

“Defending our Nation against its enemies is the first and fundamental commitment of the Federal Government. Today, that task has changed dramatically. Enemies in the past needed great armies and great industrial capabilities to endanger America. Now, shadowy networks of individuals can bring great chaos and suffering to our shores for less than it costs to purchase a single tank. Terrorists are organized to penetrate open societies and to turn the power of modern technologies against us.”

President George W. Bush, 2002 National Security Strategy

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Terrorism

The Horn of Africa: Center for Terrorism?

A year after Al Qaeda terrorists bombed a Kenyan tourist hotel, a new investigation has highlighted the pivotal role played by Somalia in the attack. Somalia served as a training base, weapons supermarket, and hideout for the Al Qaeda cell that carried out the November 2002 twin attacks near Mombasa, Kenya. The UN report describes how the terrorists used Somalia as a base—training under cover of a lobster-fishing business, buying Soviet-made missiles locally, and stealing across the Kenyan border in outboards and traditional dugout canoes.

The investigation shows how breaches of a 1992 arms embargo have made Somalia a terrorist haven. Ancient trading routes, particularly across the Gulf of Aden to Yemen, provide the backbone of Somalia’s thriving arms trade. Many weapons end up in the arms market of Mogadishu, a city carved up into zones of control by rival warlords. Recently, Al Qaeda has joined the list of customers. After the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in East Africa, a cell led by the wanted Comoran national, Fazul Abdullah Mohamed, set up in Kenya and Somalia. After the Mombasa attack, the

surviving cell members returned to Somalia, where they lived on allowances provided by a Sudanese financial controller. One alleged terrorist, Suleiman Ahmed Hemed, was plucked from Somalia in a joint U.S.-Kenyan “snatch and grab” operation in April 2003. But investigators believe at least four other cell members are still hiding out in Somalia.

Since 9/11, U.S. Special Forces and intelligence assets have engaged in covert operations in an attempt to contain the terrorist threat. But the free flow of weapons is helped by supplies from neighboring Ethiopia, which is sponsoring some warlords. Ever since the disastrous peacekeeping mission of the early 1990s, the outside world has mostly left Somalia to its own devices. Islamic groups from the Middle East have filled this vacuum. Indeed, Islamic charities have been the main sources of assistance in the refugee camps since 1989, and have built schools, mosques, and hospitals.

(Combined Dispatches)

Israelis Capture Islamic Jihad Commander Obeidi

An Israeli military unit captured the commander of the Islamic Jihad (IJ) in Jenin on November 7. Obeidi was regarded as the leading planner of Jihad suicide attacks over the last year. The operation resulted in riots in the northern West Bank city of Jenin, regarded as the leading Jihad stronghold in the West Bank. Israeli military sources said Obeidi was linked to bombings in Haifa and Jerusalem in 2003 in which more than 30 people were killed. Obeidi carried out some of the IJ operations with the cooperation of the much-larger Hamas. Hamas would help finance operations and provide the explosives for the suicide attacks while IJ would supply the suicide bombers. *(Combined Dispatches)*

Alleged Operational Ties Between the Real IRA and the French Breton Separatists

Seven suspected terrorists—five French Breton separatists and two alleged members of the Real IRA—were arrested on November 4 in a joint operation by France and the Irish Republic. Although MI5 was not directly involved, it was kept closely informed. Attempts have been made to monitor suspected Celtic link-ups between the Real IRA and other European terrorist groups, such as the Breton Revolutionary Army and the Basque separatist group ETA. A close watch has been kept for any sign of a new arms-smuggling route for the Real IRA. The arrests in France were made after the discovery of a small cache of weapons in a forest on the outskirts of Dieppe.

