



# Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE)

Secretariat for Multidimensional Security (SMS)  
Organization of American States (OAS)

## COUNTER-TERRORISM ACTIVITIES

### Aviation Basic Security Training in Trinidad and Tobago

As the first activity for 2009 in the Aviation Security Program, the CICTE Secretariat in collaboration with the Ministry of National Security (Office of International Affairs), the Trinidad and Tobago House of Assembly (TTHA), and the Trinidad and Tobago Civil Aviation Authority (TTCAA), facilitated Basic Security Training for members of the civil aviation community of Trinidad and Tobago, in Port of Spain, from January 6 to 14.



The Basic Security Training course is designed to reinforce checkpoint and checked baggage screening skills and utilizes lesson plans and teaching methodologies which focus on participatory learning techniques. These help to enhance the screener's abilities to detect threats and resolve alarms. All lessons are based on the Standards and Recommended Practices contained in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Annex 17 (Safeguarding International Civil Aviation against Acts of Unlawful Interference) to the Convention on International Civil Aviation and TTCAA Checkpoint Screening Policies and Procedures.

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### Advanced Workshop on the Creation and Management of Computer Security Incident Response Teams

The Advanced Workshop on the Creation and Managing of Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs), to be held in San Jose, Costa Rica, from February 16 to 20, 2009 is addressed to public and private sector participants. The main goal is to strengthen capacity to manage a CSIRT.

The instructors' team will be composed of experts from Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, who will assist in the preparation and coordination of two practical exercises. These exercises will recreate the daily work of a CSIRT, aiming at improving international cooperation on these matters. Additionally, experts from other countries will give presentations on managing a CSIRT and techniques on mitigating incidents.

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## **Editorial**

Just days into the Obama administration a [new U.S. strategy](#) has been outlined for enhancing cybersecurity and safeguarding U.S. critical information infrastructure. Notably, the strategy designates such cyber infrastructure as a national strategic asset, calls for the appointment of a national cyber advisor in the Office of the President to oversee a national cyber policy, and asserts the need for enhanced collaboration with law enforcement agencies, industry and key stakeholders in the private sector. The emergence of a comprehensive U.S. national cyber strategy so early in the new administration suggests that cybersecurity will be a top priority on the U.S. national agenda, and brings the U.S. into line with the growing number of nations that have elevated cybersecurity to the top tier of national security and economic concerns. Several countries in the Americas have been at the fore of this trend and many others are quickly following suit, and the Organization of American States has played an active role supporting in their efforts.

The OAS Comprehensive Inter-American Strategy to Combat Threats to Cybersecurity, adopted in 2004, mandates the CICTE Secretariat to focus on the protection of critical information infrastructure from cyber attacks by terrorist groups. Our efforts have focused on assisting the Member States to establish national Computer Security Incident Response Teams, or CSIRTs, which serve as 24/7 alert, watch, warning and coordination centers.

Having a centralized coordination entity in the form of a national CSIRT is essential for protecting cyber infrastructure and ensuring resiliency in the inevitable event of an attack. A national CSIRT can monitor incidents involving public and private sector information networks and systems, disseminate information and coordinate among relevant stakeholders, and provide technical guidance and support before, during and after a cyber attack.

Since 2006 the CICTE Secretariat has worked extensively with OAS Member States to raise awareness of the need for a national CSIRT and provide training on how to create and manage one. The number of national CSIRTs in the Americas has increased from 5 in 2006 to 12 as of publication, with several other Member States close to formally designating a CSIRT. CICTE's training program has evolved as well, from basic CSIRT creation and management training courses offered in 2007 and 2008 to more advanced courses on incident response and mitigation and information handling planned for 2009.

Simultaneously, the CICTE Secretariat has sought to increase regional cooperation on cybersecurity through the promotion of a Secure OAS-hosted Hemispheric Network of National CSIRTs. The network provides a forum for national CSIRT personnel and others responsible for cybersecurity at the national level to: dialogue with their counterparts on challenges faced and best practices employed, share materials and resources, and in some cases, exchange information on specific incidents. It is our intention to expand participation in the network to include all OAS Member States.

The CICTE Secretariat has collaborated with a broad network of partners from the public and private sectors and academia, based on the understanding that regional and international cooperation and information-sharing is critical to achieving cybersecurity in the face of constantly evolving, transnational cyber threats, including those posed by terrorist groups.

Going forward, the CICTE Secretariat will continue to provide OAS Member States with training and assistance aimed at developing their CSIRT technical capabilities. In 2009 this will take the form of sub-regional advanced courses on CSIRT management, and technical assistance missions to Member States that are in the final stages of establishing a national CSIRT.

In addition, we are in the process of organizing a joint Council of Europe – OAS/CICTE Conference on Terrorism and Cybersecurity, which will bring together counterterrorism policymakers from OAS and CoE Member States to discuss present and future threats, and what is required to combat these. The conference will take place in Madrid, Spain in April of this year.

