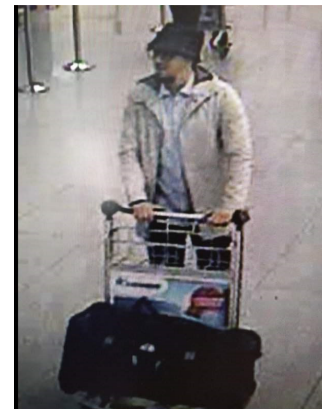
(U//FOUO) The NJ ROIC currently has no specific indication of any credible specific threats to transportation facilities. However, with the rise in “self-radicalized” actor(s), and homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) influenced by ISIL and other terror groups, targeted violent attacks to any of these sectors could occur with little or no notice by an individual(s) who has not yet garnered law enforcement attention. This advisory highlights recent transportation concerns in the wake of the recent attacks in Belgium.

Current Threat Environment

(U//FOUO) The NJ ROIC has no specific information regarding a threat to transportation hubs in New Jersey or New York. Pro-Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) and other international terrorist groups continue to call upon HVEs to carry out attacks against transportation centers due to their effect on national economies, their impact to transportation worldwide, and because of the media attention that results from such incidents. There are heightened security operations occurring throughout the US and New Jersey, in response to the attacks in Belgium. These are designed to prevent any individual(s) that have been recently radicalized, from potentially selecting and attacking transportation centers as their target. Public safety and industry security personnel will likely see an increase in suspicious activity reporting for the next ten days. However it is critical to be aware of recent suspicious activity, report any concerns immediately, and conduct thorough threat assessments surrounding any incidents at your facility.

(U) The deadly attacks in Belgium on 22 March, show ISIL’s resolve and intent to attack mass transportation locations. Their attack on the Airport (near the American Airlines Counter) and at metro stations close to the US Embassy and other foreign consulates, expressly amplifies their hate and discontent for American and European interests. ISIL announced shortly after the attacks that killed 34 and wounded 250, that there are “dark days” ahead for countries allied against the Islamic State, threatening, “What is coming is worse and more bitter”.

- (U) At the time of this report, Najim Laachraoui, the suspected bomb maker for the explosives used in the Brussels attacks, remains at large, and may be affecting other operations with direct support, or



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motivating other would be HVEs through his successful attack and evasion. A home related to him in Brussels was searched and more bomb making materials were found.

- (U) Germany recently declared Syrian and Iraqi passports issued in territories controlled by ISIL as invalid. German authorities stopped recognizing passports less than a month after French authorities found Syrian passports on the bodies of two men involved in the November 13 attacks in Paris. The German Interior Ministry warned that passports issued from Deir el-Zour, Raqqa and al-Hasaka in Syria, and Mosul and Anbar province in Iraq are invalid and their bearers' identities are considered unconfirmed unless they can provide other documents ([NY Times](#)).
- (U) DHS recently added Libya, Somalia, and Yemen as countries of concern; limiting Visa Waiver Program travel for certain individuals who traveled to these countries to ensure the program's requirements are commensurate with the threat from foreign terrorist fighters. Individuals can still apply for a visa using the regular immigration process at any US Embassy or consulate. (DHS)
- (U) State Department Travel Warning - The U.S. State Department has issued a travel warning to all Americans living in or traveling to Europe following Tuesday's terrorist attacks in Brussels. The alert warns that that the Islamic State and other terrorist groups continue to plan attacks throughout Europe targeting sporting events, tourist sites, restaurants and transportation.
 - Americans are advised to be vigilant in public places or when using public transit, to avoid crowded places and to exercise caution during religious holidays or while at large festivals or events. ([The Dallas Morning News](#))
- (U//FOUO) Many transportation systems in major U.S. cities have increased their security postures. As a precautionary measure, TSA is deploying additional security to major city airports in the United States, and at various rail and transit stations around the country. TSA is also working closely with state and local law enforcement, airport and transit authorities, and the aviation industry in order to augment that security.

Recent Suspicious Activity

(U//FOUO) The ROIC reviewed suspicious activity reporting (SARs) related to transportation threats in New Jersey. These items are *in addition* or amplifying those reported in the previous Daily Threat Overviews.