The police said that the discovery had prompted an investigation because of suspicions of links between the five French suspects and the Real IRA, the organization responsible for the Omagh bombing in 1998 in which 29 people died. There was no confirmation that the five arrested French separatists were suspected of being members of the Breton Revolutionary Army, which has strong links with ETA. One of the leaders of the Breton group has been held in a French jail without trial for three years in connection with a bomb attack on a McDonald's restaurant in Brittany in April 2000. One woman was killed. Six members of the Breton Revolutionary Army are awaiting trial in Paris on charges of stealing eight tons of explosives at Plevin, near Guingamp, in 1999. Nearly half was recovered, but several hundred kilos went to Spain, where they were used by ETA in its bombing campaign. (*Combined Dispatches*)

Israel's National Airline Installs Anti-Missile System on Some Planes

Israel's national airline, El Al, has installed an anti-missile system on some of its aircraft, just days after the discovery of an alleged plot to fire missiles at a plane in Toronto. Israel TV reported that the installation of the system is experimental at this point. The threat became a top priority for Israeli transportation authorities last November, when unidentified attackers fired two surface-to-air missiles at a chartered Israeli airliner taking off from Mombasa, Kenya. The missiles missed the plane. In October, two El Al flights from Tel Aviv to Toronto had to be diverted to Hamilton because of reported threats that

the Al Qaeda terrorist network was planning a missile attack on the aircraft.

A system called Flight Guard, developed by Israel Aircraft Industries' Elta Systems Group, has been installed on a few planes at a cost of \$755,000 for each aircraft. The system has been used on Israeli military aircraft for a decade. The Israeli government paid for the initial project, but future costs will fall on the airlines themselves. International airlines have expressed interest in the Israeli system, but will not purchase it until the device is registered with international airline authorities. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security itself plans to award preliminary contracts to one or more companies in December for a six-month program to adapt existing anti-missile military technologies for use on commercial airliners. (*Combined Dispatches*)

Compulsory ID Cards in the UK by 2013: A Vital Measure to Curb Illegal Immigration and Terrorism

On November 11, British home secretary David Blunkett said all British citizens will have to have some form of identity card by 2013 as a vital measure to curb illegal immigration, benefits abuse, and terrorism. The government would introduce the ID plan after setting up a national database of biometric information using fingerprints, iris scans, and facial recognition technology. "An ID card scheme will help tackle the crime and serious issues facing the UK, particularly illegal working, immigration abuse, ID fraud, terrorism, and organized crime," Blunkett said, claiming that "minimal internal controls and strong borders" were no longer enough. Some opponents to the project said ID cards would be too expensive to introduce and would have serious implications for civil liberties. A key concern about introducing compulsory ID cards to the UK is that the police would be able to demand to see them. Britain has not had compulsory ID cards since the early 1950s. Such ID cards are mandatory in several Western European countries. (*Combined Dispatches*)

Two of Asia's Most Wanted Terrorists Running

Two of Asia's most wanted terrorists are armed with explosives and planning fresh attacks on Western hotels and banks—possibly disguising themselves as beggars and receiving shelter from fellow radicals, officials told the Associated Press. Malaysians Azahari bin Husin (a British-trained engineer and former university lecturer) and Noordin Mohammed Top (another university graduate) are both alleged leaders of the Al Qaeda-linked Southeast Asian terror network Jemaah Islamiyah. They

are believed to have been key players in last year's Bali bombings that killed 202 people. They are the targets of a massive manhunt following their narrow escape from a police dragnet in the West Javanese city of Bandung on October 31.

Authorities say the two fugitives narrowly escaped capture at least three times since the October 12, 2002 Bali bombings. The great concern is that they are carrying bombs. Some have criticized the police for allowing the men to get away, and urged the force to enlist the help of the military and intelligence services. Although these agencies have long been criticized for failing to cooperate, the government does not want to be associated with the heavy-handed tactics of ex-dictator Suharto. The failure to find Azahari and Noordin shows the difficulties of defeating terrorism in a country of nearly 17,000 islands with porous borders and a minority that supports Islamic radicalism. *(Combined Dispatches)*

Taliban/Afghanistan

Huge Opium Harvest Brings Fears of New Terror

Opium cultivation is spreading like a "cancer" in Afghanistan, A UN survey has found. Afghanistan produces three-quarters of the world's illicit opium and two-thirds of all opiate users take drugs of Afghan origin, according to a report by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. The UN said that unless the problem is tackled, the country could be overrun by violence, corruption, and terrorism. High prices for opium have recruited more farmers, spreading poppy cultivation to 28 of Afghanistan's 32 provinces, from 18 four years ago. Afghan opium farmers and traffickers are believed to take home about \$2.3bn, or about half of the country's legitimate GDP in 2003. Afghanistan has re-established itself as the world's largest opium producer after the fall of the Taliban regime, which banned cultivation. Drug agencies in Europe are alarmed because Afghanistan produces 90 percent of the heroin sold in the EU.