Finally, we are collaborating with two other OAS entities – the Inter-American Telecommunications Commission (CITEL) and the Group of Experts on Cyber Crime of the Ministers of Justice or Attorney Generals of the Americas (REMJA) and REMJA – on the organization of a conference on developing a national approach to cybersecurity. This conference will bring together policymakers, industry representatives and other stakeholders and experts responsible for the various aspects of cybersecurity, with the intention of laying the groundwork for the formation of national cybersecurity strategies in each of the OAS Member States.

Calls for the formulation of national cybersecurity strategies and greater cooperation both within and between countries are encouraging, and necessary given the sophisticated and global nature of the threats we face – not to mention the potential widespread impact of a major cyber attack. The CICTE Secretariat will continue to support the efforts of the OAS Member States to strengthen their national and regional cybersecurity, and will welcome the opportunity to collaborate further with our existing partners and engage new ones. Only through such an approach can we secure cyberspace from terrorist groups and others who would do harm in the Americas or beyond.

## **COUNTER-TERRORISM ACTIVITIES**

### **Preparations for Port Security Crisis Management Exercise in Chile**

The CICTE Secretariat, in collaboration with Transport Canada and the United States Coast Guard, is planning to organize a Port Security Crisis Management Exercise (CME) in Chile, in April 2009. In order to prepare the exercise, the Secretariat and its partners held a first preparatory meeting with relevant authorities in Santiago, on December 16, 2008. This CME will be the fifth one of its kind, after the ones held in Argentina, Colombia, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago.

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### **German Mission to UN Convenes Discussion on Global CT Strategy**

The Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations hosted a discussion on regional cooperation and the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy on December 16, 2008, including Mike Smith, Executive Director of the UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED); Carol Fuller, Secretary of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE); and Eric Rosand, Senior Fellow at the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation. The meeting was organized to allow representatives from UN member states, the UN secretariat and nongovernmental organizations to discuss the recommendations from the Center's report, *The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Regional and Subregional Bodies: Strengthening a Critical Partnership*.

The report is available at: [http://www.globalct.org/images/content/pdf/summaries/rsr\\_report\\_launch.pdf](http://www.globalct.org/images/content/pdf/summaries/rsr_report_launch.pdf)

### **OAS Participates in Second United States-Central American Dialogue on Security**

A second United States-Central American (SICA) Dialogue on Security was held December 11-12, 2008 in Washington, DC. The Dialogue consisted of one day of technical talks and one day of vice-ministerial consultations. The consultations focused on advancing concrete and practical measures to combat the threats of criminal gangs, narco-trafficking and illicit trafficking of arms in Central America. Observers to the Dialogue included: Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, the World Bank, and the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security of the Organization of American States (OAS), including the Secretariats of CICTE and CICAD and the Department of Public Security (OAS/DPS). The Secretariats of CICTE and DPS briefed on plans for implementing projects in Central America funded by the US under the Merida Initiative.

A final Communiqué was signed by all countries at the end of the Dialogue along with a Mechanism on follow-up that details the procedures and focus of future dialogues. Following the Dialogue, all seven SICA member states signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United States, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) in particular, outlining the provision of e-Trace. E-Trace is a paperless firearm trace submission system and trace analysis computer module that is readily accessible to appropriate law enforcement users through a connection to the World Wide Web. SICA will host the next Dialogue in 2009.

A link to the Conference documents including the final Communiqué and final Mechanism can be found at: <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/hs/c27175.htm>.

### **IAEA Regional Seminar on the Nuclear Security**



The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of the United Nations (UN), in collaboration with the Government of the Dominican Republic, is holding a seminar on nuclear security, safety and safeguards for twenty-five (25) Caribbean and neighboring Latin American countries from February 10-12 in the Dominican Republic. The seminar is intended for officials of ministries of foreign affairs and the environment, police, state regulatory authorities, customs intelligence and other relevant agencies involved in the decision making process or in direct activities related to nuclear or other radioactive material in their states. The objective of the seminar is to discuss the main principles of nuclear security, safety and safeguards and role of the State authorities in the implementation of these principles.

For more information: Sheridan Hill [Shill@oas.org](mailto:Shill@oas.org)

## Second International UNICRI Conference at UN Headquarters in New York



The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) convened an International Conference on “*Innovative Policies to Advance Security Governance*” at UN headquarters in New York on January 22, 2009, in order to inform Member States, International and Regional Organisations and civil society on the actions undertaken by

UNICRI's Security Governance/Counter-Terrorism Laboratory in different thematic fields. The Laboratory is a UN facility that develops initiatives to face emerging security threats by directly involving not only security and law enforcement agencies, but also a broad cross-section of civil society, local and regional governments, and the private sector, promoting economic development and human freedom.

