

*“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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## Al Qaeda

### Al Qaeda Seeks Ties to Local Gangs

U.S. authorities have reported that a top Al Qaeda lieutenant, Adnan G. El Shukrijumah, has met with members from the Salvadoran gang, Mara Salvatrucha, known as MS-13, in an effort to help the terrorist network infiltrate the U.S. border with Mexico. Al Qaeda hopes to take advantage of the lack of space at government detention centers, where immigration officials have been forced to release non-Mexican illegal aliens back into the United States instead of their home countries. Less than 15 percent of those released appear for immigration hearings.

El Shukrijumah is suspected of helping to plan the 9/11 attacks and was identified as one of seven suspects involved in planning further attacks in the United States. Last year he was reportedly in Canada looking for nuclear materials to develop a “dirty bomb.”

MS-13 is known to run alien smuggling routes, predominantly Central and South American gang members, from Mexico into the United States. They are reported to have a smuggling center in Matamoros,

Mexico, south of Brownsville, Texas. They have a reputation for extreme violence, such as the recent machete attack on a 16-year-old in Northern Virginia. They are engaged in murder, extortion, kidnapping, drive-by shootings, drug and arms smuggling, robberies, rapes, and other violent criminal activities. They are also known to conduct countersurveillance to obtain license plate numbers of vehicles belonging to law enforcement.

In 1997, the FBI targeted MS-13 as a priority in its National Gang Strategy. MS-13 was established in 1992-1993 in Los Angeles, Northern Virginia, and Long Island, New York. Since then, they have expanded across at least 31 states, as well as the District of Columbia. Northern Virginia is a major hub of MS-13 gang activity, and the FBI estimates 3,000 members reside in the area. *(Combined Dispatches)*

## Nuclear Trafficking

### Central Asia as Haven For Islamic Militant Groups; Rise in Proliferation of Nuclear Materials

Authorities around the world increasingly view Central Asia as a hub for international terrorism, fueled by the ubiquitous trade of drugs, weapons, and radioactive materials emanating from poorly guarded post-Soviet weapons installations. Speaking at a conference promoting regional security in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, First Deputy Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, Vladimir Norov, stated that some of the gravest threats to international security include terrorism, religious extremism, drug trafficking, and organized crime. “Drug trafficking finances terrorism and Central Asian countries have become a trans-shipment point for drugs from Afghanistan.”

On September 21, a Kazakh man was arrested for attempting to sell 60 containers of plutonium-239, a main radioactive component for nuclear weapons. Plutonium-239 is not used in Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakh authorities have not released information regarding its origin or destination. However, the event follows a troublesome pattern of the proliferation of plutonium, uranium, and cesium throughout Central Asia.

Kyrgyzstan inherited numerous radioactive waste sites after the tumultuous collapse of the Soviet Union and efforts to destroy or bring the remaining waste back to Russia have been stalled by Russia, as well as by U.S. funding cuts to the Nunn-Lugar Bill. The sites remain poorly guarded and a serious threat to the nation's water supply. Cancer rates in the region are high as a result of years of Soviet nuclear testing. There is also international concern about what experts believe to be a plausible scenario: terrorist groups using nuclear materials to attack targets with some type of explosion, such as a "dirty bomb." (*Combined Dispatches*)

## War on Terror

### Jordan and Iraq Sharing Intelligence to Combat Terrorism

On Monday, September 27, several hundred Iraqi border guards received their diplomas to mark the completion of a four-week program at the Jordan International Police Training Center. This was the first graduating class since Jordan agreed to separately train Iraqi police and military units in cooperation with U.S. military instructors. For the first time in 35 years, Jordanian and Iraqi police have agreed to share intelligence to combat terrorism, money laundering, illegal immigration, and theft of antiquities.

Iraq shares over 2,230 miles of border with Syria, Kuwait, Iran, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. U.S. and newly installed Iraqi officials have repeatedly accused these countries, mainly Iran and Syria, of tacitly allowing Islamic fighters to cross the border into Iraq to fight American troops and fuel the growing insurgency.

