Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE)

Organization of American States (OAS)

COUNTER-TERRORISM ACTIVITIES

Preparations for the Eighth Regular Session of CICTE

Preparations for the Eighth Regular Session of CICTE are well underway at OAS Headquarters. Two preparatory sessions have been held and one more is scheduled for February 11. The agenda for CICTE VIII includes an in-depth focus on three substantive topics: cyber security, document security and fraud prevention, and port security--trade and safe transportation. The meeting of CICTE National Points of Contact will take place on the morning of March 5, prior to the opening of CICTE VIII. Also being planned are the Meeting of government experts to evaluate a tourism and recreational facilities' security pilot project, and the Sixth Meeting of National Points of Contact to CICTE. All the meetings are to be held March 4-7, 2008 at the OAS in Washington, D.C. with participation by all 34 CICTE Member States.

For more information: www.cicte.oas.org

Workshop on Port Security Best Practices and the Implementation of ISPS Code

At the request of the Secretariat for Communications and Transportation (SCT) of the Government of Mexico, the CICTE Secretariat organized January 21-24, 2008, a hands-on workshop on port security best practices and implementation of the International Ship and Port Facilities Security Code (ISPS) for Mexican Port Facility Security Officials (PFSOs) in Veracruz, Mexico, in conjunction with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and Transport Canada. Some 40 PFSOs attended the workshop, representing cargo and cruise ship facilities as well as PEMEX installations. Instruction was provided by the USCG, Transport Canada, and the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, as well as a port security expert from the Chilean Navy's Maritime Security School. Topics covered include: threats and vulnerabilities to port facilities; recognizing persons posing a security risk to ports; conducting risk assessments; physical security techniques to prevent breaches; conducting port facility security plan/port facility audits; and conducting physical security searches. Participants were divided into smaller groups of 10-12 based on their respective responsibilities, and met independently to identify key issues and challenges, and share best practices. These were presented to the full attendees on the final day, and will be consolidated into an executive report which will serve as a guide for next steps to enhance Mexico's port security in the future.

For more information, please contact Mr. Pablo Martínez, pmartinez@oas.org

Highlights:

Editorial

As readers will notice, much of the content of this month's newsletter focuses on cyber security, cyber crime, and cyber terrorism. This focus reflects the growing cyber threat that we all – countries and individuals alike – face in a world increasingly dependent on more sophisticated technologies.

While computers, the internet, and other information and communication technologies have made our lives easier and carry boundless potential for growth, connectivity, innovation and prosperity, so have they also made us vulnerable to a wide range of new threats. The list of these is long and constantly evolving, and includes: the use of "botnets" to send spam and "phish" for personal or financial information; the exploitation of insecure web applications; attacks on websites, networks, and critical infrastructure; cyber espionage; and the use of the internet to plan, organize and execute malicious activities, to name but a few. Perpetrators range from individual hackers testing their skills, to highly sophisticated criminal organizations driven by the pursuit of profit, to terrorist groups seeking to recruit members, plan attacks or otherwise sow instability and fear.

For CICTE, issues of cyber security have always been viewed through the lens of counter-terrorism, and CICTE Member States have repeatedly identified threats to cyber security among the most pressing of the emerging terrorist threats. Counter-terrorism experts generally consider cyber terrorism as taking one of three forms: 1) cyber attacks on critical information infrastructure, whether to wreak havoc by disrupting information systems, "hack" into intelligence or financial systems, or misappropriate information for financial gain; 2) terrorist recruitment and incitement through the internet; and 3) illegal use of the internet to plan, organize or execute acts of terrorism.

The CICTE Secretariat has promoted and enhanced cyber security awareness within OAS Member States since the Third Regular Session of CICTE in 2003, which emphasized cyber security as a key aspect of critical infrastructure protection. Since then, the CICTE Secretariat has played a central role in the approval by Member States in 2004 of an OAS Cyber Security Strategy, and has taken the lead in organizing hemispheric meetings and workshops focused on cyber security.

Under the OAS Strategy, the CICTE Secretariat seeks to assist Member States' to secure their critical information infrastructures against cyber attacks by establishing national Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs), to serve as a 24/7 watch, warning and alert centers. Although the host government agency for the CSIRTs varies from country to country, members of those teams must necessarily come from a wide variety of backgrounds, including: counter electronic and cyber crimes units; security or law enforcement agencies; regulatory institutions; academia; and the private sector. The CICTE Secretariat is also currently facilitating the launch of a pilot project aimed at creating an inter-American network of CSIRTs, to enable Member States to rapidly disseminate cyber security information and share technical guidance and support in the event of a cyber incident.

