



Inter-American Committee against Terrorism - CICTE

Secretariat for Multidimensional Security - Organization of American States

Newsletter No. 70 - August, 2009

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Organization of American States

Sub-regional Workshop on the Interdiction and Investigation of Cross Border Bulk Cash Smuggling

The CICTE Secretariat (OAS/SMS/CICTE), in conjunction with ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement), and in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Inter-American Commission on Drug Abuse Control (OAS/SMS/CICAD) and under the auspices of the Government of Mexico, organized a “*Sub-regional Workshop on the Interdiction and Investigation of Cross Border Bulk Cash Smuggling*”. The workshop was held in Mexico City from August 3 to 6, 2009.



The main objective of the workshop was to enhance the capability of participating countries to effectively apply the national and international legal framework on bulk cash smuggling, as well as the investigation of violations of their local cash declaration laws/regulations. There was also an exchange on best practices with respect to special analysis, investigative and prosecution techniques, and the importance of international cooperation on these matters.

The framework is given by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Special Recommendation IX.

More than 40 financial intelligence analysts from Financial Intelligence Units, immigration and customs officials and prosecutors from Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama, participated in the workshop. Experts from the Executive Directorate of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee (UN CTED), the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF), the United States Department of Homeland Security, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, as well as the organizers, gave theoretical and practical sessions on bulk cash smuggling. The workshop was opened by CICTE’s President, Mr. Juan Miguel Alcántara Soria.

For more information: Mr. Ignacio Ibáñez, iibanez@oas.org

Bioterrorism Exercise - Site Visit to Cancun

From August 17 to 21, 2009 the Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (OAS/CICTE), had an on-site visit to Cancun, Mexico to initiate preparations for the Simulation Exercise on Counter-Terrorism Crisis Management in Response to a Bio-Terrorist Attack. The exercise will take place at the Cancun International Airport in November, 2009. This exercise has been designed to establish a learning environment for participants to examine current and/or future emergency response plans, policies, and procedures in response to bioterrorism threats to public health, international transportation, trade, and tourism within Mexico and other countries in the region. There will also be an opportunity during this exercise for a discussion of the OAS H1N1 Resolution proposed by Mexico, bearing in mind the very relevant experience that the Mexican government has on this issue. The Crisis Management Exercise will involve 8 countries from the region and approximately 90 officials from different agencies with operational responsibility in this field.

For more information: Mr. Alejandro Diaz de Leon, ADiazdeleon@oas.org.

Editorial

Ambassador (ret.) John F. Maisto

Former U.S. Ambassador to the OAS, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and former Senior Director for the Western Hemisphere, National Security Council of the U.S.

Global Criminal Networks, The New Terrorism, and Globalization

Global criminal networks are the dark side of globalization. They spawn, expand, undergird, and facilitate a new form of terrorism, one that breeds political and social instability, intimidation and fear, and has taken on forms often very different than the 9/11, Madrid train, Buenos Aires Jewish Center type attacks. This new terrorism employs human trafficking, the narcotics trade, money laundering, and trade in weapons including nuclear materials. Its perpetrators amass capital through intellectual property theft, from CDs to medicines to clothing, and increasingly through cyber crime, and have developed the linkages to outsource their activities at the retail or city level. The tools of the new terrorists are: money flows from open markets and free trade; new technologies that include cell phones, the web, e-mail and texting; new source routes and expanded supply chains; weak States and corrupt institutions; corruption among public servants and within the private sector; and new entrepreneur opportunities that include the penetration of neighborhoods by gangs. The linkages among all and the challenges they pose are brilliantly explored in Moises Naim's recent book, "Illicit", and clearly demand a better coordinated and more invigorated multilateral response.

The Organization of American States deals with all of these challenges through the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security (SMS) and its three component parts: the Secretariats of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE) and the Inter-American Commission on Drug Abuse Control (CICAD), and the Department of Public Security (DPS). Each of these carries out unique, valuable work of the nuts and bolts type, engaging Member States in confronting security challenges in the traditional, non-threatening OAS way.

This work includes an array of activities intended to prevent and combat terrorism (CICTE), reduce the production, trafficking, use and abuse of drugs (CICAD), and address the range of other threats to public security (DPS) in the Americas. These initiatives employ a number of methodologies that include policy-level conferences; training courses and workshops to promote the exchange of information and best practices; crisis management exercises; meetings of experts; technical assistance missions; mutual country evaluations (e.g. CICAD's MEM); and education and awareness-raising, among others.