Jordan's relationship with the United States and the new Iraqi government, as well as its peace treaty with Israel, make its situation in the Arab world tenuous and vulnerable. Islamic militant groups such as Al Qaeda, may begin to focus attacks on Jordan due to King

Abdullah's recognition of and assistance to the new Iraqi government and the U.S. military presence. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian believed to be behind the insurgency in Iraq, has publicly stated his goal is to overthrow the Hashemite regime of King Abdullah. Palestinian terrorists, under the control of Syrian intelligence services, have started to infiltrate Jordan, armed with rocket-propelled grenades. (*Combined Dispatches*)

### U.S. Military Aids Chadian Troops: Recipe for Disaster?

As part of the war on terror, the United States has deployed a group of Marines to train Chadian troops in counterterrorism measures. This "anti-terrorism unit" is another part of the Pan Sahel Initiative, in which the United States trains soldiers in Chad, Mali, Niger, and Mauritania to combat terrorism.

There has been a dramatic rise in the number of attacks in Africa, from the U.S. embassy bombings and the more recent Madrid bombings, which were partially planned from Morocco, to the increasing presence of the Al Qaeda-linked Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC). The United States views Africa as a crucial link in diminishing terrorism and threats to U.S. security. Speaking in Ghana in July, Deputy Commander of the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) General Charles Wald stated "[terrorists] are going to look for a place where they can do the same thing they did in Afghanistan, Iraq, or other places. They need a haven to train, equip, organize, and recruit. As you squeeze the balloon and move them, they are going to move to Africa."

To combat this crisis, U.S. Marines are working with 170 Chadian soldiers on infantry skills, among other proficiencies, in cooperation with Major Abakar Mohammed Abdullah. Chadian soldiers have fought against GSPC forces and are cooperating with neighboring Niger in rooting out GSPC terrorists in the region. U.S. military specialists are also training soldiers in Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia.

While training African troops in combating terrorism could be considered helpful for U.S. security interests, some experts believe that this could lead to more serious problems later. The Chadian government is hardly free from corruption, and according to Major Paul Baker of

the U.S. Marines, who heads this initiative, there is doubt as to whether these newly trained forces will maintain a pro-Western stance: “You never know. Africa is a fluid environment—coups and dictatorships all the time. You never know who you are training today and what he will do tomorrow.” This scenario appears vaguely similar to U.S. military aid for the mujahideen in Afghanistan during the 1980s—a plan which functioned well in the short term in driving the Soviets out of Afghanistan, but is now one of the main reasons U.S. troops are training Afghans and Africans in counterterrorism measures today. (*Combined Dispatches*)

### **Brazil Strengthens Countersmuggling Measures to Improve Image**

Brazil is stepping up its cooperation with neighbors in combating smuggling and terrorism within the Triborder region of Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina. This region is an unregulated and lawless corner of South America and is a haven for organized crime groups, Islamic terrorists, drug traffickers, as well as a center for piracy and intellectual-property fraud.

Since 9/11, the Triborder region has been a target of U.S. complaints regarding corruption, arms and drug smuggling, and terror financing. For this reason, the United States threatened to exclude Brazil from the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) in which developing countries receive lower import tariffs. To this day, the U.S. government publicly declares its concern that the region is a haven for corruption and trafficking. The wave of anti-Jewish bombings within the region in the 1990s also fueled U.S. concern that the Brazilian government was not doing enough to combat corruption and terrorism. There have been a number of reports that Hizballah, the Iranian-backed terrorist group, has been using the Triborder area as an operations base for years against Western targets, such as the 1992 Israeli embassy bombing and 1994 Jewish Community Center bombing, both in Argentina.