These fears were reinforced by the UN's last report. The 2003 harvest of 3,600 tons was the second biggest recorded since the agency began surveying the country in 1994. Antonio Maria Costa, the director of the UN drugs agency, warned: "Either major surgical drug-control measures are taken now or the drug cancer in Afghanistan will keep spreading and metastasize into corruption, violence, and terrorism." He added: "Out

of this drug chest, some provincial administrators and military commanders take a considerable share. The more they get used to this, the less likely it becomes that they will respect the law, be loyal to Kabul and support the legal economy. Terrorists take a cut as well: the longer this happens, the greater the threat to security." Weeks ago, Afghanistan's finance minister, Ashraf Ghani, warned: "Afghanistan may return to being a narco-state where all legitimate institutions are penetrated by the power and wealth of drug traffickers." Heroin has increasingly become a fear factor in Afghanistan. The UN's recent decision to begin its withdrawal from the country directly followed the killing of an aid worker nearby poppy fields.

Poppy cultivation involves 1.7 million people, or 7 percent of the country's population, earning more than three times the average national income despite declining prices. Farmers' revenues from opium in 2003 were about \$3,900 per family. A new drug strategy to oversee rural development has been launched, in addition to a new drug control law aimed at thwarting trafficking and money laundering. But Mr. Costa said law enforcement alone was not enough and called on the international community to rebuild the country's economy.

(Combined Dispatches)

Stepped-Up Efforts to Find Bin Laden in Afghanistan

Two years after President Bush said Osama bin Laden was wanted dead or alive, America's new Afghan envoy said on November 18 the U.S. is redoubling efforts to find him and other leaders of both Al Qaeda and the Taliban. The new U.S. ambassador, Zalmay Khalilzad, an Afghan-born diplomat, said more help is needed from Afghan citizens, particularly along border regions of Pakistan that the elusive bin Laden and top aides might be crossing with impunity. "We are going to redouble our effort," Khalilzad declared. With new funding for Afghanistan approved by Congress, the United States plans to "take the fight to the Taliban extremists and to go after the Al Qaeda leadership," he said.

The Arabic television station Al Jazeera in October broadcast two audiotapes purportedly from bin Laden that vowed more suicide attacks inside and outside the United States and warning that all countries backing Washington's policies concerning Iraq were targets. Turkish foreign minister Abdullah Gull declared on November 16 that "it has emerged that there is a link (in the Istanbul suicide attacks) with an organization in

Afghanistan in terms of belief and understanding”; earlier in the day Al Qaeda had claimed responsibility for the attacks. There are concerns in Washington about the stability of the Afghan government amid renewed violence by members of the Taliban and Al Qaeda, regional warlords flexing their muscles, and drug lords and other criminals operating freely. But Washington has given Afghanistan a lower priority than Iraq, as reflected in its request that the U.S. Congress approve \$20 billion for rebuilding Iraq and about \$1 billion for Afghanistan.

(Combined Dispatches)

Bin Laden/Al Qaeda

Turkish Intelligence Sees Al Qaeda in Iran Behind Synagogues Attack

Turkey believes Al Qaeda agents in Iran were involved in the suicide strikes on November 15 against two synagogues in Istanbul. Turkish intelligence sources said early evidence from the car bombings, in which at least 23 people were killed, pointed out sponsorship, planning, and logistics of Al Qaeda operatives in neighboring Iran. Turkish intelligence received two alerts from the Mossad of a potential Al Qaeda attack on Turkish synagogues in April and September—Israeli officials denied the report. Intelligence sources said the attacks could have been carried out by Al Qaeda or the Iranian-backed Hizbullah group. Al Qaeda operations chief Seif Al Adel was believed to have organized the attack from somewhere in Iran. Turkish officials have acknowledged that intelligence services failed to respond to warnings of an attack, and will launch a review. Al Qaeda claimed responsibility on November 16 for the Istanbul bombings.

(Combined Dispatches)

Homeland Security

New Translation Center to Help in War on Terror

A shortfall in linguists and a glut of data in foreign languages is a threat to U.S. security, but a new federal translation service may help clear some of the backlog. Armed with a network of about 300 translators throughout the United States, the National Virtual Translation Center will kick off work on December 1, translating data intercepted by bodies like the CIA, FBI, and the Pentagon, whose own translators are already swamped with work. The center’s director, Everette Jordan, said it would be a “clearing house” for

the translation of intelligence data which in-house government translators are too busy to handle.

