



## Overview of Recent Threat Information

24 September 2009

*(U//FOUO) NJ Regional Operations Intelligence Center (NJ ROIC) Threat Analysis Program ~ AE200909-738*

(U//FOUO) The NJ ROIC Analysis Element has no information regarding any specific, credible threat to New Jersey or the U.S. Homeland at this time. Due to an active, federal counterterrorism investigation, the NJ ROIC Analysis Element produced this overview of potential targets of terrorist activity and the tactics, techniques, and procedures that extremists may use. It was produced with information from FBI and DHS, based on analysis of police investigations, thwarted plots, and past terrorist attacks.

### Potential Targets

(U//FOUO) Al-Qaeda and affiliated organizations remain committed to attacking in the United States, with a likely objective of striking prominent political, economic, and infrastructure targets to produce mass casualties. Mass transit and passenger rail systems, government facilities, and commercial facilities - such as popular sport and entertainment venues and luxury hotels - remain the most likely targets for terrorist attacks against the United States.

#### *Mass transit and passenger rail systems*

(U//LES) Mass transit and passenger rail systems continue to be potential targets due to their accessibility to heavy public ridership, regular schedules, and numerous access points throughout the rail system.<sup>1</sup> New Jersey has a large mass-transit infrastructure, including large bus terminals, and approximately 1.4 million customers using NJ Transit, Port Authority Trans-Hudson (PATH), Port Authority Transit Corporation (PATCO), Amtrak, and Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) services on a daily basis.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Popular sport and entertainment venues*

(U//LES) Al-Qaeda could meet its standing objectives of inflicting mass casualties, economic damage, and psychological impact by attacking a stadium or arena filled with spectators. The al-Qaeda training manual specifically lists "...blasting and destroying the places of amusement, immorality, and sin...and attacking vital economic centers" as a key objective.<sup>3</sup> New Jersey has an NFL stadium, two NHL/NBA arenas, a new soccer stadium, and several concert venues that attract large crowds.

#### *Luxury hotels*

(U//LES) Continued terrorist interest in this sector is due to the substantial number of people present in hotels and the general lack of robust perimeter security necessary to prevent access by operatives. Also, regular deliveries of products and services offer venues or opportunities for terrorists to

<sup>1</sup> DHS/FBI, Joint Homeland Security Note, "Terrorist Tactics Against Mass Transit and Passenger Rail," 9/21/09

<sup>2</sup> NJ Office of Homeland Security & Preparedness, Intelligence Bureau, "The Threat to the New Jersey Transportation Sector," 9/23/09

<sup>3</sup> DHS/FBI, Joint Homeland Security Note, "Potential Threats to Popular Sport and Entertainment Venues," 9/21/09

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penetrate protective measures.<sup>4</sup> New Jersey is home to numerous luxury hotels, with the most prominent being the hotels associated with the casino gaming industry in Atlantic City. Some historic examples of attacks on this industry include:

- **Jakarta, Indonesia (July 2009):** Two suicide attackers posed as guests to attack hotels with IEDs. They reportedly checked into a room two days earlier and may have been assisted by a hotel vendor.
- **Peshawar, Pakistan (June 2009):** A small group of attackers used small arms and two vehicles, one packed with explosives, to attack a luxury hotel. Gunmen approached the security checkpoint and fired at the guards, allowing both vehicles to enter the compound and detonate the explosives.
- **Mumbai, India (November 2008):** Terrorists attacked several soft targets - including a train station and two luxury hotels - using assault rifles, pistols, grenades, and small IEDs.<sup>5</sup>

### Potential Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

(U//FOUO) The information provided by FBI and DHS also highlighted potential terrorist tactics, techniques, and procedures that may be of concern to New Jersey law enforcement and homeland security officials. These areas include:

#### *Homemade explosives*

(U//LES) Violent extremists have used explosives made from ingredients readily available at retail stores in the United States or over the Internet. Triacetone triperoxide (TATP) and hexamethylene triperoxide diamine (HMTD) are two common homemade explosives built with hydrogen peroxide.<sup>6</sup>

(U//LES) TATP and HMTD are extremely sensitive to impact, friction, static/sparks, and heat, and may react violently to field drug testing. Similarities in appearance and production methods may cause first responders to mistake them for clandestinely manufactured narcotics (i.e., methamphetamine), creating a potential, additional hazard.<sup>7</sup>