The event provided an overview of some of the main activities developed by the Laboratory, including those in the area of radicalisation, urban security, major event security, cooperation between public and private sectors for the protection of vulnerable targets, and prevention of illicit trafficking of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) material. Emphasis was also placed on the importance of private-public partnerships (PPPs) in advancing UNICRI's goals. Main speakers included policy makers, senior officials of international and regional organizations, and relevant representatives of the academia and the private sector. The contributors offered examples of concrete application of the security governance approach to the designing and implementation of national security policies.

For more information: Mr. Francesco Candelari, UNICRI Contact Person in New York (tel. +1 917 3672 914; e-mail: [candelari@unicri.it](mailto:candelari@unicri.it)).

## International Mechanisms for Promoting Freedom of Expression

The UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the OAS Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and the ACHPR (African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information adopted a joint declaration on defamation of religions, and anti-terrorism and anti-extremism legislation in Athens, Greece, December 9, 2008.

Summary of the Declaration:

The Declaration on Defamation of Religions and Anti-terrorist legislation and anti-extremist emphasizes two points: the defamation of religions and anti-terrorism legislation. The first refers to the incompatibility of the concept of "defamation of religions", since libel concerns the protection of the reputation of individuals and not religions, as religions do not have the right to reputation. Therefore, they urge international organizations to desist from decisions that support this notion. It also dictates that the restrictions on freedom of expression must be limited to the protection of social interests and individual rights but not of particular institutions or concepts, as well as limited to the advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence.

Regarding anti-terrorist legislation, the Declaration states that the definition of terrorism, in the context of restrictions on freedom of expression, must be limited to violent crimes that promote ideological causes that seek to exert influence on authorities by generating terror amongst the population. Also, vague notions that glorify or encourage terrorism or extremism, but do not constitute incitement to it, should not be criminalized. The role of the media as a key vehicle for realizing freedom of expression and for informing the public should be respected. Also, the normal rules on the protection of confidential sources of information for journalists in the context of the anti-terrorist actions should apply as at other times.

For more information [click here](#).

## Unmasking Terror Series Released

The Jamestown Foundation released the fourth volume of its *Unmasking Terror* series. Edited by Andrew McGregor, *Unmasking Terror Volume IV* continues the work of previous volumes by providing a collection of indigenous terrorism analyses to the media, intelligence, and academic communities. Like its previous volumes, *Unmasking Terror Volume IV* serves as an invaluable reference tool to understanding militant jihadi movements worldwide.

For more information [click here](#).





## Follow the Money

In an Op-Ed in the Los Angeles Times December 23, 2008, Matt Levin and Mark Jacobson of the Washington Institute's Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence in Washington DC advise the new U.S. administration of President Obama to retain targeting of terrorists' financing as a key part of the U.S. government's counterterrorism tool kit. Although mounting a terrorist attack is relatively inexpensive, the cost of maintaining a terrorist infrastructure is high. Terrorist networks need cash to train, equip and pay operatives and their families and to promote their causes. Recruiting, training, traveling, bribing corrupt officials and other such activities also cost money. Limiting their ability to raise funds therefore limits their ability to function. Perhaps even more important than cutting off funding to terrorist groups may be the benefits of financial intelligence -- better known as "following the money." Definitively linking people with numbered accounts or specific money changers is a powerful preemptive tool, often leading authorities to conduits between terrorist organizations and individual cells. And although following the money will not stop all attacks, it can frustrate some terrorist activity. Focusing on terrorist financing has other benefits as well. The prospect of being designated as a terrorist might deter some from financing terrorist activity. Major donors -- who may be heavily involved in legitimate business activities -- may think twice before putting their personal fortunes and their reputations at risk. Ultimately, combating terrorist financing will not, in and of itself, defeat terrorism. But when employed with other counter-terrorism tools as part of a broader strategy, it represents a powerful weapon in tackling the terrorist threat facing every nation today.

For more information [click here](#).

## January Revisions to Consolidated List of the United Nations Security Council Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee

An updated January 2009 version of the Consolidated List is accessible in XML, PDF and HTML formats on the Committee's website at the following URL: <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/consolist.shtml>

## The OSCE Ministerial Council adopts decision on Further Promoting the OSCE's Action in Countering Terrorism

At the 16th OSCE Ministerial Council held on 4 and 5 December 2008 in Helsinki, Finland, participating States adopted Ministerial Council Decision MC.DEC10/08 on Further Promoting the OSCE's Action in Countering Terrorism.



The decision confirms counter-terrorism as one of the Organization's priorities and reaffirms previous OSCE counter-terrorism commitments, including support to the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The decision calls upon participating States to continue promoting public-private partnerships in countering terrorism, inter alia with the media. Participating States are also called upon to make use of the OSCE in countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism.