To clean up its image and disassociate itself from Islamic terrorist groups, the Brazilian government enacted a number of security initiatives. It has established a maritime police unit with 20 officers to monitor the waters surrounding the Itaipu Hydroelectric Dam and the Parana River. These officers are equipped with speedboats and machine

guns. The government also rebuilt its police headquarters in the region, which includes an intelligence center and crime lab and has initiated surveillance flights to patrol the region. Brazilian authorities believe these measures will impede smugglers in the region, which has served as an entry point for drugs, pirated goods, and stolen cars. (*Combined Dispatches*)

## **Maritime Security**

### **Tackling the Horn of Africa Pirates**

In an effort to curb piracy and the associated threats of terrorism from drug, weapons, and human trafficking, the Combined Task Force (CTF) 150 was established as a U.S.-led flotilla from eight different countries to patrol from the Red Sea to the Gulf of Oman in order to search suspect vessels. “Experts say dhows carrying arms and ammunition destined for Mogadishu, the center of the Somali arms trade, arrive in Somalia from Yemen two to three times a week.”

A UN appointed panel concluded that terrorists have obtained small arms as well as antitank weapons and that it was relatively easy to smuggle surface-to-air missiles. The weapons used to bomb an Israeli-owned resort in Kenya and those used in an attempt to shoot down an Israeli airliner were all imported from Yemen via Somalia to Kenya. Several tons of drugs and hundreds of AK-47 automatic weapons have been seized in recent months. However, the area is too large to be affectively patrolled and small wooden dhows are nearly impossible to track on radar, which underscores the reality of curbing the proliferation of weapons, drugs, piracy, and terrorism. (*Combined Dispatches*)

### **Ocean Choke Points Vulnerable to Piracy and Terrorism**

The Royal Navy’s Admiral Adam West noted that Al Qaeda has identified the maritime shipping industry as a prime target. The most dangerous places for ships are in port and maritime choke points. Some of the major global points include: the Strait of Malacca, the Strait of Hormuz, the Strait of Gibraltar, the Suez Canal, and the Strait of Bab al-Mandab.

Security experts say that coordinating patrols through the Malacca Strait is not sufficient to deter and prevent terrorist threats. Security patrols will only deny pirates or terrorists the chance to strike at their targets. “What we

need is a comprehensive approach on piracy or terrorism across the board to undermine its foundation,” said Mak Joon Num of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. “So doing one thing is not enough. We need, for example, to deny pirates the access to markets, their access to technology such as high powered engines, modern arms and ammunition.” Indonesia, however, has resisted the idea of U.S. antiterrorist patrols in the Malacca Strait, as they view it as an encroachment upon their territorial sovereignty.

In northeastern Africa, piracy has dropped by more than half this year according to maritime experts. This is partly because Yemen enhanced its coastguard capacity in the Red Sea Strait of Bab al-Mandab. However, piracy, and the associated risks of terrorism, remains a serious concern. Although there has been a noted drop in the overall number of incidents of piracy, there has been an alarming rise in the number of crew killed during piracy attacks in the first half of 2004, according to the International Chamber of Commerce’s International Maritime Bureau report.

In Morocco, the north coast on the Mediterranean serves as a port for dozens of speedboats dedicated to drug, weapons, and human trafficking. Navy officials in Gibraltar said that it would take just 15 minutes for a speedboat to leave the north coast of Morocco and attack a vessel anchored beside Gibraltar.

Ten countries recently participated in naval exercises held in the Caribbean and Pacific Ocean designed to simulate a response to a terrorist threat against the Panama Canal. Participants included naval forces from Chile, Colombia, the United States, Honduras, and Peru; as well as the Argentine air force; observers from Ecuador, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic; and units from the Panamanian security organization.

The International Maritime Organization reported that nearly 90 percent of the world’s port facilities and over 90 percent of global shipping comply with new security measures designed to protect international shipping from the threat of terrorism. Despite overall improvements, statistics show that certain regions have been less cooperative with the new security regulations, such as Africa, the former Soviet Union, and Eastern Europe. (*Combined Dispatches*)

## Pirated Goods Fund Terrorism

Interpol has warned that counterfeit disks have overtaken drugs as the largest source of income for organized crime groups in Southeast Asia. This has become an alarming trend due to the huge volume of pirated goods being sold not only in Southeast Asia, but in Australia, the Triborder region in South America, Russia, China, Saudi Arabia, and the United States. “Because of the growing evidence that terrorist groups sometimes fund their activities using the proceeds, it must be seen as a very serious crime with important implications for public safety and security,” stated Interpol secretary general Ronald Noble.