Among the major challenges was finding qualified translators for languages that are central to the war on terror—such as Arabic, Persian, or Bahasa Indonesian—who could get security clearance. Mr. Jordan said more than half of his translators would specialize in Middle Eastern languages. “We are really pushing Arabic, but I am in competition with a lot of other government agencies and large corporations who are also looking for the same personnel,” he said. *(Combined Dispatches)*

Terror Finance

Terror Funding Crackdown “Flawed”

A leaked UN study, reported by the UK’s *Financial Times*, says that efforts to cut off funding to the Al Qaeda network are failing. The report blames inadequate cooperation, legislative loopholes, and a lack of political determination. The study says two suspected Al Qaeda fundraisers are still active in Italy and Switzerland. It also says the international arms embargo against Al Qaeda is not working and needs to be overhauled. Despite a system of financial checks designed to impede the activities of terrorists, many countries are not adequately sharing information. Since 9/11, countries are required to submit lists of individuals and organizations linked to terrorist groups to a UN committee, but according to the study, many countries have failed to act and have been reluctant to seize properties and businesses. Also, charities suspected of being linked to Al Qaeda remain active and difficult to control because of their involvement in humanitarian work.

The report is quoted as citing specifically the case of financiers Youssef Nada and Idris Nasreddin, directors of al-Taqwa, a group Washington believes is a key funder of Al Qaeda. The two men continue to maintain commercial interests and property in Italy and Switzerland, even though they are categorized as terrorist financiers. Mr. Nada visited Liechtenstein in January and tried to register two companies linked to al-Taqwa, despite being banned from traveling under UN restrictions. Such examples “reflect continued serious weaknesses regarding the control of business activities and assets other than bank accounts,” the study is reported as saying. Mr. Nada has denied any links to extremist groups. *(Combined Dispatches)*

Myanmar Penalized Under Patriot Act

The Bush administration said it would sharpen its focus on alternative ways terrorists may raise or move money, such as the trafficking of drugs, gold, and diamonds, diverting charitable contributions, and exploiting the Internet. In light of this effort, the U.S. Treasury Department, on November 19, designated two Burmese commercial banks—Myanmar Mayflower Bank and Asia Wealth Bank—as being of “primary money laundering concern,” and said it plans to prohibit U.S. financial institutions from doing business with them. It is the first time the Treasury Department has used a section of the 2001 USA Patriot Act against specific foreign financial institutions. The two Myanmar banks, however, are accused of having ties with narcotics traffickers rather than with terrorists. (*Combined Dispatches*)

Organized Crime

Europol Warns About Surge in Organized Crime in Enlarged European Union

Europe will witness a huge surge in organized crime next year when ten countries join the European Union. Almost every one of the new members, eight of whom are in Central or Eastern Europe, “will become source, transit, and destination countries for criminal goods and services,” according to Europol—based in the Hague—in a 27-page study to member states, reported the *Times* of London. The report identifies criminal gangs from all ten future members, and says that the smuggling of hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants into the EU, and the social, economic and political consequences of the trafficking, are now overtaking drug smuggling as perhaps the most serious danger facing the EU. Financial crime and fraud are also set to increase as criminals target Brussels subsidies, produce counterfeit euros, and practice wide-scale money laundering.

In the past year alone, EU governments have identified 1,000 new organized crime groups, bringing the total number operating inside the EU to 4,000, with an estimated 40,000 members. Among the most violent are Albanians, who are heavily involved in drug and people trafficking. As they consolidate their position, they have gradually taken control of certain criminal markets, notably the vice industry in Britain and the Turkish heroin trade, while continuing to act as intermediaries for Colombian groups engaged in

smuggling cocaine. Russian gangs remain among the most powerful and are well entrenched in Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and the Baltic states. “They are extremely adept at exploiting legislative and administrative loopholes. A major aspect of their success is due to their significant financial resources, which are invested in legal businesses,” the report says. With cutbacks in Russian border controls, the agency predicts an increase in illegal immigration into Finland. As policing is increased on Poland’s frontiers, criminals are likely to turn southwards and transport human beings through the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Estonia and Poland are identified as sources for synthetic drugs, such as amphetamines and Ecstasy. Estonian narcotics are smuggled into Scandinavia, whereas Polish drugs are targeted at Austria, Denmark, Sweden, and Portugal.