The CICTE Secretariat coordinates efforts closely with two other OAS bodies under the OAS Strategy. A Group of Governmental Experts of the Meeting of Ministers of Justice of the Americas (REMJA) works extensively on cyber crime. The Inter-American Committee on Telecommunications (CITEL) works on broader cyber security issues with the telecommunications organizations and on promoting a culture of cyber security.

While the growing number of news and media reports regarding cyber-related threats in recent months is an alarming indication of the scope of the challenge we all face, the increased coverage of these threats is an encouraging sign of a heightened awareness of the need to develop our capacity to detect, prevent and respond to cyber attacks of all kinds. In 2008 the CICTE Secretariat will continue to place high priority on our Cyber Security Program, and the objective of providing OAS Member States the technical and organizational support they need develop such capacities. Cyber security will be one of three substantive sessions held during the Eighth Regular Session of CICTE at OAS Headquarters March 5-7, 2008.

COUNTER-TERRORISM ACTIVITIES

UN Security Council Committee 1267 approves amendments to consolidated list

The Security Council's Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee on 21 December 2007 approved amendments to identifying information with regard to 25 individuals and 1 entity in the Al-Qaida section of its List of individuals and entities subject to sanctions. Also on January 16, 2008, the Committee approved the addition of the names of three individuals to its Consolidated list. The amendments have been marked in the entries of the list referred to below. An updated version of the List is accessible in XML, PDF and HTML formats on the Committee's website.

For more information **click here**.

Immigration and Customs Training

Under its Customs and Immigrations program, the CICTE Secretariat began organizing in 2006 a series of training courses in the Caribbean for the nine host countries of the Cricket World Cup, in support of those countries' security needs. Most recently, the government of Antigua and Barbuda hosted a customs and immigration security training program in St. Johns, from December 3-7, 2007. Twenty-six (26) customs, immigration and other port and airport security officials were trained by experts from the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) service of the United States Department of Homeland Security. The final course in the series will be conducted in Barbados February 18-22, 2008, following an assessment of current procedures and training needs to be completed January 29-31. All nine countries have now participated in this specialized training.

For more information, please contact Mr. Sheridon Hill, shill@oas.org

Aviation Security Training

Airport security refers to the techniques and methods used in protecting airports and by extension aircraft from crime and terrorism. Large numbers of people pass through airports every day. Such a large gathering of people presents a natural target for terrorism and other forms of crime due to the number of people located in a small area. Similarly, the high concentration of people on large airliners, the potential high lethality rate of attacks on aircraft, and the ability to use a hijacked airplane as a lethal weapon provide an alluring target for terrorism. Airport security provides a first line of defense by attempting to stop would-be attackers from bringing weapons or bombs into the airport. If security measures inside the aiport succeed, then the chances of these devices getting on to aircraft are greatly reduced. As such, airport security serves two purposes: To protect the airport from attacks and crime and to protect the aircraft from attack.

In December the CICTE Secretariat provided Basic Aviation Security Training to 18 nationals from the Caribbean islands of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This one-week capacity building training was targeted at Airport/Aviation Security staff who are the first line of defense for the airport and aircraft, i.e. the security screeners. The training is designed to enhance the screener's ability to detect threat items using x-ray machines, metal detection portals, physical search techniques and explosive trace detection technologies.

From January 21-24, the CICTE Secretariat, in conjunction with the Ministry of National Security, Immigration & Labour of St Kitts and Nevis, organized an Aviation Crisis Management Course held at NEMA Headquarters. The five-day course, conducted by experts from the United States Transportation Security Administration (TSA), furnished participants of mid-level to senior aviation-management, and other government officials, with the knowledge and skills needed to develop and implement sound crisis management procedures. Similar training will be conducted in Antigua and Barbuda January 28-February 1, 2008. Please visit the CICTE website for up to date information on all upcoming events.

The Secretariat welcomes comments from the Member States, as well as communications from our National Points of Contact on the needs of their government for specific training.

For more information, please contact Ms. Hayda Wallen at hwallen@oas.org.

