

CICTE INFORME #6

Counter-Terrorism Activities

El Salvador Deposits Instrument of Ratification

The Salvadorian Foreign Minister, Lic. Maria Egenia Brizulea de Avila, formally deposited her nation's the instrument of ratification of the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism on 8 May during a visit to OAS Headquarters. El Salvador is the third nation to formally complete the ratification process as a state party to the convention, following Canada and Antigua and Barbuda. Peru, Mexico and Nicaragua have taken the necessary legislative action to approve the treaty, but have not yet deposited their instruments of ratification. Six ratifications are required for the treaty to enter into force.

United States and Canada Conduct Counter-terrorism Exercise

The United States and Canada recently completed a binational counter-terrorism exercise testing emergency response, health care, law enforcement, and intelligence sector capacity to respond to a series of simultaneous terrorist incidents. The exercise, designated *TOPOFF 2* lasted five days and included table-top and actual response drills in Seattle, Chicago, Washington DC, and Vancouver, Canada. The exercise examined responses to simulated radiological and biological attacks.

Uruguay to Extradite Suspected Terrorist

The Supreme Court of Uruguay recently cleared the extradition of a suspected Egyptian terrorist, Al Said Mohammed Ali Mokhles. Mokles is wanted in Egypt for charges stemming from his involvement with the Al Gama terrorist group. He is suspected of murder and illegal possession of firearms and explosives. Mokles is suspected of being involved in passport fraud and other illegal activities in the Triple Frontier area around Foz de Iguazu. His extradition was cleared when Egypt agreed not to apply the death penalty or life imprisonment.

CICTE Announces First Meeting of National Points of Contact

CICTE will hold its first meeting of its National Points of Contact (NPC) in Washington from 14-15 July. This meeting is designed to exchange information at the professional level between the counter-terrorism professionals in the member states. Agenda topics include training initiatives under the auspices of the CICTE Secretariat, communications tools available to the NPCs, status of the CICTE work plan, and the role of the NPC. Questions about the meeting may be referred to Joaquin Galvez at 202-458-3523 or email at jgalvez@oas.org.

Upcoming Conferences and Meetings of Note

- June 16-20 FATF Plenary Berlin, Germany. Topics include revision to the FATF 40 recommendations on money laundering and additional guidance on terrorist financing. For more information see FATF web site at <http://www1.oecd.org/fatf/>
- June 18-20 Inter-American Travel Congress Guatemala City, Guatemala. Under the theme of “Hemispheric Cooperation Within the New Challenges of the Tourism Sector”, the Congress will provide an opportunity for tourism private and public sector officials to assess industry efforts to recover from events of September 11, 2001, to learn of initiatives contributing to recovery and opportunities for the future. The CICTE Executive Secretary will make a presentation on regional counter-terrorism efforts. For more information see the Congress web site at http://www.oas.org/tourism/tr_intel.htm
- June 22-23 REMJA Group of Experts on Cyber Crime Meeting. OAS Headquarters, Washington DC. For more information contact Jorge Garcia-Gonzales at jgarciag@oas.org .
- June 22-26 CICAD Money Laundering Group of Experts Meeting, OAS Headquarters. For more information contact Rafael Franzini at rfranzini@oas.org.
- July 28-29 OAS Cyber Security Conference, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Three OAS organizations, CICTE, CITEL, and the REMJA Group of Experts on Cyber Crime, are jointly sponsoring a conference to examine the threats and potential courses of action for the OAS in regards to the security of our networks and critical infrastructure systems. For more information contact Kevin Newmeyer at knewmeyer@oas.org or Joaquin Galvez at jgalvez@oas.org of the CICTE Secretariat.

Recent Developments in the News:

The *Washington Post* reported the theft of a density gauge containing radioactive cesium-137 from a construction site. The density gauge is used in measuring the compression of soil during the construction process. Its use of a radioisotope is similar to other industrial and medical uses of small amounts of radioactive material. The cesium does not pose a health risk while in the gauge, but cesium-137 in sufficient quantities could be used in a radioactive “dirty” bomb.

The *IEEE Spectrum* details a new technological defense against the distributed denial of service attacks that have shutdown several well-known web sites. Developed by two professors at Georgia Tech University, the defense works by sending new inquires initially to another internet address where the original requestor is given a secret key to use when contacting the destination server. Since the attackers most often use false return address, they never get the secret key and are thus ignored by the target computer server.

For more information see the article by Jun Xu and Wooyong Lee in *IEEE Transactions on Computers*, February 2003, pp. 195-208.

The *New York Times* reported that the United States will start using some types of biometric devices to recognize passengers trying to enter the country before the end of 2003. The new security measures will include fingerprint and facial recognition software. It will be used in some cases to verify information on the passenger with information provided in the visa application. The system will be designed to make it more difficult to enter the US illegally while expediting the process for legal entrants.

In another story, the *New York Times* discusses the training of chemical weapons detection dogs by the US Department of Homeland Security. The dogs have been trained to detect trace amounts of the non-lethal components of sarin and cyanide.

Clarín.com reported that the Argentine prosecutors pursuing the AMIA bombing case have requested additional indictments. The fiscales asked for international arrest warrants for five Iranians believed to be involved with obtaining and transporting the explosives used in the attack in 1994. The request discusses the involvement of the terrorist organization Hezbollah and its associates operating in the Triple Frontier region of Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina.

Security Management discusses initiatives by the Canadian and Australian governments to improve aviation security. Canada is instituting increase access control systems that use biometric identifiers. These credentials will be used to control access to restricted zones in airports. The government will also take over screening of non-passengers who have access to restricted areas. The new Australian legislation is designed to protect sensitive aviation security information. Under the bill the government may compel individuals to provide information if the lack of disclosure would present a security threat.

The US State of Mississippi enacted a new law that makes it illegal to possess or release harmful biological substances in the state. The law also prohibits false claims of exposure to such substances. Releasing a toxic agent with intent to cause harm is punishable by a fine of up to \$100,000 and 20 years in prison. *Security Management* reported that this follows recent regulations issued by the US Health and Human Services Administration (HHS) and Center for Disease Control limiting the handling of 42 substances identified as select agents. The HHS regulations require designation of a responsible individual at each site to oversee handling on the agents. Additionally each facility must establish a security plan for control of the agents.