In addition participating States agreed to review the implementation of OSCE counter-terrorism commitments at the Annual Security Review Conference. To this end the OSCE Secretary General has been tasked to prepare a report on OSCE counter-terrorism activities in consultation with other executive structures.

## Council of Europe Events and Publications



On 15 January 2009 a conference regarding the intercultural dialogue and the fight against terrorism took place in Rome. The occasion was given by the publication in Italian of the "White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue- Living Together As Equals in Dignity", adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on 7 May 2008, in which the emergence of extremism and terrorism are underlined as the risks of non-dialogue.

Further information at: <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/>

On 19 January 2009, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe issued a new viewpoint "Europe must open its doors to Guantánamo Bay detainees cleared for release". In this document, the Commissioner urged European governments "to open their doors to a small number of men who fear persecution or torture if transferred to their home countries. Such assistance is both the right thing to do and of critical importance in our push for the prompt closure of Guantánamo Bay." Further information at: <http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Viewpoints/>

## Upcoming Events of the Council of Europe

The Council of Europe will co-sponsor the 6th Worldwide Security Conference, which will take place on 18-19 February 2009 in Brussels, Belgium. This meeting, entitled "From the Global War on Terror to Common Security and Joint Action" is organized by EastWest Institute, World Customs Organization, and Italy in its role of Chair of the G8.

Further information at: <http://www.iews.org>



The OCTOPUS Interface Conference on Co-operation against Cybercrime will take place on 10-11 March 2009 in Strasbourg, France. The conference will be followed by the 4th meeting of the Cybercrime Convention Committee (T-CY) on 12-13 March. Further information at: <http://www.coe.int/t/dg1/legalcooperation/economiccrime/cybercrime>

The Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL) will hold its 29th plenary meeting on 16-20 March 2009 in Strasbourg, France. Further information at: <http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/moneyval>

The Committee of Experts on Terrorism (CODEXTER) will hold its 16th meeting on 15-16 April 2009 in Spain. Further information on this event as well as the Council of Europe action against terrorism is available at: [www.coe.int/gmt](http://www.coe.int/gmt)

## **RECENT TRAINING AND CONFERENCE EVENTS**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Venue</b>
<b>January</b>	6-14,2009	Basic Aviation Security Training Course for Trinidad & Tobago, organized by CICTE	Trinidad & Tobago
	19-28, 2009	CICTE Scholarships to Guyana and Suriname to attend ICAO Instructors Development Training	Aruba
	26-30, 2009	CICTE Scholarship to Chile and Peru to attend ICAO Screener Certification Workshop	Bolivia

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Month	Days	Event	Venue
February	3-6,2009	Sub-regional Workshop on Terrorism Financing	Costa Rica
	3-12, 2009	Advanced Aviation Security Training with TSA sponsored and organized by CICTE	Suriname
	9-10, 2009	Follow-up legislative technical assistance mission	Costa Rica
	12-13, 2009	Follow-up legislative technical assistance mission	Rep. Dominicana
	16-20,2009	Advanced Workshop on the Management of a National CSIRT for the Central American and Mexico Sub-region	Costa Rica
	Feb 24 - March 5, 2009	Advanced Aviation Security Training with TSA sponsored and organized by CICTE	Bahamas
March	3-11, 2009	CICTE Scholarships to Guatemala and El Salvador to attend ICAO Instructors Development Training	Honduras
	4-6, 2009	Ninth Regular Session of CICTE and Meeting of National Points of Contact to CICTE	Mexico
	9-12, 2009	Tourism Security stakeholders meetings	México
	9-13, 2009	Aviation Crisis Management Training	Haiti
	23-27, 2009	Training Course on Tourism Crime and Security Training for Security & Law Enforcement Supervisors - Level 2	Trinidad & Tobago
	TBD	Port Security Training Needs Assessment	Trinidad & Tobago
	TBD	Port Security Training	Guatemala & Honduras
	TBD	Sub-regional Workshop for the Caribbean on Best Practices in Port Security and Implementation of the ISPS Code	Bahamas
April	TBD	ICAO Screeners Certification Workshop to 10 CARICOM Nationals	St. Vincent
	TBD	Crisis Management Exercise on Port Security	Chile
	TBD	Joint Cyber Security Workshop with the Council of Europe	Spain
	April 28-May 7, 2009	Basic Aviation Security Training	Nicaragua



## **NEWS**

### **Pentagon: Ex-Gitmo detainees resume terror acts**

Dozens of suspected terrorists released by the United States from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, are believed to have returned to terrorism activities, according to the Pentagon. Since 2002, 61 former detainees have committed or are suspected to have committed attacks after being released from the detention camp, Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell said at a briefing Tuesday, January 14. The number is up since the Pentagon's last report in March 2008 when officials said 37 former detainees had been suspected of returning to the battlefield since 2002. Since 2002, the Pentagon has released about 520 detainees to their home countries or countries that agreed to take them.