Crisis Management Exercises on Port Security

In February 2007, the Secretariat of CICTE, the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), the Secretariat of the Inter-American Ports Committee (CIP), Transport Canada, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the U.S. Department of State (Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement – INL) formed a broad partnership for maritime security-related capacity building assistance for OAS Member States. This Port Security Assistance Program (PSAP) includes among its three projects Crisis Management Exercises (CME) on Port Security. These CME port facilities activities are implemented as tabletop exercises, which are usually preceded by a one-day training on procedures of the International Ship and Port Facilities Security Code (ISPS) of the International Maritime Organization and the preparation of the tabletop scenario.

The CICTE Secretariat conducted a first CME in conjunction with the Prefectura Naval in the port of Buenos Aires, Argentina, September 12-14, 2007. The Secretariat is currently organizing the second CME under the PSAP to take place in Bogotá, Colombia , February 20-22, 2008, in collaboration with the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Maritime Secretariat (Dirección Marítima de Colombia –DIMAR). A third CME is planned for the port of Callao in Lima, Peru, in the second quarter of 2008, in coordination with the Ministry of Transportation and Communications and the Port Authority of Peru.

The overall aim of these exercises is to assist OAS Member States in effectively assessing the complex and multi-faceted nature of the response capacities and mandates of each of the actors involved in a crisis situation at port facilities and to encourage discussions to address potential vulnerabilities in port facilities security plans. The main objectives of the CME include : a) improving the coordination and cooperation between the various players (public and private) who would be involved in a crisis situation and who share port security responsibilities at the strategic-political and tactical-operative decision levels; b) building capacities and abilities to respond to a possible crisis situation derived from a threat at a national level; c) and consolidating channels of cooperation within all Government Ministries and institutions in order to detect threats and adopt preventive measures in accordance with international port security standards.

For more information, please contact Mr. Pablo Martínez, pmartinez@oas.org

INTERPOL bioterrorist attack exercise to identify areas for enhanced co-operation

On December 3, 2007, participants in the 'Black Death' scenario faced a fictional plague attack involving 10 countries to assist them in identifying critical co-operation and co-ordination issues which would be necessary to respond to such an attack. "Bioterrorism is the perfect storm of opportunity and motivation and we would be mistaken in treating a worst-case scenario as a remote possibility," said INTERPOL Secretary General Ronald K. Noble. "This exercise will help focus our joint understanding of the role and responsibility of each of us – police, health care professionals, experts – in response to a bioterrorism incident, as well as identifying possible gaps or redundancies so that we can draw lessons from them." Senior law enforcement officials from nine countries and representatives from the following international organizations the European Council, Europol, the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) took part in the two-day event in Lyon, France. For more information **click here**.

Informal Review of UN Global Strategy on Terrorism

On December 4, 2007, an Informal Meeting of the UN General Assembly on the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly, Ambassador Dr. Srgjan Kerim of Macedonia, pointed out the excellent work of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, and emphasized the outstanding role of Assistant Secretary-General Orr.   Additionally, the President highlighted the key importance of involving civil society when countering terrorism. This was also underscored by Mr. Alistair Millar, Director of the Center on Global Counter-Terrorism Cooperation, who additionally encouraged relevant organizations to generate research on counter-terrorism measures and technical assistance, provide support on legal issues, as well as monitor military actions—especially in regions were institutional capabilities are vulnerable. Ambassador Kerim urged UN Member States to implement the Strategy's recommendations, continue promoting awareness, incentive discussions among countries, and coordinate actions among all stake-holders to implement all aspects of the Strategy.   The Strategy will continue to be reviewed and Member States will keep on working to finalize a formal review in early September 2008.

For more information **click here** and **here**.

Workshop on Implementation of UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

The Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, an NGO based in New York City, New York, has published the summary report of the recent workshop it convened on implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in East Africa. The workshop was financed by the Government of Denmark and was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, January 15-16, 2008. This summary is listed under "Publications" on the Center's website and may be of interest to OAS Member States since the Center plans to offer a similar workshop for the Americas in 2008. The Center has also offered nine Special Recommendations for Implementation of the United Nations Strategy, which is also available on its website.
For more information click **here** and **here**.