With the international crackdown on terrorist funds through the world banking system, Al Qaeda and other militant groups are becoming more self-reliant and shifting their focus towards crime. To fund their attacks, they have turned to selling drugs and pirated software, as well as using small, local charities and businesses. As Ronald Noble noted, “pirated goods are an attractive source of revenue for terrorists because it is a low-risk, high-profit crime that is not a priority for most governments and police forces.”

In 2003, a shipment of fake goods that Al Qaeda was using to fund part of its worldwide operations was intercepted by Interpol traveling from Dubai to Copenhagen. The number of pirated disks seized by police and customs officials in Australia during the first quarter of 2004 was equal to the total number for pirated disks seized in all of 2003. The UN reported that 1 kg. of counterfeit disks was worth more than the same weight of marijuana. (*Combined Dispatches*)

## Terrorism

### Division in Jemaah Islamiyah May Lead to Shifting Tactics

As Southeast Asian governments continue to crack down on the terrorist group Jemmah Islamiyah (JI), terrorism experts believe the group is switching tactics to political assassinations rather than large-scale attacks.

Officials believe there are still an estimated 2,000 JI members. However, they have lost strength due to government pressure, internal divisions over soft targets, lack of leadership after the arrest of Muslim cleric Abu Bakar Bashir and Hambali (the group’s head of

operations), and worldwide strengthening of financial regulations aimed at cutting off terror financing. Terrorism expert Sidney Jones notes that the organization is experiencing financial difficulties. “All the major bombings that we know of involved the transfer of some money from outside...From interrogation depositions that we’ve gotten hold of, it seems there isn’t enough money to support the organization let alone the families of members who have been detained.”

After the Marriot hotel bombings, in which almost all of the victims were Indonesian, JI members disputed whether the bombing of “soft targets” was immoral. Some members believed that such attacks would not help their goal of creating an Islamic state. Hardliners within the groups, such as Noordin Mohammed Top and Azahari bin Hussein, both involved in the Bali and Jakarta bombings, believe JI should continue to target Western institutions. They allegedly have a list of targets including Western-owned hotels, banks, and oil and gas firms in Southeast Asia.

While the group does not appear to be focused on highly coordinated attacks, JI is still considered the most dangerous terrorist group in Southeast Asia. “The threat has been contained but it is still there and has not been eliminated completely,” stated the director-general of Southeast Asia’s antiterror center, Zainal Abidin Zain. (*Combined Dispatches*)

## Drug Trafficking

### Clashes Erupt in Bolivia Over Coca

Bolivian president Carlos Mesa ordered a temporary suspension of coca eradication in central Bolivia as a result of recent clashes between farmers and security forces in the Chapare region. The president’s chief of staff, Jose Galindo, announced the halt was to ease tension in the Chapare region, but added that eradication would continue in other parts of the country.

Coca farming is a contentious issue in Bolivia and representatives of the Movement to Socialism (MAS), which supports coca farmers, has called for a “War against the government.” President Mesa is caught between mediating with the MAS leader Evo Morales to resolve the coca issue and complying with the U.S.-backed eradication program.

While coca has been used by the indigenous people for thousands of years as a source of income, medicine, and for religious purposes, when refined, it is sold as cocaine. Bolivia has reported 23,600 hectares of land are used to grow coca, of which 7,300 are in the Chapare region. Bolivia is the third-largest cultivator of coca after Colombia and Peru and exports cocaine mostly to or through Brazil, Argentina, and Chile on its way to Europe and the United States.