(U//LES) Chlorate-based explosive formulations are also a possible option for terrorists. The demonstrated effectiveness of explosive compositions using ammonium nitrate and hydrogen peroxide has raised law enforcement awareness of these materials and increased security measures. In order to adapt and avoid detection, terrorists are exploring other options, such as using potassium chlorate (white, odorless powder) or sodium chlorate (yellow, odorless powder) when making IEDs.<sup>8</sup>

(U//LES) High-profile, historic examples include the London attacks in July 2005, in which suicide bombers used homemade hydrogen-peroxide based explosives to carry out attacks,<sup>9</sup> and the December 2001 attempted attack by “shoe-bomber” Richard Reid, who attempted to detonate a TATP explosive device while flying from Paris to Miami.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> DHS/FBI, Joint Homeland Security Note, “International Terrorists Remain Focused on Targeting Luxury Hotels,” 9/21/09

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> DHS/FBI, Joint Homeland Security Note, “On-Going Terrorist Interest in Homemade Explosives,” 9/14/09

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> FBI, Roll Call Release, “Increased Interest in Chlorate-Based Explosives,” 9/2/09

<sup>9</sup> DHS/FBI, Joint Homeland Security Note, “On-Going Terrorist Interest in Homemade Explosives,” 9/14/09

<sup>10</sup> DHS/FBI, Roll Call Release, “Triacetone Triperoxide as a Possible Homemade Explosive,” 9/16/09

### ***Concealed IEDs***

(U//LES) Terrorists have used innocuous, everyday items to avoid detection and conceal small, mobile IEDs. The purpose is to facilitate their placement in secure areas, among large gatherings, or at high-profile events. Small IEDs are difficult to detect, especially when hidden in common items that are easy to transport. The following are potential indicators, concealment options, and historic examples of small, mobile IED activity:

#### ***Potential indicators***

- Protruding wires or fuses
- Unusual smells such as chemical odors
- Wetness or unusual stains on a container
- Containers abandoned in high traffic or otherwise strategic location

#### ***Potential concealment options***

- Backpacks, satchels, suitcases, etc.
- Jars, bottles, cans, etc.
- Shoes and clothing

#### ***Historic examples of attacks or attempted attacks using these concealment tactics:***

- Attack on rail system in Madrid (2004), mass transit in London (2005), and western hotels in Jakarta (2009), which utilized backpacks carrying concealed explosives
- Richard Reid, aka the “shoe-bomber,” who concealed explosives in his shoes in a failed attempt to blow up a U.S.-bound airliner in 2001
- The disrupted 2006 U.K. plot, in which operatives planned to down multiple transatlantic airliners by smuggling explosives aboard the planes disguised as sports drinks<sup>11</sup>

### **Suspicious Activity Indicators**

(U//LES) Suspicious activity is not always actionable, but when placed in context with additional behaviors or with other information, may indicate a potential threat.<sup>12</sup> The following are some examples of potential suspicious activity:

#### ***General***

- There is no typical physical appearance for a terrorist operative - al-Qaeda actively seeks to diversify its “operatives”
- Bulky clothing inconsistent with the weather; frequent, brief contact with other individuals; etc.
- Individuals taking panoramic photos/videos - the al-Qaeda Manual stresses that if still photos are taken, prints should be cut and assembled together in a mosaic
- Individuals taking notes or drawing diagrams of critical infrastructure
- Repeat visits to take photos/video of the same landmark
- Measuring by counting footsteps between entrances, security posts, security cameras, etc.
- Questioning security personnel on sensitive subjects (shift changes, what cameras film, etc.).
- Possession of multiple identification documents
- Filming entry and egress points, traffic barriers, or security personnel

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<sup>11</sup> DHS-FBI, Roll Call Release, “Concealment of Small Charge Improvised Explosives Devices,” 9/18/09

<sup>12</sup> DHS-FBI, Roll Call Release, “Terrorist Use of Self-storage Facilities,” 9/21/09

- Possession of sensitive schedules, blueprints, evacuation plans, codes, etc.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Self-storage facilities***

(U//LES) Violent extremists have used commercial storage facilities for pre-operational purposes (i.e., housing explosives or other supplies) in past attacks, and use of these facilities continues to be of interest to extremists. Terrorist operatives favor such facilities because they provide areas to hide explosives and other contraband while limiting the risk of arousing suspicion.