That is the good news—as far as it goes. The bad news is that so much more needs to be done, and that what is being done—although it deals with the real world and affects peoples lives' in every country of the Americas— does not get the attention it deserves from Member States' governments or within the OAS itself. Similarly, despite increasingly robust partnerships with the relevant UN agencies and other international and regional organizations, the work of the SMS entities gets scant attention in NGOs, think tanks, civil society, and the media in general. Sadly, other than inclusion in the Secretary General's annual report and a yearly report of the annual meetings of each, one hears very little about SMS and CICTE, CICAD, and DPS.

What to do about this? Lots, and it should start within the OAS itself.

--CICTE, CICAD, and DPS should, quarterly, inform the Permanent Council of their work, through factual reports which point out successes and shortcomings. These should highlight countries and entities that cooperate, identify plans and opportunities, and be explicit about what they could do, and where, and with what funding.

--Beyond the OAS, the three must work more and better with counterpart UN entities and with European (OSCE, Council of Europe) and other regional partners. In the UN case, this will likely require a pro-active and persistent approach in view of a UN bureaucracy tendency to dismiss the work of the OAS.

--There is need for a public affairs approach to NGO's and think tanks in Washington and in key capitals and universities throughout the hemisphere.

--Finally, an immediate area for policy attention for CICTE, CICAD, and DPS should be the U.S. Merida Initiative, which encompasses the work of all three and spans the U.S., Mexico and all of Central America. The SMS entities provide the Merida Initiative ready expertise. It is time for the OAS to be bold about this opportunity, and CICTE, CICAD, and DPS have much to offer.

All of this will require the political will of OAS leadership, which would include lobbying Member State capitals to provide instructions to their delegations. It also requires ready, forward-leaning ideas and initiatives from within CICTE, CICAD, and DPS themselves. These three entities deal with the dark side of globalization every day, and are uniquely positioned to address the challenges it has spawned. It is an effort that demands more than rhetoric, and offers a historic opportunity to increase the relevance of the OAS.

Counter-Terrorism Activities

Tourism Security Program – Workshop in Mexico

The Tourism Security Program of the OAS Secretariat for Multidimensional Security, which was being conducted in the Caribbean countries, has been extended to Latin America, starting with Mexico. The first tourist destination in Mexico to receive this specialized course was Acapulco, a city which is globally recognized for its natural beauty and importance in Mexico's tourism activities.



The OAS, in coordination with the Government of Mexico, supported by the authorities of the State of Guerrero and the Municipality of Acapulco, and in collaboration with the Association of Hotels and Tourism Enterprises of Acapulco (AHETA), conducted the first course on Tourism Security. The Security in Tourism course targeted 50 security supervisors from the public and private sectors with the objective of strengthening capacities and enhancing cooperation between the two sectors, in order to prevent incidents that affect the security of travelers and visitors.

The course was from August 24 to 28, 2009, and included, among other subjects: The Importance of Security in the Tourism Industry; Crisis and Emergency Management: Communications; Security in Hotels and other Installations, and Security Analysis and Evaluations.

The course included theoretical presentations and field exercises on international standards and best practices in tourism security. The training and technical assistance provided to the participants will allow them to conduct security evaluations at their own workplaces and to prepare the respective plans, procedures and manuals to prevent and respond to security threats at their facilities. The objective of this is to support and enhance the safety and security of international and local tourists and the tourism industry in general.

For more information: Mr. Alejandro Díaz de León, adiazdeleon@oas.org

News release:

<http://www2.esmas.com/noticierostelevisa/investigaciones-especiales/089516/oea-elige-acapulco-arrancar-programa-turismo>

Tourism Security Training in Haiti

The CICTE Secretariat conducted a workshop on Tourism Security training in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, August 10-14, 2009. This training course was the result of a partnership between CICTE, the OAS Department of Trade and Tourism (OAS/DTT), the Tourism Association of Haiti (ATH) and the Quisqueya University, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and the Government of Haiti. The objective of the course was to develop public-private partnerships to protect tourism and recreational facilities from any security threats. It was specifically aimed at security personnel of the public and private sectors in Haiti who have direct responsibility for these tourist destinations. During the five-day course the participants discussed security challenges faced by hotels and other tourism recreational sites. Over twenty-five (25) representatives from these two sectors attended this training.