UN Security Council 1540 Committee – Assistance

The Security Council recognizes that some States may require assistance in implementing the provisions of resolution 1540 within their territories and invites States in a position to do so to offer assistance as appropriate in response to specific requests to the States lacking the legal and regulatory infrastructure, implementation experience and/or resources for fulfilling the resolution's provisions. The Committee 1540 stands ready to facilitate the implementation of UNSCR 1540 by States through its clearing house function, particularly by receiving and compiling both requests and offers of assistance. To help fulfill this goal, the Committee has also posted a summary of the Assistance Request Template on its website:
http://www.un.org/sc/1540/assistancetemplate.shtml

The 1540 Committee sent recently to all United Nations Member States a letter encouraging them to provide the Committee with up-to-date information on steps taken or planned to be taken to implement Resolution 1540 in order to help the Committee prepare its report to the Security Council by April 1, 2008.   (At the request of the Committee, the CICTE Secretariat reforwarded to all CICTE National Points of Contact a copy of the letter and the Matrix for response.)

US to issue 'passport cards' for Canada, Mexico, Caribbean trips

The US government will offer special "passport cards" as a cheap alternative to traditional documents for Americans visiting Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean by land or sea, the State Department announced Tuesday, January 15. "The passport card will facilitate entry and expedite document processing at US land and sea ports-of-entry when arriving from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Bermuda," the Department said. The government will begin distribution of the cards, which will not be accepted for air travel, in the spring. US citizens can apply for them starting February 1. The passport card is being issued as a cheaper and more convenient travel document for Americans living in the northern and southern borders who complained that traditional passports were too cumbersome.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister of the Bahamas, Brent Symonette, told the newspaper "The Guardian," that the U.S. passport card ruling coincidentally came at the same time as local officials were considering a similar card for Bahamians. Symonette warned the Bahamian public not to be wary of embracing the technology once it comes on stream in The Bahamas.

For more information **click here** and **here**.

Restriction on American travelers faces fight at northern border

The Secretary of Homeland Security of the US said Thursday, January 17, that he is committed to ending a centuries-old practice that allows United States citizens to cross U.S. land borders simply by saying they are Americans. Politicians representing northern border states have fought the change, scheduled to take effect January 31. But Secretary Michael Chertoff said the current practice of accepting "oral declarations" of citizenship undermines efforts to thwart terrorism and illegal immigration. Beginning January 31, citizens of the United States and Canada must present proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate, and a government-issued ID, such as a driver's license, when entering the United States at land border crossings and sea ports.

For more information **click here** and **here**.

Cyberterrorism - The use of the Internet for terrorist purposes

Cyberterrorism and the misuse of Internet for terrorist purposes represent serious threats, since many essential aspects of today's society are completely dependent upon the functioning of computer systems and the Internet. Further to the adoption by the Council of Europe of the Cybercrime Convention (2001) and the Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism (2005), its Committee of Experts on Terrorism (CODEXTER) has been studying this matter and surveying the situation in member states to evaluate whether existing legal instruments are sufficient to combat this emerging form of crime. A new publication contains an expert report prepared by the Max Planck Institute, which evaluates the main problems that arise in the context of cyberterrorism and provides recommendations, together with reports on the situation in the member and observer states of the Council of Europe and the relevant Council of Europe conventions.

For more information **click here**.

U.S. Expands Computer Network Monitoring

President Bush signed a National Security Presidential Directive January 8 expanding the intelligence community's role in monitoring the Internet traffic in order to protect against a rising number of attacks on federal agencies' computer systems. The directive creates a task force headed by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and authorizes the intelligence agencies, in particular the National Security Agency, to monitor the computer networks of all federal agencies. According to a Washington Post article January 26, "The Department of Homeland Security will collect and monitor data on intrusions, deploy technologies for preventing attacks, and encrypt data. It will also oversee the effort to reduce Internet portals across government to 50 from 2000 to make it easier to detect attacks."   This "cyber initiative" is aimed at securing the government's computer systems against attacks by foreign adversaries and other intruders. However, according to the article, "supporters of cyber-security measures say the initiative falls short because it doesn't include the private sector—power plants, refineries, banks—where analysts say 90 percent of the threat exists."

For more information **click here**.