For more information [click here](#).

### **FBI ranks cyber attacks third most dangerous behind nuclear war and WMDs**



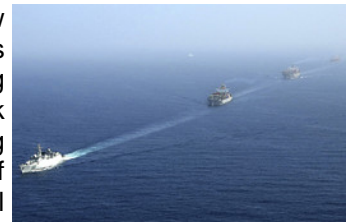
On January 6, the FBI announced it considers cyber attacks to be the third greatest threat to the security of the United States. The only two preceding it are nuclear war and weapons of mass destruction (WMD). A new term "Cybergeddon" has been coined, relating to the potential loss of intellectual property, intelligence infrastructure and related industries dealing primarily in data exchange or storage. The target today is not a person or place, but rather a person's data or a place's significance. While the United States has, to date, never seen an attack of that scale, Russian hackers allegedly mounted similar Internet attacks on networks in Estonia and Georgia last year. And most recently, several Israeli websites have been attacked

just within the last few days.

For more information [click here](#).

### **US Navy Announces Anti-Piracy Task Force**

The Wall Street Journal reports, "The US Navy said Thursday, January 8 it would create a new antipiracy task force in the latest military response to attacks in the waters off Somalia, and is asking other nations' navies to join in." The Journal says there are "early signs that growing international naval firepower in the area may be starting to have an effect," and that "the task force, which will initially include an American command ship and two other US warships, along with supporting aircraft, will be operational by mid-January." It is said not to be "an increase of US firepower, but is the first attempt to officially coordinate the growing international naval presence."



For more information [click here](#).

### **Tokyo prepares to take on African pirates**

As reported on January 28, Japan has ordered its navy to prepare for a mission to guard against pirates off the coast of Somalia and plans to draw up legislation in the next two months to clear the way for its warships legally to combat modern-day buccaneers. Tokyo had accelerated efforts to establish a legal basis for the mission after China last month sent three naval vessels to waters off Somalia last month, the first such mission by the People's Liberation Army navy.

For more information [click here](#).

### **Top al Qaeda Targets Reportedly Dead After U.S. Air Strike**

Two top al Qaeda officials are believed dead following a New Year's Day drone attack in northern Pakistan, ABC News confirmed on January 8. U.S. officials said Fahid Mohammed Ali Msalam and Sheikh Ahmed Salem Swedan, both on the FBI's most wanted terrorists list, were killed in the CIA strike. Msalam, who also went by the alias Usama al-Kini, and Swedan were both from Kenya and were indicted in the Aug. 7, 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya and for conspiring to kill U.S. citizens.

For more information [click here](#).

## Obama Issues Directive to Shut Down Guantánamo



President Obama signed executive orders on Thursday, January 22, directing the Central Intelligence Agency to shut what remains of its network of secret prisons and ordering the closing of the Guantánamo detention camp within a year, government officials said.

The orders, which are the first steps in undoing detention policies of former President George W. Bush, rewrite American rules for the detention of terrorism suspects. They require an immediate review of the 245 detainees still held at the naval base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, to determine if they should be transferred, released or prosecuted. And the orders bring to an end a Central Intelligence Agency program that kept terrorism suspects in secret custody for months or years, a practice that has brought fierce criticism from foreign governments and human rights activists. They will also prohibit the C.I.A. from using coercive interrogation methods, requiring the agency to follow the same rules used by the military in interrogating terrorism suspects, government officials said. But the orders leave unresolved complex questions surrounding the closing of the Guantánamo prison, including whether, where and how many of the detainees are to be prosecuted.

For more information [click here](#).

## European Countries May Take Detainees

European nations have begun intensive discussions both within and among their governments on whether to resettle detainees from the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, as a significant overture to the incoming Obama administration, according to senior European officials and U.S. diplomats. The willingness to consider accepting prisoners who cannot be returned to their home countries, because of fears they may be tortured there, represents a major change in attitude on the part of European governments. Repeated requests from the Bush administration that European allies accept some Guantanamo Bay detainees received only refusals. At least half a dozen countries are considering resettlement, with only Germany and Portugal acknowledging it publicly thus far.

European diplomats said Monday, January 26, that they are willing to help the Obama administration empty the prison at Guantanamo Bay, but stopped short of making specific promises to give inmates new homes in Europe. Since Obama's election, a handful of European countries have changed their minds. Portugal, Ireland and Switzerland have been among the strongest advocates. But U.S. officials don't expect them to accept more than a few inmates each. French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said Monday that his country would take prisoners "under extreme, precise conditions only." Italy and Spain have said they would consider participating, but only under a plan endorsed by the European Union. Britain, the Netherlands, Austria and Denmark have rejected the idea, saying that it is the United States' responsibility alone to handle the problem. European Union officials are also examining whether they can help the United States find a solution to another Guantanamo problem: what to do with the estimated 100 Yemeni nationals who remain in the prison.