For more information: Ms. Daniela Westphal (dwestphal@oas.org) or Mr. Alejandro Díaz de León (adiazdeleon@oas.org)

Airport Security - Crisis Management Training Workshops in and Costa Rica

The CICTE Secretariat recently organized a Crisis Management Training Workshop in Costa Rica on August 24-28, 2009. The workshop was coordinated through the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) Office of Global Strategies Capacity Development Branch. Twenty-one participants attended this course—including national aviation security inspectors.

The workshop emphasized a comprehensive "all-hazards" approach to crisis management that will allow one to prepare and plan for any number of different contingencies. The concepts presented and discussed during the course are applicable to a broad range of crises, such as natural disasters, accidents, technological malfunctions, sabotage, and acts of terrorism that can impact the aviation sector. Participants were also exposed to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards and guidance procedures, and dealing with the media during a crisis situation. One of the benefits of this workshop was that the involvement of participants from various agencies facilitated a more collaborative and inter-agency approach to combating crime and terrorist acts.

The opening ceremony in Costa Rica was attended by Amb. Patricio Zuquilanda-Duque, OAS Representative to the country who spoke on behalf of the OAS. Also in attendance at this opening ceremony was Costa Rica's National Point of Contact to CICTE, Mr. Carlos Cordero Madrigal.

For more information: Ms. Alana Wheeler, awheeler@oas.org

Conference on "Global Cyber Security: Threats, Challenges and Opportunities"



A representative of the CICTE Secretariat's Cyber Security Program participated in a recent conference on "Global Cyber Security: Threats, Challenges and Opportunities", held August 4-6 in Washington D.C. and organized by the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Directorate for Science and Technology, and the CyberScience Laboratory. As part of a panel discussion on "International Policy and Legal Challenges", the CICTE representative presented a view of the cyber challenges confronting the OAS Member States and the work that CICTE and other OAS entities are doing to address these challenges. The presentation highlighted the need for increased awareness at the policy level and further strengthening of the mechanisms for information-sharing and capacity-building within and between the Member States, and especially among government CSIRTs. The conference brought together over 300 partners from government, international, federal, state and local law enforcement, the private sector, and academia.

For more information: Mr. Brian Sullivan, bsullivan@oas.org

October is U.S. National Cyber Security Awareness Month



Each year, the National Cyber Security Division (NCSD) of the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) joins with the National Cyber Security Alliance (NCSA), the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) and other partners to support National Cyber Security Awareness Month, a national campaign focused on educating the

American public, businesses, schools and government agencies about ways to secure their part of cyber space, computers and our nation's critical infrastructure.

The goal of the National Cyber Security Awareness Month is to educate everyday Internet users on how to "Protect Yourself before You Connect Yourself", by taking simple and effective steps. These steps will teach Internet users how to safeguard their computer from the latest online threats, will offer ways to respond to potential cyber-crime incidents, and will link how each person's cyber security affects securing our nation's critical infrastructure.

More information: <http://jsrcclibrary.wordpress.com/2007/10/05/national-cyber-security-awareness-month/>

Meeting of Experts on Biological Weapons Convention Begins

A five-day meeting of experts on the Biological Weapons Convention was scheduled to begin on Monday, August 24, 2009, in Geneva, Switzerland. Participants were expected to consider disease monitoring, contagion countermeasures and other beneficial uses of the life sciences and associated technology. Also on the agenda was a discussion of enhanced collaboration among countries.

"These experts' contributions will be crucial to help us review our existing disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis, and containment capacities, and identify the resources that might be used to help others build their capacity," said Canadian diplomat Marius Grinius, chairman of the meeting. Representatives from the convention's 162 member nations are scheduled to gather in December for the annual states parties' meeting.

More info: http://gsn.nti.org/gsn/nw_20090824_9839.php

New IAEA guidance on the Security of Radioactive Sources

Radioactive sources are in widespread use with applications in research, industry, medicine and agriculture. There are concerns that terrorists or criminals might gain access to such sources and use them maliciously; e.g. in a radiological dispersal device like a 'dirty bomb'. As a result, there is a global trend towards improving the control and protection of radioactive sources. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has recently released a new guide for implementing security measures on radioactive sources entitled Security of Radioactive Sources. This guide, which is the eleventh in the IAEA's Nuclear Security Series, covers prevention, detection, and response measures. It is expected to help legislators and regulators, physical protection specialists and facility and transport operators, as well as law enforcement officers, to develop effective security programmes.