RECENT TRAINING AND CONFERENCE EVENTS

December	3, 2007	Second Session of the Preparatory Meeting of the Eighth Regular Session of CICTE	Washington D.C, U.S.
	3 - 7,2007	Customs and immigration follow-on security training	Antigua and Barbuda
	3-15, 2007	Basic Security Training (Aviation)	St. Vincent & Grenadines
January	21 - 25, 2008	Aviation Security Crisis Management Training	St Kitts
	21 - 24,2008	Port Security Workshop on ISPS Code	Veracruz, Mexico
	28 - Feb 1, 2008	Aviation Security Crisis Management Training	Antigua and Barbuda
	29-31, 2008	Customs and Immigration security assessment	Barbados

UPCOMING EVENTS

February	11, 2008	Third Session of the Preparatory Meeting of the Eighth Regular Session of CICTE	Washington D.C, U.S.
	11 - 15, 2008	International Organization on Migration(IOM) In country Assessment	Suriname
	18 - 22, 2008	Immigration and Customs Security Training	Bridgetown, Barbados
	21 - 22,2008	Port Crisis Management Exercise in Port Security	Bogota, Colombia
	25 - March 4, 2008	Aviation Security Basic Security Training	St Kitts and Nevis
March	March - May, 2008	Port Security Training	Jamaica & Guyana
	4, 2008	Meeting of Experts to Evaluate the Pilot Project on Security of Tourism and Recreational Installations	Washington D.C, U.S.
	5 - 7, 2008	Eighth Regular Session of CICTE	Washington D.C, U.S.
	5, 2008	Sixth Meeting of CICTE National Points of Contact	Washington D.C, U.S.
	10 - 14,2008	International Organization on Migration (IOM) In country Assessment	St. Lucia
	17 - 19,2008	APEC Port Security Training for Peru by US Coast Guard	Elizabeth City, North Carolina - U.S.
	17-21, 2008	Aviation Security Crisis Management Training	Georgetown, Guyana
	24 - April 1, 2008	Aviation Security Basic Security Training	Georgetown, Guyana
April	1 - 2, 2008	Conference against Cybercrime - Council of Europe	Strasburg, France
	7-11, 2008	Sub-regional Course on Cyber Security awareness Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT)	Antigua, Guatemala
	TBC	Port Security Crisis Management Exercise	Lima, Peru
	30, 2008	Port Security Training Needs Assessment	The Bahamas
June	June - July, 2008	Port Security Follow on Training	The Bahamas

NEWS

Hackers Caused Multi-City Power Outages

On January 16, a United States CIA analyst admitted publicly to a conference of security professionals that criminals had been able to hack into computer systems via the Internet and cut power to several cities outside the United States. The goal of the attacks was extortion. The revelation of this previously classified information came as a surprise to many professionals who were unaware of the incidents, but following a cost benefit analysis, the CIA had decided to make the information public. "There were apparently a couple of incidents where extortionists cut off power to several cities using some sort of attack on the power grid, and it does not appear to be a physical attack."

For more information **click here**.

Proposed U.S. Cyberspace Command Headquarters

In order to defend strategic U.S. computer systems against electronic warfare, whether from terrorists, foreign adversaries, or hackers, the U.S. Air Force has been tasked with establishing a Cyberspace Command Headquarters in the near future. The command would be parallel to the Air Force Space Command and Air Combat Command. Fifteen sites are currently being considered, and the bidding "wars" have begun. A final site is expected to be chosen in March. The facility would initially employ at least 400-500 officers, enlisted personnel and civilians.

For more information **click here** and **here**.

Cyber Crime 2.0

The year 2007 may go down in the annals of Internet crime as the year when organized cyber criminals finally got serious about their marketing strategies -- crafting cyber schemes that were significantly more sophisticated and stealthy. Attackers also excelled this year at timing attacks with holidays or major events. "Cyber Monday" is the day following Thanksgiving weekend that is typically one of the largest online shopping days of the year in the U.S. Researchers at the Clearwater, Florida-based security firm Sunbelt Software discovered that more than 40,000 Web sites had been created and populated with fake search terms for the sole purpose of increasing their page ranking when Google users searched for any of the words listed in the bogus pages -- words that included a number of popular holiday gadget gifts. Dan Hubbard, senior director of security and technology at Websense, a San Diego-based Web filtering software firm, worries that in 2008 cyber crooks will begin purchasing ads and keywords on search engines to increase their exposure and lure greater numbers of Web surfers to malicious sites.