For more information [click here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

## Authorities say extortion behind the attack that left two dead in Bogotá



The explosive was left in an ATM in a Blockbuster video rental store on Carrera 9 and Calle 81 on Tuesday, January 27, 2009. President Uribe attributed responsibility for the attack to the FARC.

The president condemned the attack from Europe, where he had traveled to the previous evening. "The national government laments the death of two citizens in this latest terrorist offense on Bogota, an offense which again reveals the farce put on by the FARC who speak of Human Rights and Humanitarian Accord, and at the same time combine extortion and terror" points out the bulletin of the Presidency.

Several bordering constructions and vehicles were damaged by the explosive wave. The tragedy could have been bigger, as at that hour there were hundreds of people, among them several foreigners, watching the match between Colombia and Venezuela.

For more information [click here](#).

## **FARC Takes Responsibility for the Bombing in the ICBF Mission, but says it was a Mistake**

The guerrilla group informed in a press release on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December that the attack in San Vicente del Caguan was directed to Gaula Members. During the attack two people disappeared. This is the first mistake that the guerrilla recognizes since Alfonso Cano took power. They reconfirmed that the attack on December the 7<sup>th</sup> was directed to a car that belonged to the anti-kidnapping group of the police, but a bomb was activated by mistake while the mission vehicle was passing through. A young psychologist of the institute and the driver died and three more people were injured. The South Block of the FARC expressed how sorry they were for the accident and wished a fast recovery to the victims through their web site. However, in the same press release, the guerrilla insists on a series of "recommendations for the civil society" since the bombing on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December is the consequence of the social and armed conflict the country is going through.

For more information [click here](#).

## **Researchers Hone In On 'Dropzones' For Stolen Credentials**

German researchers have discovered more than 300 cybercrime servers full of stolen credentials on more than 170,000 people -- and it is only the tip of the iceberg, they say.

Researchers at the University of Mannheim's Laboratory for Dependable Distributed Systems were able to access nearly 100 so-called "dropzone" machines, and say the actual number of these servers is much more. The researchers basically traced the steps of specific keyloggers and banking Trojans between April and October 2008. One-third of the machines infected by this data-stealing malware are in Russia or the U.S., according to the researchers. Overall, the 170,000 victims whose data they discovered in the dropzones were from 175 different countries. They discovered a total of 10,775 bank account credentials, including passwords and bank account details that the victims would enter during a regular transaction. They also found more than 5,600 credit card accounts and tens of thousands of passwords for various sites.

For more information [click here](#).

## **U.S. Department of Homeland Security forecasts 5-year threat picture**

The terrorism threat to the United States over the next five years will be driven by instability in the Middle East and Africa, persistent challenges to border security and increasing Internet savvy, says a new intelligence assessment obtained by The Associated Press.

Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks are considered the most dangerous threats that could be carried out against the U.S. But those threats are also the most unlikely because it is so difficult for al-Qaida and similar groups to acquire the materials needed to carry out such plots, according to the internal Homeland Security Threat Assessment for the years 2008-2013. Intelligence officials also predict that in the next five years, terrorists will try to conduct a destructive biological attack.

Terrorists will continue to try to evade U.S. border security measures and place operatives inside the mainland to carry out attacks, the 38-page assessment said. It also said that they may pose as refugees or asylum seekers or try to exploit foreign travel channels such as the visa waiver program, which allows citizens of 34 countries to enter the U.S. without visas. Intelligence officials predict the pool of radical Islamists within the U.S. will increase over the next five years due partly to the ease of online recruiting means. Officials foresee "a wave of young, self-identified Muslim 'terrorist wannabes' who aspire to carry out violent acts." A 2008 Interagency Intelligence Committee on Terrorism assessment said that Hezbollah members based in the U.S. do local fundraising through charity projects and criminal activity, like money laundering, smuggling, drug trafficking, fraud and extortion, according to the homeland security assessment.

In addition, the cyber terror threat is expected to increase over the next five years, as hacking tools become more sophisticated and available. "Youthful, Internet-savvy extremists might apply their online acumen to conduct cyber attacks rather than offer themselves up as operatives to conduct physical attacks," according to the assessment. Currently, Islamic terrorists, including al-Qaida, would like to conduct cyber attacks, but they lack the capability to do so, the assessment said. The large-scale attacks that are on al-Qaida's wishlist - such as disrupting a major city's water or power systems - require sophisticated cyber capabilities that the terrorist group does not possess. But al-Qaida has the capability to hire sophisticated hackers to carry out these kinds of attacks, the assessment said. And federal officials believe that in the next three to five years, al-Qaida could direct or inspire cyber attacks that target the U.S. economy. Counterterrorism expert Frank Cilluffo says the typical cyber attack would not achieve al-Qaida's main goal of inflicting mass devastation with its resulting widespread media coverage. However, al-Qaida is likely to continue to rely on the Internet to spread its message, said Cilluffo, who runs the Homeland Security Policy Institute at George Washington University.