Copies may be downloaded from the IAEA's website at <http://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/publications/PubDetails.asp?pubId=8113>

OSCE/ATU activities

- On 11 September 2009, the ATU and the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA), in co-operation with the Charity Commission for England and Wales, the United States and the Basel Institute on Governance, will jointly organize a Workshop for Public and Private Sector Experts on Preventing the Abuse of Non-Profit Organizations for Terrorist Financing. The workshop will bring together experts from governments, international organizations, non-profit organizations and the donor community, to discuss i) relevant international standards ii) government oversight of the non-profit sector and enforcement actions iii) self-regulation of the non-profit sector to achieve greater transparency; as well as iv) governance capacity-building for the non-profit sector. Deadline for registration is 28 August.
For more information contact Mehdi.Knani@osce.org
- Conference entitled 'The War on Words: Terrorism, Media and the Law' organized by the International Press Institute and Center for International Legal Studies with support from the OSCE, 5-6 October, Vienna.
For more information contact Sayed.Aly@osce.org
- Workshop for Experts on Public Private Partnerships: Engaging with the Media in Countering Terrorism' organized by the ATU, 19-20 October, Vienna.
For more information contact Sayed.Aly@osce.org



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

An updated August 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>



Recommended Reading

Council on Foreign Relations – Kathryn Gregory: “Shining Path, Tupac Amaru”



Brief by the Council on Foreign Relations on the two main Peruvian terrorist groups: Both organizations operated most forcefully in the 1980s and early 1990s, when Peru's government fought a costly war against both insurgencies, but disproportionately the Shining Path. The Shining Path had a period of dormancy in the 1990s, but the organization has since resurged, along with the Peruvian cocaine trade. Analysts say the group is small in numbers, but it could gain support in rural areas. For

more information [click here](#).

Cano speaks

Just before starting a new electoral campaign and in a moment of external tensions with Venezuela and Ecuador, there are a lot of questions in the air regarding the FARC. Will they try to influence the results of these elections? Are their international networks damaged? Do they receive support from, or have they helped Hugo Chavez or Rafael Correa? Since the death, one year ago, of “Manuel Marulanda”, his successor “Alfonso Cano” has not given statements to any Colombian media, but after several weeks of insistence, he decided to break his silence and answer online to a questionnaire prepared by CAMBIO about this and other topics of interest. For more information [click here](#).

Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

Mr. John Brennan: “A new approach for safeguarding Americans”



Stephen Flanagan, senior vice president and Henry Kissinger, chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, discuss with Mr. John Brennan, assistant to the president for homeland security and counterterrorism an equally somber and critically important topic –

the president's approach to dealing with terrorism and extremist threats, to provide an overview of the president's comprehensive approach to protecting the American people from terrorism, to disrupting and defeating the near-term threats from al-Qaida and other international terrorist groups and addressing some of the political, economic and social factors that often fuel violent extremism. For more information [click here](#).

Elcano Royal Institute – Manuel Torres Soriano: “Jihadist Terrorism and new uses of Internet: propaganda distribution”

The uses that jihadi terrorism networks have found for the internet are rapidly and continuously changing. Institutions and agencies dealing with Cyber terrorism need to continuously update their knowledge base and best practices. In the 110/2009 edition of the *Analisis del Real Instituto* (ARI) some of the most recent developments relating to the communications aspect of jihadi terrorism are examined: the “outsourcing” of the propaganda functions, the establishment of a more stable and secure presence in the web, and the principal methods of content distribution. The article suggests some measures to address this particular aspect of terrorist activities on the internet. For more information [click here](#).

Recent Events

Month	Days	Event	Venue
August	3-6, 2009	Sub-Regional Workshop for Central America on Bulk Cash Smuggling	Mexico City, Mexico
	4-6, 2009	US Secret Service Global Cyber Security Conference	Washington DC, United States
	10-14, 2009	Tourism Security Level II Training for Haiti	Port-Au-Price, Haiti
	17-21, 2009	Bioterrorism Site visit	Cancun - Ciudad de Mexico, Mexico
	24-28, 2009	CICTE Aviation Crisis Management Training	San Jose, Costa Rica
	24-28, 2009	Tourism Security Level II Training for Mexico	Acapulco, Mexico
	31 -Sept. 4, 2009	CICTE Aviation Crisis Management Training	San Salvador, El Salvador