For more information **click here**.

Eighteen-year-old arrested for the interception of 1.3 million computers

This capture in December is evidence of the danger that so-called 'botnets' (networks of computers effectively captured and remotely controlled by a hacker) pose for internet security. "Today, botnets are the preferred tool of cyber criminals," says Robert Mueller, FBI Director. According to industry statistics cited by CNN, at least five million PCs worldwide are infected. Other experts believe that the problem is more serious. This year Vint Cerf, a pioneer of the Internet, said during the World Economic Forum of Davos: "It is a pandemic when of the 600 million PCs that are connected to the Internet, between 100 and 150 are part of a botnet."

For more information click here.

Enemies at the gate

Six years after 9/11, an NBC News undercover investigation has found that the black market in fraudulent passports is thriving. On the streets of South America, NBC documented (December 28, 2007) the sale of stolen and doctored passports, and travel papers prized by terrorists: genuine passports issued under false names. Ronald K. Noble, Secretary General of the international police agencyInterpol, considers access to fraudulent passports "the Number One" global security problem with regard to terrorism. "In every major terrorist attack that's occurred recently," Noble said, "you can find fraudulent travel documents tied or linked in some way."

Of all the types of fraudulent passports, what concerns authorities the most is a genuine passport issued by a government agency under a false identity. For more information **click here**.

U.S., Bahamas partnering on security initiative

Addressing the press at a round table discussion January 18, 2008, United States Ambassador Ned Siegel disclosed recently that his government is looking forward to signing with the Bahamian government the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), which is presently in the Cabinet. He explained that the initiative will facilitate international cooperation to search vessels which are suspected of carrying weapons of mass destruction or WMD components. "This initiative gives us the ability - with protocol - to board Bahamian-registered ships around the world [where there is] information or intelligence [to suggest] that there may be weapons of mass destruction or materials to prevent them from even getting to port." Another item ranking high on Siegel's agenda was security at the airport. For more information **click here**.

St Kitts-Nevis prepares to introduce national ID card

Persons who confirm their registration at the Electoral Offices in St Kitts and in Nevis are eligible to receive a new National Identification Card, which is due in a few weeks time. On January 22, 2008, Minister of State for Information Nigel Carty said that the re-registration process is expected to conclude in September 30, 2008, but cards will be issued before then in accordance with legal regulations. "The law states that we have to put a mechanism in place that articulates how the issuance of the card is going to work," said Carty. "That may happen in early January [or] February … and once those regulations are in place we will begin to issue ID cards."

For more information **click here**.

2007 – A year of 'firsts' for INTERPOL

INTERPOL's first-ever global public appeal for information, new ways of opening up access to its databases to field officers by mobile phone and laptop, record numbers of searches and entries of its databases – these were just some of the main 'firsts' achieved by INTERPOL in 2007, as stated by the organization on December 31, 2007. Training was a highlight during the year, with an agreement signed to open the world's first INTERPOL Anti-corruption academy in Vienna, while an Anti-Heroin-Smuggling centre was opened near Moscow and the first students of INTERPOL's international police training programme graduated in March. For more information **click here**.

World Customs Forum 2007

The World Customs Organization (WCO), in partnership with the Trusted Trade Alliance, hosted the World Customs Forum 2007 at WCO Headquarters in Brussels (Belgium) on 11 and 12 December 2007. This two-day event undertook a critical implementation review of the SAFE Framework of Standards by focusing on the security and facilitation of the international trade supply chain. This major Forum brought together recognized experts in global trade, supply chain security, international trade law and Customs procedures to openly examine progress made, as well as new developments in terms of facilitation. For more information **click here**.

London man jailed for terror plans

A London man was sentenced to four-and-a-half years in jail Tuesday, January 8, 2008, after pleading guilty to planning to fly to Pakistan to carry out terrorist attacks. Sohail Qureshi, 29, was arrested at Heathrow Airport in October 2006 as he prepared to fly to Islamabad, carrying thousands of pounds in cash, medical supplies, a night-vision scope, camping equipment and computer documents including the "Mujahideen Poison Handbook." Prosecuting lawyer Jonathan Sharp told the court that Qureshi, a dentist, was a "dedicated supporter of Islamist extremism."