- There are no credible threats specific to any particular transportation center or asset at this time.
- 3/22/16, *Robbinsville*: Identified male had photos of ISIL beheadings/instructions to make IEDs.
- 3/21/16, *New Brunswick*: Unidentified male taking panoramic video of train station intersection.
- 3/11/16, *Union*: Identified subject reported their law enforcement identification lost or stolen.
- 3/8/16, *Jersey City*: Identified armed subject dressed as a police officer at a mall.
- 3/3/16, *Garfield*: Two photographs of unidentified subjects in possession of assault rifles and wearing military fatigues observed in a business.
- 2/28/16, *Lawrence*: Identified male claimed during arrest to have terrorism funding information.
- 2/27/16, *Ewing*: Unidentified male made telephonic bomb threat to homeland security personnel.
- 2/26/16, *Voorhees*: Unidentified subject made implied social media threat regarding 9/11 attacks.
- 2/26/16, *Elizabeth*: Unidentified subject was observed photographing airport infrastructure.
- 2/25/16, *Old Bridge*: Identified juvenile made statements expressing interest in ISIS.

- 2/21/16: *New Brunswick*: An identified business in New Brunswick, NJ, allegedly promotes ISIS/Terrorist related activities.
- 2/16/16, *Bayonne*: Unidentified subject was photographing Port Elizabeth and the Turnpike.
- 2/12/16, *Linden*: Unidentified suspects were observed on the New Jersey Turnpike, hanging out of the passenger side window of a vehicle with a NY registration taking photos of the oil refineries and the Newark Airport.
- 2/6/16, *Bayonne*: Identified subject had .38 caliber ammunition in checked baggage at port.
- 2/2/16, *Hanover Township*: Identified subject with a military style tactical vest was observed in the area of a commercial facility.
- 2/2/16, *Lawrence*: Unidentified male made "jihadi" threats while patronizing auto retailer.
- 2/2/16, *Wall*: Unidentified subject observed photographing the airport.
- 2/1/16, *Atlantic Highlands*: An unidentified male subject acted strange while on board a ferry.
- 1/30/16, *Beachwood*: Unidentified males overheard saying, "We're doing business in Brussels," on a domestic flight to Newark Liberty International Airport.
 - **Analytic Comment**: Likely in response to the Brussels attacks
- 1/28/16, *Teterboro Borough*: Unidentified male inquired about transporting explosives and ammo using a private air charter.
- 1/20/16, *Clifton*: Juvenile student made a statement claiming her parents are members of ISIS.
- 1/15/16, *Toms River*: Unidentified subject attempted to elicit information about traffic cameras and security cameras at a hospital.
- 1/11/16, *Lakewood*: Identified subject at an MVC office, stated he was a terrorist.
- 1/7/16, *Hackensack*: Identified subject made a comment about being a former terrorist, during a custody hearing in Superior Court.

National/International related items of interest:

(U//FOUO) The following incidents or events have occurred nationwide. The NJ ROIC encourages security and infrastructure personnel working transportation industry to consider these recent events, and how they may affect New Jersey transportation posture:

- 3/22/16, *Denver*: Airport Terminal reopened after no threat was found in suspicious package investigation: No threat was found after a positive hit by a bomb-sniffing dog prompted authorities to evacuate a section of the main terminal of Denver International Airport (DIA) Tuesday afternoon as they investigated "suspicious packages" left near a ticket counter. The ticket counters affected by the evacuations included: American, Aero Mexico, Air Canada, Lufthansa and British Airways. The baggage claim on the west side of level 5 was also closed for the investigation. No vehicle traffic was allowed on the west side of the terminal. Police directed passengers to the east side. ([KUSA](#))
- 3/22/16: *Texas*: A Walmart in Kaufman was evacuated Tuesday morning during an active shooter incident. Kaufman police reported the active shooter just after 10 a.m. local time. 55-year-old Donald Ray Coleman walked into the store, pulled out a handgun and shot 59-year-old John D. Morgan multiple times, and then shot himself. The shooter is in the hospital in critical condition, in this apparent murder suicide, related to an ongoing dispute between the men. ([5NBCDFW](#))
 - **Analyst comment**: Incidents like the event in Belgium, can cause people with already existing violent plans to speed up their planning and execution cycle. Even when their

extremism roots are not related to the Islamic extremists such as those that conducted the Belgium attacks, people seeking revenge or planning acts of violence may latch on to such events as the final motivation needed to carry out an attack.