For more information [click here](#).

## Panama Canal protected by detection tech



Colon, Panama, Dec. 31 (UPI) -- New nuclear threat detection technologies are currently operating in Panama after a recent agreement with the U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration.

The United States and Panama recently reached an agreement that paved the way for the NNSA, in partnership with the Manzanillo International Terminal and others, to install advanced radiation detection systems at the Panama Canal's Atlantic and Pacific Ocean megaports, the NNSA reported.

The ports, located at Colon and Panama City, are currently operating the scanning technologies to prevent the smuggling of illicit nuclear materials in cargo containers, as part of the Container Security Initiative.

"We are working closely with the Panamanian National Customs Authority and with the private terminal operators in Panama to prevent nuclear terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction," William Tobey, NNSA deputy administrator for defense nuclear non-proliferation, said in a statement.

"The success of this project reflects a strong commitment and desire on behalf of the government of Panama to secure its ports from illicit trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive materials." For more information [click here](#).

## Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative Deadline Approaches



The U.S. Department of State recommends that travelers apply now for travel documents that will be required at all land or sea border entry points as of June 1, 2009. On that date, under the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) U.S. citizens will be required to present a government-approved document that denotes both citizenship and identity when entering the United States. The U.S. Passport Book and the

U.S. Passport Card are the premiere documents that denote both citizenship and identity. A list of other government-approved documents is available at <http://www.getyouhome.gov/>. The Passport Card has been in production since July 2008. As of November 2008, more than 650,000 have been issued. Processing times for passport books and passport cards are approximately three weeks. First-time applicants or those under the age of 16 can apply at any of the more than 9,400 passport application acceptance facilities throughout the United States. Current passport holders, who are eligible to renew, can apply for a passport card by mail.

## Lower House of Indian Parliament Passes Tough New Anti-Terror Laws

Responding to soaring public anger about security lapses after the Mumbai assault, the lower house of India's parliament passed December 17, 2008, a string of tough anti-terrorism laws and a plan to set up a national investigative agency. The government debated and brought to the table two key bills, the National Investigating Agency Bill and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendments Bill, that will facilitate investigation and trial of the accused in cases of terrorism.

India announced a comprehensive revamp of its security forces and strengthened coastal borders and intelligence agencies. The government also proposed the setting up of a national agency, along the lines of the FBI, to investigate and prosecute "offenses affecting the sovereignty, security and integrity" of the country. Such an agency was earlier opposed because Indian state governments feared that their legal powers will be diluted. But the agency will bring better coordination between the law enforcement officials of various regions to combat terror groups that have spread through out the country in the recent months, officials said. For more information [click here](#).

## Briton convicted of directing terrorism

A British man was convicted December 18, 2008, of directing terrorism, the first person to be found guilty of the offense in the United Kingdom. Rangzieb Ahmed, 33, was also found guilty of a second offense -- being a member of al Qaeda. A second defendant, Habib Ahmed, 29, was convicted of the same crime. He was caught with two diaries containing the names and phone numbers of other al Qaeda operatives written in invisible ink, Manchester Crown Court heard during the trial. Among the contacts was Hamza Rabia, the terror group's suspected former no. 3.

formed by the Minister of the Interior. Embassy sources added that all the packages received in other diplomatic offices have been analyzed, and the results say it is an "innocuous substance" with the same sender in all the cases. According to the FBI release, from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> of December, letters with a note and white powder have been received in offices of more than 40 U.S. governors. The tests of the substance came up with the same results as the ones the Embassies obtained and all the letters had Texas's stamps. For more information [click here](#).



## Terrorist False Alarm provokes chaos in downtown Madrid



Traffic has been cut out in Serrano Street of Madrid for approximately three hours on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December because of a possible terrorist threat in the U.S. Embassy, which has blocked the downtown of the city. According to sources of the fight against terrorism, a suspicious envelope that had flour has activated all the alarms. U.S. Embassy of 15 European capitals –La Haya, Luxemburg, Paris, Roma, Oslo, Berlin, Bucharest, Bern, Stockholm, Brussels, Dublin, Copenhagen, Tallinn and Riga- have received in the last hours, envelopes with flour, alarming the security personnel of these premises, as it was informed by the Minister of the Interior. Embassy sources added that all the packages received in other diplomatic offices have been analyzed, and the results say it is an “innocuous substance” with the same sender in all the

cases. According to the FBI release, from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> of December, letters with a note and white powder have been received in offices of more than 40 U.S. governors. The tests of the substance came up with the same results as the ones the Embassies obtained and all the letters had Texas's stamps. For more information [click here](#).