The worrying security nugget was the revelation that Qureshi had been in communication, by e-mail and via extremist Web forums, with a woman by the name of Samina Malik. Malik was found guilty two months ago of possessing documents likely to be of use for acts of terrorism. Malik worked air-side at Heathrow in a branch of the shop WH Smith and it emerged on Tuesday (January 8) that she had passed on details of changes in security arrangements at the airport after a request to do so from Qureshi. For more information **click here** and **here.**

UK plans tougher terrorism laws

The British government revealed sweeping plans on January 24, 2008 to toughen terrorism laws, including a proposal to hold suspects for up to 42 days without charge. The measures will also allow police to take DNA samples from terrorism suspects and urge judges to impose stiffer sentences on criminals whose offenses are linked to terrorism. Proposals to increase the maximum time terrorism suspects can be held by police are opposed by human rights groups as well as lawmakers within Prime Minister Gordon Brown's Labour Party. The bill also laid out how much the government has committed to spending on counterterrorism. It provided police with $926 million for counterterrorism work last year and an additional $1.4 billion was allocated in October. The government said that funding would increase over this year and next year. An additional $88 million has been allocated to more than 70 local authorities to spend over the next three years on projects aimed at tackling extremism. For more information **click here**.

Fears of terror attack in Germany

Lebanese authorities have warned of terrorist attacks being planned on targets within Germany, prompting the Justice Ministry in Berlin to increase its security measures, authorities said Saturday, January 12, 2008. Two magazines, Focus and Der Spiegel, reported that the German Embassy in Beirut had received a phone call earlier this month [January, 2008] threatening attacks on German military or judicial targets. Following the threat, Lebanese authorities on January 11th arrested a Syrian al Qaeda suspect identified only as "Mohammed N.". The suspect allegedly said a German-Turk, a Saudi and an Australian were already in Germany planning an attack on Berlin's Justice Ministry or other such agencies in order to avenge the prosecution of al Qaeda suspects in Germany, Focus reported, without citing sources. The report said explosives for the plot were already within Germany. For more information click here**.**

Why al-Qaeda is losing

"The conventional wisdom is that al-Qaeda is making a comeback from its rout in Afghanistan. Many point to its success in killing Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan and to its support of Islamic insurgents there as evidence". Gary Anderson, author of the article published by the Washington Post on Sunday, January 13, argues that this is not so. Al-Qaeda is waning and its decline has to do with al-Qaeda's institutional limitations, he states. For more information **click here**.

The "Lone Wolf" and al-Qaeda Sleeper Cells in the United States

Since 9/11, the security and intelligence echelons of the United States have been preoccupied with the possibility of domestic al-Qaeda sleeper cells being activated to perpetrate additional terror attacks. In clandestine activities, a "sleeper" is an operative who establishes deep cover to evade security forces and accomplish his mission in hostile environments. To uncover such sleeper cells, the FBI has devised certain security measures throughout its field offices in the United States. Islamist militants, eager to again attack the United States, are posting instructions on jihadi websites as to how fellow militants could evade the security apparatus and carry out terror strikes on U.S. soil. Comparing the training instructions for jihadi sleepers with the security measures currently in place could shed light on other angles warranting consideration in the hunt for sole sleeper operatives and—to a lesser degree—sleeper cells. For more information **click here**.

Former lawmaker charged in terrorism case

A former U.S. congressman was charged on January 15, 2008, in connection with his work for an Islamic charity accused of funneling money to an Afghan warlord, prosecutors announced Wednesday. The money laundering, conspiracy and obstruction of justice charges against former Michigan Rep. Mark Deli Siljander are part of a 42-count indictment released by the U.S. attorney's office in Kansas City, Missouri. Siljander "vehemently denies the allegations in the indictment and will enter a not guilty plea," said his attorney, James Hobbs. Prosecutors allege Siljander's co-defendants -- the directors of an Islamic charity -- hired him to get the organization off a list of agencies suspected of links to terrorism and paid him with stolen U.S. government funds. For more information **click here**.