President Mesa’s eradication program has not kept pace with increased coca cultivation. The government announced earlier this month that it will invest \$951 million by 2008. Two-thirds would be used to promote cultivation of replacement crops and one-third for antidrug operations. (*Combined Dispatches*)

## Cyber Crime

### Justice Department in Coordination with FBI Plans More Labs Focused on Cyber Crime

U.S. attorney general John Ashcroft stated that the Justice Department will soon widen its capabilities for chasing and prosecuting cyber criminals by expanding its forensic analysis capabilities. The department will increase the number of centers for analysis of cyber-related crimes from 5 to 13. “We recognize that proper forensic analysis of computer evidence is critical for the successful investigation and prosecution of crime,” Ashcroft noted at a conference held by the High Technology Crime Investigation Association. He went on to say that nearly 10 million Americans had their identities stolen last year alone

U.S. authorities have arrested roughly 103 suspects and filed 117 criminal complaints since June 1 in a concentrated effort called “Operation Web Snare” against online fraud-related cyber crime. Common cyber crimes include identity theft, hacking, sending viruses, wire and credit card fraud (known as “phishing”), the selling of counterfeit software, Internet child pornography, and a flourishing practice known as “Nigerian e-mail fraud” in which e-mails are sent pledging to provide huge sums of money in return of an advance fee. This Internet scam is commonly sent from individuals or organized crime groups from Nigeria but is also appearing in other countries such as Iraq.

Two years ago, 32 nations including the United States negotiated and signed a convention against cyber crime,

yet most of the signatory nations never ratified and implemented it. Recently, however, with the growing number of worldwide cyber crimes, the French-based organization that headed the negotiations held a new conference and distributed a report on organized crime. It stated that “cyber crimes represent the fastest-growing category of crimes in many countries,” and, contrary to certain U.S. beliefs, the established connections between organized crime and cyber crime “are still scarce and do not permit a reliable analysis.” (*Combined Dispatches*)

### **United States Vulnerable to Cyber Attacks**

The new generation of Al Qaeda terrorists is well educated, with degrees in computer science and engineering, many of whom are Pakistani graduates of British institutions. These terrorists pose a threat to major U.S. infrastructure sectors. Chemical factories, utilities, and wastewater plants using online monitoring and communications are currently running antiquated systems vulnerable to cyber attacks. Hacking expert Jason Larne of the Idaho National Engineering & Environmental Laboratory warned that “terrorists could shut down chunks of the Internet, the phone system, or the electrical grid by hacking into computers. We’re not spending enough on computer security and the consequences could be devastating.”

The government has been criticized for not doing enough to combat this potential risk. The director of the National Cyber Security Division, Amit Yoran, resigned on one-day’s notice, only a year after taking his post. While he stated, “we’ve hired some fantastic expertise and we’ve achieved our primary objective,” many are skeptical. Sources close to him have described his frustration over what he considered the low priority level given to computer security by the Department of Homeland Security. (*Combined Dispatches*)

## **Terrorist Financing**

### **Terrorist Financing Techniques More Reliant on Cash-Based Couriers and Counterfeiting**

The U.S. Treasury Department has stated that terrorist networks have been forced to rely on cash smuggling and counterfeiting techniques as a result of a successful international crackdown on banks, charities, and financial services, making it more difficult for groups

such as Al Qaeda to finance worldwide operations.

“As the formal and informal financial sectors become increasingly inhospitable to financiers of terrorism, we have witnessed an increasing reliance by Al Qaeda and terrorist groups on cash couriers. The movement of money via cash couriers is now one of the principal methods that terrorists use to move funds,” confirmed Treasury Under Secretary Stuart Levey.

Terrorist networks, such as Al Qaeda, have used many financial techniques to transfer and launder money worldwide. One of the most successful techniques, known as Hawala, is an alternative remittance system in which records are nonexistent and untraceable. In a campaign to stamp out money laundering and terrorist financing, the United States and many other nations have been working closely with the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an organization created to prevent criminal elements from corrupting world financial systems for illegal purposes, to identify and prevent the use of cash couriers.

Another challenge remains: preventing the proliferation of counterfeit currency from areas outside the United States such as North Korea. The U.S. Secret Service has been investigating links of counterfeit U.S. currency emanating from North Korea that give the impression of being printed by a highly expensive and intricate program. “The sophisticated techniques used to produce the counterfeits are evidence of a well funded, ongoing criminal enterprise, with a scientific and technical component,” Levey said. (*Combined Dispatches*)

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