The spread of e-business provides criminals with anonymity, and computers and modern printer technology make it easier to forge documents and currencies. Europol is arguing for greater harmonization across the EU of national legislation on money laundering, illegal immigration, and the trafficking in people. It also recommends joint law enforcement operations to target the masterminds behind drugs and people smuggling networks. (*Combined Dispatches*)

Uranium Smuggling

Two Slovaks Arrested in Czech Republic With Radioactive Material

Two Slovak nationals have been arrested in Brno in eastern Czech Republic for trying to sell three kilograms (6.6 pounds) of radioactive material, possibly low-grade uranium. The men, aged 54 and 46, were caught in a hotel on November 14 while trying to sell the substance for 600,000 euros (\$706,000) to an undercover policeman. The president of the Czech Office for Nuclear Safety, Dana Drabova, said the “material is not dangerous. It appears to be low-grade uranium, a substance which has for several years been trafficked in Europe,” she said. The potential uses of the substance remained unclear pending an investigation, but an expert said initial tests revealed two components that could possibly be used in a dirty bomb. No such device has been used before, but the Al Qaeda network is reported to have been interested in such weapons. (*Combined Dispatches*)

Bioterrorism

CIA Says Experts See “Darker Bioweapons Future”

A panel of outside experts told the CIA that advances in technology resulting from genomic research could produce the worst known diseases and the “most frightening” biological weapons, a CIA report said. The unclassified two-page CIA report dated November 3, 2003 and titled “The Darker Bioweapons Future” summed up a January workshop of a panel of non-government science experts. The range of gene-related threats is wide, from the development of “designer” biological warfare agents created to be antibiotic-resistant or evade an immune response, to weaponized gene therapy vectors, or a “stealth” virus which could lie dormant inside the victim for an extended period of time before being triggered, the report said. Such biological weapons could leave a country with massive health and economic problems.

“The resulting diversity of new BW [biological warfare] agents could enable such a broad range of attack scenarios that it would be virtually impossible to anticipate and defend against,” the report said. And traditional intelligence methods for monitoring developments of WMD “could prove inadequate” in dealing with the threat from advanced biological weapons. Detecting the development of novel bioengineered pathogens will increasingly depend on human intelligence and require a closer working relationship between the intelligence and biological sciences communities. “The quality of intelligence can only improve from the rough and tumble of peer review and outside input,” said Steven Aftergood, director of the government secrecy project at the Federation of American Scientists. “In the past, CIA has been completely insular, they have been unwilling to engage with outside experts,” he said, “and so this is a welcome departure from that norm.”

(Combined Dispatches)

Biometrics

Ridge: U.S. and EU Should Pioneer Biometrics

The United States and the European Union should lead the world in setting international global standards for biometrics such as facial recognition technology, U.S. Homeland Security secretary Tom Ridge said on October 29. Transatlantic agreement should be the

starting point of worldwide harmonization, said Ridge. It was agreed that fingerprints and facial recognition will be introduced initially—as already proposed by the European Commission—for visas for third country nationals. Scanning of the iris will come later. No specific dates were mentioned.

Biometrics as a means to enhance the security of international travel has gained momentum since the 9/11 attacks, but initiatives have been split between several forums, including the G8 and the EU. Nevertheless, some transatlantic disagreements still remain. The EU and the United States are embroiled in a separate dispute over new U.S. rules requiring foreign airlines to hand over passenger booking records in the hope of tracking potential terrorists. Washington agreed to delete some sensitive data such as passengers’ preference for halal or kosher meals, but still wants to hold up to 39 pieces of information on each incoming traveler for up to seven years. EU Commissioner Frits Bolkestein called that “disproportionate.” Ridge stressed repeatedly that Washington understood “legitimate” European concerns about civil liberties and privacy rights, and that Americans traveling abroad should face the same level of checks as visitors to the United States. Ridge also stated that America will not compromise privacy for security. *(Combined Dispatches)*

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The TNT Update draws on several U.S. and international media sources, including Associated Press, Agence France Presse, Reuters, Xinhua News Agency, World Tribune, Intelligence Digest Glenmore Trenear-Harvey, Afghan News, and others.

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