Colombia and the FARC

On January 7, 2008, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez asked the international community to remove the Revolutionary Armed Force of Colombia (FARC) from lists of terrorist organizations after the guerrilla group freed two women kidnapped since 2002. At a session of the Permanent Counsel of the Organization of American States (OAS) on February 15th, the United States reiterated its decision to maintain the Revolutionary Armed Force of Colombia (FARC) on its list of the terrorist groups. For its part, on January 22, the European Union firmly rejected the possibility of removing the FARC from its list of terrorist organizations and reaffirmed "its complete support" for Colombian president Alvaro Uribe in the fight against violence in his country and for the liberation of those held captive by the guerilla group. On January 25, the OAS Secretary General, Jose Miguel Insulza, stated that the FARC has committed "terrorist acts" as they are clearly described in the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism. "How could we not call the FARC terrorists? Let them stop attacks against the civilian population and lengthy kidnapping." Insulza reiterated that kidnapping is "an act against humanity", and a practice that we must recognize and work together to end in order to achieve peace in Colombia. For more information **click here**, **here**, **here** and **here**.

## Caribbean leaders addressing unprecedented threats to the region

Addressing the rank and file of the Royal St Christopher and Nevis Police Force on Wednesday, January 23, Prime Minister Dr Denzil Douglas of St Kitts and Nevis said that, while the global community is appealing for increased multilateral cooperation in fighting crime, Caribbean leaders are strategizing to manage the unprecedented threats that are surfacing and are threatening to erode the progress that have been achieved so far as a region.

He said that the government is fully aware that this wave of criminal activity is a global phenomenon and will not take comfort in the fact that the increased incidences of violence are not geographically confined. "This region that is known to be a zone of peace is not immune from crime," said Douglas. He disclosed that, at the regional level, the Secretary General of CARICOM, Dr Edwin Carrington, has already announced in his Christmas address that security has been identified as the Fourth Pillar for regional cooperation in the Caribbean Community. For more information **click here**.

CARICOM holds immigration and customs meeting
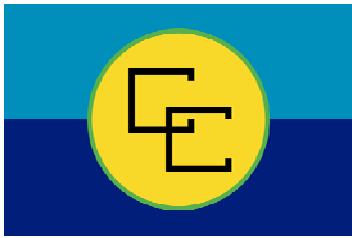
The Fourth Joint Meeting of the CARICOM Standing Committees of Immigration and Customs was held in St Lucia on January 14-18, 2008. The meeting was co-chaired by Chair of the Customs Standing Committee, Fitzroy John, Comptroller of Customs, Trinidad and Tobago and Jessmon Prince, Head of Immigration, Grenada, who was elected as the interim Chair of the Immigration Standing Committee. The objective of the Meeting was to deliberate further on current border security initiatives and to determine the way forward in relation to the work programme for regional Immigration and Customs for the 2008-2009 period. For more information **click here**.

Stowaways discovered on plane at Dulles Airport

Two stowaways were discovered on January 23, 2008 on an Ethiopian Airlines flight that landed at Dulles International Airport (Virginia, USA). Even so, the regional director for Ethiopian Airlines says security at Addis Ababa Airport, where the two men got on-board is one of the tightest in the world. A spokesman says the two men who hid themselves in the ceiling of the aircraft appear to be Ethiopian Nationals, part of a cleaning crew that cleaned the plane just before take-off. For more information **click here**.

Extremists plotted attacks across Europe

Suspected Islamic extremists arrested on January 19 in Barcelona, Spain, were planning al Qaeda-style attacks in Spain, Germany, France, Britain and Portugal, according to an informant who "infiltrated" the group, Spain's El Pais newspaper reports. "If we attack the metro [subway bombers told the informant, El Pais reported. "Our preference is public transport, especially the metro." The judge who ordered 10 suspects held for allegedly plotting a suicide attack in Barcelona, cited in his rulings the testimony of an informant. Also, Spain's Interior Minister on Friday, January 25, said an informant warned of a planned suicide attack against Barcelona's metro on the weekend of January 18 to 20. But he added that, for now, "there is only the testimony of an informant" regarding the timing. He also said police have not found explosives "in sufficient quantity" to have carried out the assault.

Spain's attorney general, Candido Conde-Pumpido, said last week that the cell could have contained six suicide bombers, two explosives experts and two ideologues. Al Qaeda was planning to take responsibility for the first attack in Barcelona through Baitullah Mehsud, a Taliban commander whom the Pakistani government blames for last month's assassination of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto, El Pais reported. More than 300 suspected Islamic extremists have been arrested in Spain since the Madrid train bombings killed 191 people and wounded more than 1,800 on March 11, 2004, Minister Rubalcaba said. For more information **click here**.

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