- *3/18/16, United States:* US Airport Employees Flagged for Terrorist Ties - According to open source reporting, 73 private employees, at 40 airports across the US, were flagged for having potential ties to terrorism. The DHS Inspector General's Office report identified flaws in the TSA's vetting process. These flaws included a lack of access to all terrorism related databases for vetting, improper verification of Form I-9 documents, and a lack of recurring criminal and terrorist watch list background checks for current employees. The report also identified a lack of proper vetting for criminal background checks and citizenship status by the TSA. The TSA relies on local airport employees to conduct these background checks, follow up and review of these records. The TSA response to this report was to assign blame to a lack of access to terrorist databases, or miscoded information associated with new employee credential requests.
- *3/17/16, Arizona:* Abdul Malik Abdul Kareem, 44, was convicted on all five charges against him by a federal jury in U.S. District Court in Phoenix stemming from the May 3 attack in the Dallas suburb of Garland where he and others conspired to attack a "Draw Mohammed" cartoon contest. His support of the Islamic State in this incident, also left his two alleged associates dead in a shoot-out with police.
- *3/9/16, New York, NY:* The trial of a suspected ISIL supporter finished with former US Air Force veteran and former airplane mechanic Tairod Nathan Webster Pugh, 48 being found guilty of trying to join ISIL. Prosecutors say Pugh was carrying 180 jihadist propaganda videos and a letter on his computer telling his wife he wanted to join the Islamic State, when he was stopped at a Turkish airport in January 2015. Pugh is the first of a multitude of trials for suspected of sympathizing with ISIL.
 - Analyst Comment: These are the first ISIL-related defendants to go on trial. We have no historical record of how these and other trials may affect other "would-be" homegrown violent extremists. If recent events, such as the recent shooting of the Philadelphia Police Officer during an ambush style attack, are any indication, we could see others that have been radicalized, moving closer towards violence, using this case or recent events in Paris and Belgium as a precipitous event.
- *2/28/16, Bakersfield California:* Police shot a man who appeared to be homeless, but was acting aggressively towards several bus drivers at the Amtrak Station. One driver used a fire extinguisher to defend himself while officers repeatedly instructed him to drop a knife.
- *2/20/16, New York:* Two New York Police Officers were shot in Brooklyn during an exchange of gunfire and car chase. Jamal Funes, 34, drove his car head-on into a marked patrol vehicle as he was going the wrong way on Lexington Ave near Malcom X Boulevard in Bedford-Stuyvesant. Funes was known previously as Fredrick Funes before he converted to Islam while serving time in prison. Investigators are still looking into possibilities of Islamic radicalization. ([CNN News](#))
- *2/18/16, Buffalo, MO:* A woman arrested for operating ISIL social media accounts, had made numerous threats against FBI agents, military members and the President of the US on nearly 100 Twitter accounts, some associated with ISIL. During numerous tweets she posted a link containing personal identifiable information for US Army, Navy and State Department personnel. She posted names, addresses and numbers of two FBI agents with the words "Wanted to Kill." ([News Leader](#))

Pre-Operational Indicators:

(U//FOUO) The following items are examples of suspicious incidents that may indicate pre-operational threats are evolving around transportation epicenters.

- Persons carrying bulky, excessively heavy, or oddly shaped baggage.
- Individuals wearing clothing that does not meet the current environment, such as bulky outer garments, meant to conceal weapons or explosive materials. (e.g. sweating with a large coat).
- Potential “swatting” threats that are intended to disturb transportation, or provoke a response
- Vehicles poorly parked, or displaying inappropriate/lacking identification tags (e.g. missing license plates) or markings that don’t match vehicle purpose/type (e.g. ambulance or delivery truck)
- The loss or theft of badges, ID cards, access cards associated with the transit agency (i.e. badges, uniforms, credentials, vehicles, technology or documents)
- Unusual odors, and/or hazardous or potentially hazardous materials, such as chemical, biological, or explosive materials, left at or near the office or facility
- Unusual questions about a facility or a transit asset’s purpose, operations, shifts and/or security procedures on that transportation asset
- Individuals unable to display proper identification, or identification appears to be altered or fraudulent, including delivery personnel or contractors
- Individual(s) that inquire about transit schedules, operations and procedures but fail to provide identification when asked.
- The NJ ROIC recommends all security personnel maintain situational awareness of their surroundings and be familiar with past tactics and procedures.

Noteworthy Dates

- 3/27/16: Easter
- 4/22/16 – 4/30/16: Passover

Significant Terrorism Dates

- 3/29/10: 40 killed and 60 wounded in Russia when female suicide bombers attacked two metro stations in Moscow for Chechen rebel groups
- 4/2/03: Jemaah Islamiyah explodes bomb on passenger wharf in Philippine Islands
- 4/2/86: An Arab revolutionary bomb explodes on TWA flight 840 in Greece

Suspicious Activity Reporting

(U//FOUO) Suspicious activity should be reported immediately, per existing protocols. Activity can be reported 24 hours a day to the NJ ROIC Counter Terrorism Watch at (866) 4-SAFE-NJ (866-472-3365) or tips@njhomelandsecurity.gov. The US military’s Suspicious Activity hotline: IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING 1-800-CALL SPY (225-5779)

Contact Information

(U//FOUO) Any questions regarding this product, contact the NJ ROIC at (609) 963-6900, extension 6253 or email njroicthreat@gw.njsp.org.