Upcoming Events

Month	Days	Event	Venue
September	TBD	Cyber Security Technical Assistance Mission	Bogota, Colombia
	7-8, 2009	Crisis Management Exercise: Black Ice II (CICTE as observer)	Montreux, Switzerland
	8-10, 2009	Meeting on UNSCR 1540	San Jose, Costa Rica
	9-11, 2009	Legislative Technical Assistance Mission (CICTE, CICAD, UNODC and UNCTED)	Asuncion, Paraguay
	14-22, 2009	PANAMAX Crisis Exercise, organized by SOUTHCOM and the Government of Panama	Panama City, Panama
	22-24, 2009	Specialized training - Delegation from Costa Rica	Vienna, Austria
	21-23, 2009	5th ICAO MRTDs Symposium	Montreal, Canada
	28-30, 2009	Port Security Hemispheric Forum (DIMAR Colombia, Red PBIP)	Cartagena, Colombia
	29-30, 2009	UNODC/CICTE Specialized training for Peru on counter terrorism investigation and prosecutions	Lima, Peru
	29 - October 2, 2009	CICAD - Anti-Money Laundering Group of Experts	Montevideo, Uruguay
November	11-13, 2009	Tourism Security Crisis Management Exercise	Cancun, Mexico
	TBD	Specialized Training on Tourism Security	Cancun, Mexico
	TBD	Joint OAS Hemispheric Workshop Cyber Security (CICTE-CITEL-REMJA)	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
	TBD	Legislative Technical Assistance Mission (CICTE, UNODC)	La Paz, Bolivia (TBC)
	TBD	Crisis Management Exercise - Maritime Security (CICTE, USCG, Transport Canada)	Brazil (TBC)

News

Pakistani Taliban say chief Baitullah Mehsud dead

Two commanders of the Pakistani Taliban acknowledged Tuesday, August 25, that the militants' top leader, Baitullah Mehsud, was killed by a U.S. missile strike. It was the first time the militants acknowledged Mehsud's death, first reported shortly after the CIA missile strike August 5 near the Afghan border. For more information [click here](#).

Argentina condemns Iran defense minister nominee

The Argentine Foreign Office reported, on August 21, that the nomination of Ahmad Vahidi as the Defense Secretary of Iran is "an insult to the Argentine justice and to the victims of the brutal terrorist attack against the Jewish Community Centre in Argentina (AMIA)."

Argentine Israeli Associations Delegation (DAIA) condemned the appointment of Iran's Defense Minister, Ahmad Vahidi, accused by the Argentine justice of being connected with the bombing of the Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires on July 18th, 1994, the worst terrorist attack on a Jewish center outside Israel. Vahidi, whose international capture was ordered by the Interpol, has also been the subject of an Interpol "red notice" since November 2007. For more information [click here](#).

Terrorists could use Internet to launch nuclear attack: report



On 24 July 2009, The Guardian reported on a study commissioned by the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND), which argued that under the right circumstances, terrorists could break into computer systems and launch an attack on a state with nuclear capabilities which would have global consequences. Without better protection of computer and information systems, the paper suggested, governments around the world were leaving open the possibility that a well coordinated cyber attack could quickly elevate to nuclear levels. This could be an easier alternative for terrorist groups than building or acquiring a nuclear weapon or dirty bomb. For more information [click here](#).

Twitter, Facebook, Live Journal and Google hit by denial-of-service attack



Twitter, Facebook, LiveJournal, and several Google sites were hit by a denial of service (DoS) attack that prevented people from accessing their websites for several hours on Thursday August 6, 2009. According to CNET, a Georgian blogger with accounts on Twitter, Facebook, LiveJournal, and Google's Blogger and YouTube was targeted in a denial-of-service attack that led to the sitewide outage at Twitter and problems at the other sites on August 6th.

The blogger, who uses the account name "Cyxymu," had accounts on all of the different sites that were attacked at the same time, and it is probable that the perpetrators of these attacks had political and personal motivations, Max Kelly, chief security officer at Facebook, told CNET News.

Denial of service attacks are able to bring down a Web site by overwhelming the site's servers with a large number of page view requests. The large number of simultaneous requests makes it impossible for the servers to handle the traffic load and eventually make the site inaccessible to users. DoS attacks are typically carried out by a botnet -- a large network of compromised computers that can be controlled from one source.

The incidents on August 6 followed a wave of similar cyber attacks in July that disrupted access to several high-profile U.S. and South Korean websites, including the White House site.