## US Military forms special units trained to respond to possible WMD attacks

U.S. Northern Command, the military organization responsible for defense of the United States, is creating an array of trained and equipped units to respond to any significant event involving chemical, biological, nuclear or radioactive elements, its commander said December 17, 2008. Air Force Gen. Victor (Gene) Renuart said the units are a response to the recognition that following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks the nation did not have "a standing capability to respond to an attack by weapons of mass destruction." Creation of that capability was recommended by the 9-11 Commission, and this year Defense Secretary Robert Gates directed NorthCom to act, Renuart said. The new units are to be able to deal with up to three simultaneous events involving release of chemical or biological agents or a nuclear or radioactive explosion, he said. Although primarily intended to respond to a terrorist attack, the units also could react to a natural disaster, such as an earthquake that resulted in the release of toxic elements from a chemical plant, the general explained. These new units will augment the 54 WMD-Civil Support Teams that have been established with state National Guard personnel.

They also will complement two existing organizations -- the Chemical, Biological Incident Response Force created by the Marine Corps in 1996 and the Army's Technical Escort Unit, which responds to discovery of possible radiological materials. For more information [click here](#).

## Lockerbie marks 20th anniversary of bombing

Events commemorating the bombing of an American airliner over the Scottish town of Lockerbie took place December 21, 2008, in both the UK and the U.S. to mark the 20th anniversary of the attack which killed 270 people. All 259 people on board Pan Am flight 103 from London to New York were killed when the plane exploded in midair on December 21, 1988. A further 11 people died on the ground as debris rained down on Lockerbie. A former Libyan intelligence officer, Abdelbaset Ali Mohamed Al Megrahi, was convicted of the bombing in 2001. Al Megrahi, who is serving a life sentence in Scotland's Greenock Prison, last month lost an appeal to be released because he is suffering from advanced prostate cancer. Libya has formally accepted responsibility for the bombing, though Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi later denied any culpability. For more information [click here](#).

## Dynamite Found At Store In Paris



Police found five sticks of dynamite in a landmark Paris department store December 16, 2008, after an unknown group warned that bombs were hidden there and threatened more attacks unless France withdraws its military forces from Afghanistan. The interior minister, Michèle Alliot-Marie, said that the dynamite was old and that there was no detonator to set it off, suggesting that the threat to holiday-season shoppers had been minimal. But the scare dramatized the risks inherent in President Nicolas Sarkozy's decision in April to increase the number of French troops in Afghanistan to about 3,000 and expand their role to include combat operations. For more information [click here](#).



## **Families Who Sued Libya See Their Victory Voided**

U.S. Pact Nullifies \$6 Billion Award in '89 Bombing Over Africa.

The issues involved in the dispute date to the 1980s, when Libya was implicated in a spate of international terrorism incidents. The highest-profile case was the bombing 20 years ago of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, which killed 270 people, including 180 Americans. In 1986, the bombing of the La Belle disco in Berlin killed three people, including two Americans. Among the 229 wounded were 79 Americans. Then, there was UTA Flight 772. The dead on the flight were from 17 countries. The case stems from the Sept. 19, 1989, bombing of the French-operated UTA Flight 772, which crashed in the Niger desert after a suitcase bomb exploded in the cargo hold, killing 170 passengers and crew, including seven Americans. Family members of the American victims made history in January 2008 by becoming the first and only group to successfully sue Libya in federal court. After hearing the Pugh case -- named for the family of one of the victims -- U.S. District Judge Henry H. Kennedy found Libya responsible for the attack and awarded 44 relatives a collective \$6 billion. Experts say the success of the Pugh case helped bring Libya to the negotiating table. Faced with the court judgment, Libya had to take into account two dozen pending civil lawsuits that made similar claims about involvement in other terrorist attacks. The Pugh lawsuit made use of the 1996 Anti-Terrorism Act, which allows individuals to sue countries that sponsor terrorism and hold them financially liable. The law also allows the Justice Department to freeze and collect assets for the victims -- a financial threat that experts say serves as a deterrent. For more information [click here](#).

## **5 men convicted of conspiracy to kill US soldiers**

Five Muslim immigrants accused of scheming to massacre U.S. soldiers at Fort Dix were convicted of conspiracy on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December in a case that tested the FBI's post-Sept. 11 strategy of infiltrating and breaking up terrorist plots in their earliest stages. The men could get life in prison when they are sentenced in April. The five, who lived in and around Philadelphia for years, were found guilty of conspiring to kill U.S. military personnel. But they were acquitted of attempted murder, after prosecutors acknowledged the men were probably months away from an attack and did not necessarily have a specific plan. Four defendants were also convicted of weapons charges. For more information [click here](#).



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