- Insistence on paying in cash, sometimes weeks or months in advance
- Seemingly excessive concern about privacy
- Visits to a storage unit late at night or at unusual times
- Suspicious deliveries to the storage unit, particularly from chemical supply companies
- Exhibiting nervousness or evasiveness when approached by rental employees or security personnel
- Unusual fumes, liquids, residues, or odors emanating from units
- Discarding of chemical containers in storage-unit dumpsters
- Stockpiling of cell phones, timers, or similar electronic devices
- Indications of burns or symptoms of exposure to chemical substances
- Attempts to store unusual quantities of fuel or agricultural/industrial chemicals<sup>14</sup>

### ***Homemade explosives***

- Individuals who have burn marks on their hands, arms, or face, or who have stains on clothing
- Foul odors or caustic fumes coming from a room or building
- Damage to ceilings and walls - such as corrosion of metal surfaces or structural damage - and paint discoloration from harsh chemical fumes
- Strong chemical odors emanating from sewers and drainage ditches
- Large industrial fans or multiple fans in windows
- Dead vegetation in the surrounding area
- Presence of metal or plastic drums for storing explosives
- Machinery - such as gas burners or mixers - for processing raw materials
- Discoloration of pavement, soil, or structure
- Refrigerators or coolers used to store volatile chemicals and finished products
- Individuals requesting or purchasing information (such as textbooks) on using peroxide
- Large-quantity purchases of hydrogen peroxide (i.e., more than a gallon)<sup>15</sup>

### **Potential Countermeasures**

(U//FOUO) The NJ ROIC Analysis Element provides the following information on potential countermeasures for law enforcement and homeland security officials to consider in reducing threats to potential targets of attack.<sup>16</sup>

- Municipal police departments with sizeable mass transportation hubs in their jurisdictions may increase the presence of visible patrols and the frequency of contact with the public in these areas
- Municipal police departments with chemical industries in their jurisdictions may increase the presence of visible patrols and the frequency of contact with the public in these areas

<sup>13</sup> NJ ROIC Advisory AE200811-633, "Determining What is Truly Suspicious Activity," 11/7/08

<sup>14</sup> DHS/FBI, Roll Call Release, "Terrorist Use of Self-storage Facilities," 9/21/09

<sup>15</sup> DHS/FBI, Joint Homeland Security Note, "On-Going Terrorist Interest in Homemade Explosives," 9/14/09

<sup>16</sup> DHS/FBI, Joint Homeland Security Note, "Terrorist Tactics Against Mass Transit and Passenger Rail," 9/21/09

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- Municipal police departments with storage facilities in their jurisdictions may increase the presence of visible patrols and the frequency of contact with the public in these areas
- Provide daily security and awareness briefings to essential personnel
- Prohibit non-essential vehicles from parking in the immediate area surrounding a facility, with particular attention to underground parking areas and loading docks
- Approach all illegally parked vehicles in and around facilities, question drivers, direct them to move immediately, and remove unattended vehicles
- Examine possible attack scenarios and weaknesses in security, and review response plans with local law enforcement, emergency management, and facility personnel
- Provide frequent training for all staff, particularly security personnel, on threat awareness, surveillance detection, recognition of suspicious behavior, and small-arms concealment
- Install adequate perimeter fencing, walls, or barriers to expand the perimeter around the buildings and populated areas
- Maintain a high level of awareness and training of security staff to recognize surveillance and counter-surveillance techniques and to identify and report suspicious activities
- Use advanced security surveillance technologies
- Develop as much information as possible **before approaching** individuals regarding actions and identity
- Check if unattended vehicles contain suspicious items (e.g., wires or large bags/containers) or are unusually weighed down<sup>17</sup>

### Request for Information

*(U//FOUO) Any agency with further information regarding potential extremist activity should contact Watch Operations at (609) 963-6900 or [roic@gw.njsp.org](mailto:roic@gw.njsp.org). Anyone with comments or questions about this document should contact the Special Projects & Topics Desk at (609) 963-6900, ext. 6243, or [njroicspt@gw.njsp.org](mailto:njroicspt@gw.njsp.org).*

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<sup>17</sup> NJ ROIC Advisory AE200811-633, "Determining What is Truly Suspicious Activity," 11/7/08, and NYPD, Counterterrorism Bureau, Site Specific Report, 12/8/08