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

Airlines Set to Ask More of Passengers

U.S. airlines on Saturday, August 15 began asking travelers to provide their birth date and sex for the first time under a new aviation security requirement, federal officials said.

The change comes as the U.S. Department of Homeland Security takes over responsibility for checking airline passenger names against government watch lists. The additional personal information, which airlines will forward to the Transportation Security Administration, is expected to cut down on cases of mistaken identity, in which people with names similar to those on terrorist watch lists are erroneously barred or delayed from flights.

For more information [click here](#).

Three Alleged Hackers Indicted in Large Identity-Theft Case

As reported on August 18, a federal grand jury has indicted three people on charges of hacking into the files of the credit and debit card processing giant Heartland Payment Systems last year in what the Justice Department is calling the largest identity-theft case ever prosecuted.

In total, the government alleges that the suspects stole data on more than 130 million credit and debit cards from Heartland alone, including intrusions at grocery chain Hannaford Brothers and 7-Eleven. Authorities say hackers in the United States, Russia and Eastern Europe worked together to target known security weaknesses in computer systems.

For more information [click here](#).

ACME'S Cyber Safety Guide: The Teen and College Years



The Internet is second nature to today's teens, but that doesn't necessarily mean that cyber security is. According to ACME, the main "stumbling blocks" when it comes to young adults heading off to campus are online security and the thought that due to have grown up with the Web, and live and breathe by it, it would make them know how to stay safe and secure online. According to industry studies, while 93 percent of teenagers in the U.S. use the Web, only 20 percent of them say they use good judgment when sharing personal information online.

Tried and true strategies to avert online disasters follow below:

1. Invest in reliable PC security basics.
2. Navigate networking sites with care.
3. Don't post too much information about yourself online.
4. Be on guard when you shop online for bargain books and school supplies.
5. Work securely from wireless networks at coffee shops, libraries, and train stations.
6. Steer clear of peer-to-peer and file sharing networks.
7. Be wary of sharing your PC.
8. Create strong passwords and change them regularly.
9. Be skeptical of e-mail and instant messaging.
10. Backup your data regularly.

For more information [click here](#).

Moscow says crew of “Arctic Sea” is alive and free



The 15 Russian crew members of the Cargo Ship “Arctic Sea” which disappeared three weeks ago are alive and free, assured Russian Defense Minister, Anatoli Zerdiukov on Monday 17th August. The vessel is located 300 miles from Cape Verde (550 Kilometers)

Russian Authorities are questioning the crew in an effort to clarify what caused their mysterious disappearance. Some 20 countries had participated in the search operation for the Maltese-flagged, Russian-Crewed vessel.

Four days before its disappearance the vessel was detained for 12 hours near a Swedish island in the Baltic Sea by masked men who approached the vessel in a boat and presented themselves as police officers. These strangers, who did not present any identification, tied up the crew of the vessel and for several hours they searched for something in the ship’s hold, apparently finding nothing, after which they released the crew and left the “Arctic Sea”.

For more information [click here](#).

Panamanian Ship Held in the Philippines for transporting Weapons

A Panamanian-registered vessel has been held by Philippine authorities after they detected that it was transporting a cache of military weapons manufactured in Israel, said official sources on August 21.

The spokesman of the Cost Guard, Armand Balilo, said that during the inspection of the vessel, the agents discovered nearly fifty Galil automatic rifles.

The local police chief, Leonilo de la Cruz, stated that they suspect that these weapons were intended to be delivered to rebel groups or criminal organizations in the Philippines. The Philippine Army has been fighting communist guerrillas and Muslim separatist forces for decades and these two conflicts have caused approximately 160,000 deaths. For more information [click here](#).

Syrian Ex military officer charged with participating in a plan to sell weapons to the FARC



The Syrian arms trafficker and former member of the Syrian military, Jamal Yousef, AKA Talal Hassan Gantu, who was transferred last August 20 from Honduras to New York, was charged with participating, along with other Honduran nationals, in a plot to sell military-grade weapons to Colombian FARC guerrillas in exchange for 938 Kilos of cocaine, said the Attorney General’s Office in Manhattan. Yusef and his associates did not know that the presumed representatives of the Colombian armed group with whom they negotiated were actually confidential sources working for the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). The cargo offered for the exchange included one hundred AR-15 rifles, one hundred M-16 rifles, ten M-60 machine guns, about 2500 hand grenades and rocket-propelled grenades, C-4 explosives and surface-to-air missiles.

According to the indictment document, “The conspirators claimed that the arms were stolen from Iraq and were kept at the Mexican home of one of Yusef’s relatives. They also affirmed that this relative was a member of Hezbollah”. The indictment document also recalls that the Hezbollah is considered by the US to be a terrorist organization.

For more information [click here](#).

Portugal to Take Two Guantanamo Detainees

As reported on August 7, the Portuguese government has agreed to accept two Syrian detainees from Guantanamo Bay. The Portuguese government weighed humanitarian factors as well as security issues and the potential for ex-detainees to integrate into Portuguese society in making its decision, according to a statement from the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Other countries that have agreed to accept detainees from Guantanamo include Chad, Iraq, Ireland, Bermuda, and Saudi Arabia. For more information [click here](#).

US appeals the decision that denies the extradition of the "Merchant of Death"

The US appealed, on Friday, August 14, the decision of a Thailand Tribunal refusing to approve the extradition of suspected Russian arms trafficker, Viktor Bout, also known as the "Merchant of Death" and who is accused by the US of selling missiles to Colombian guerrillas.

The Prosecution now has 30 days to prepare its case. During that time, Bout, who was eligible for release if US authorities had not decided to appeal, will remain in custody.

The US Department of Justice has implicated Bout in deals to sell to the FARC 800 surface-to-air missiles, 5000 AK-47 assault rifles, C-4 explosives, landmines and other weapons valued at several million dollars.

According to the FBI, Bout also attempted to purchase an anti-aircraft battery and conspired to assassinate American citizens. If he is found guilty of these crimes by the US courts, he could be sentenced to a life imprisonment. For more information [click here](#).

Information from FARC's laptops: a Paraguayan visited FARC's Chief in 2001, and emails reveal links between the FARC and Honduran parties UD and FUTH

According to reports published last 18th August, the files of Raul Reyes reveal that the former Second-in-Command of the FARC met with a Paraguayan national who gave him details of a plan to be executed and asked him for more money to execute the plan. This meeting took place two months before the 64-day kidnapping of Maria Edith de Debernardi.



The names found in the files are pseudonyms, but it is known that Luis Edgar Devia is the real name of Raul Reyes and that the "Joke tellers" are the Paraguayan contacts with the FARC. Subsequent communications spoke of the presence of the "joke tellers" in Colombian territory, among other topics.

On another note, the computer that was seized from the guerrilla commander "Raul Reyes", reveals that FARC had established contacts in Honduras through the Democratic Unification Party (UD) and the Federación Unitaria de Trabajadores de Honduras (FUTH). The Investigation Unit of EL HERALDO of Honduras affirms to have had access to several emails discovered in the "Reyes" computer, in which the militants affirm having contact with, and "support" from the political party and the Honduran labor union for their politico-military intentions.

In the emails, dated for several months from 2005, 2006 and 2007, the names of political, labor and even religious figures that support the terrorist activities of the FARC at the continental level were mentioned.

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

Alleged Colombian drug trafficker based in Costa Rica accused of assisting the FARC

The US Treasury Department accuses José Cayetano Melo Perilla, currently residing in Costa Rica, of being "an important financial contact for the FARC's 27th Front" which is lead by Luis Eduardo Lopez Méndez aka "Efrén Arboleda".

The following four companies owned by the alleged drug trafficker: Carillanca Colombia (hydroponics), Carillanca SA (in Costa Rica), Carillanca C.A. (in Venezuela, construction sector) and Parquadero De La 25 – 13 (in Bogotá, Colombia), were also added to the black list. American enterprises and American citizens, by law, cannot develop commercial relations with Melo Perilla or any of these four companies.

"Although recent actions by the Colombian Government have undercut the FARC significantly, it continues to be the leading trafficker of narcotics out of Colombia," said Adam J. Szubin, Director of the US Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control. For more information [click here](#) and [here](#).

Bahamian Foreign Ministry Made CWC National Authority

The Foreign Ministry of the Bahamas has been selected to manage implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in the country, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons announced Friday, August 21. The convention requires that all member states establish or designate a "national authority" to manage contact with other nations and with the Hague-based organization that monitors compliance with the pact.



For more information [click here](#).

Arrested for Financing ETA with Lottery

According to information obtained on the 31st of July, Fernando Andreu, a Judge at the National Court has ordered the release of three detainees in the Basque Country for their connection with the youth association's website, "Gaztesarea", that has been linked with the outlawed SEGI and which was selling bonds for assistance to ETA.

After taking statements from the three detainees: Spanish Surfing Champion iker Acero, Alberto Martinez Gutierrez-Barquin and Arkaitz Artola, Judge Andreu decided to release them under probation with the obligation to appear before the judge every 15 days, the three have been accused of collaborating with a terrorist organization. To justify his decision to release them the judge explained in his ruling that "the accused can only be detained" when there exists "a reasonable risk of new criminal infractions", which, in his opinion, did not obtain in this case "even though the facts under investigation contain the characteristics of crimes and there exists evidence of criminality against of detainees".

For more information [click here](#).

About 10,000 members of ETA have been imprisoned during the last 30 years

According to data from the Spanish Interior Ministry, since 1978 nearly 10,000 members of that terrorist group have been imprisoned in Spain and France. The statistics, reported by "El Mundo" on Monday 17th August, does not include data on ETA members detained in Latin America, where a large number of them have taken refuge for many years. Nevertheless, the arrest statistics show that the State Security Forces of Spain have been forceful in its pressuring of that terrorist organization.

For more information [click here](#).

Judge launches new investigation related to the 2004 Madrid Train Bombings (3/11) - 7 accused of helping the fugitives

The Judge of the Spanish National Court, Eloy Velasco, has launched a new investigation on the attacks of 3/11 2004 in Madrid against 7 suspects accused of helping several perpetrators of the massacre to flee, said judicial sources. The new investigation is directed against Zohair Khadiri (in pre-trial custody), Djilali Boussiri, Taha Seghrouchni, Nassreddine Ben Laine Amri, Hammad Lahsini, Abdelkrim Lebchina and Abdelaliz el Merabit (all free). These suspects are "The only ones", according to the judge, "that remain in order to exclusively investigate the persons involved with the escape of those directly responsible for the attacks" and the explosion several weeks later in the apartment in the Madrid suburb of Leganés, where the suspected masterminds of the attack committed suicide.



Of the seven suspects, five have already been included in the main component of the trial. One of them, Abdelkrim Lebchina, is believed to have provided shelter to Abdelilah Hriz, the attack planner, who had also been sentenced in Morocco to 20 years imprisonment because of his participation in the 3/11. Only Hammad Lahsini and Abdelaliz el Merabit have been included in the trial since the opening of this new case.

For more information [click here](#).

Hamas hits al-Qaeda allies in Gaza, over 20 dead



Palestinian Islamists Hamas struck back at an al-Qaeda challenge to their hold on the Gaza Strip by storming a mosque in battles that left the leader of the "Warriors of God" splinter group among up to 28 dead.

When fighting ended in the town of Rafah early on Saturday, August 15, Hamas said the preacher-physician who led the group and who had proclaimed an al Qaeda-style Islamic "emirate" from a mosque on Friday was dead.

The worst inter-Palestinian violence since Hamas seized Gaza from its secular, Western-backed rivals two years ago exposed bitter tensions in the blockaded coastal strip, where Hamas has imposed its own nationalist brand of Islam while also seeking Western favor to end its international isolation.

For more information [click here](#).

Sri Lanka: Tamil Leader Arrested, Government Says

Sri Lanka said on August 6 that a wanted arms smuggler who recently took over as the leader of the defeated Tamil Tiger rebels was arrested overseas. The government's information director said the man, Selvarasa Pathmanathan, was arrested Thursday, August 6, in a foreign country that he declined to identify.

For more information [click here](#).

UK Cyber-security strategy launched



On 25 June 2009, the BBC reported the launch of the UK's first cyber security strategy. In line with a wider focus within the National Security Strategy on protecting both state and citizens, the cyber-strategy encompasses the protection of individuals from forms of fraud, identity theft and e-crime committed using technology as well as defending government secrets and businesses. At the launch of the strategy Security Minister Lord West stressed that there was also a growing concern that terrorists' improved web skills increased the chances of cyber attacks being carried out by terrorists. The new strategy envisaged the creation of a dedicated Office of Cyber Security in the Cabinet Office

which would coordinate policy across government and look at legal and ethical issues as well as relations with other countries. In addition, a new Cyber Security Operations Centre (CSOC) would be responsible for coordinating with public and private sector in attributing cyber crimes, working out how to better protect the country, providing advice and information about the risks.

For more information [click here](#).



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