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Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council
NEWSLETTER



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Open Source News reporting Summary: This collection of open source information is offered for informational purposes only. It is not, and should not be, construed as official evaluated intelligence.

FBI E-Mail Scam Spreads Virus



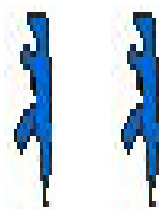
The FBI warned late Tuesday that e-mails appearing to originate from the bureau were spreading a virus via the accompanying attachment. The e-mail informs recipients that they have visited illegal Web sites and asks them to answer a set of attached questions. Opening the attachment will infect computers with the Sober-K worm, a variant that first appeared Monday morning. "If the public receives an e-mail that purports to come from the FBI, please know that the FBI does not conduct business in this way,"

said Paul Bresson, a spokesman at FBI headquarters in Washington. "We would not notify a person that they were a target or a potential target of investigation." "It's a classic worm, disguising itself and using some sort of teaser to get you to open it," Mastoras said. "I wouldn't be surprised if Sober-K ended up at the top of our security lists before it's all said and done."

Full story: <http://www.eweek.com/article2/0,1759,1769226,00.asp?kc=ewnws022405dtx1k0000599>

Also see 'Worm Attacks' special report at the above URL

Watchdogs sniff out terror sites



On the website of Internet Haganah, self-described as "an internet counterinsurgency," the mark of victory is a makeshift graphic -- a little blue AK-47 assault rifle. "Haganah" in Hebrew means defense. But when Internet Haganah's founder places another AK-47 on his site, it means mission accomplished: another jihad website taken out by going on the offensive.

Full story: <http://www.wired.com/news/privacy/0,1848,66708,00.html> and <http://haganah.org.il/haganah/index.html>

It's not so much *what folks don't know* that's the problem.
It's that *they know too much... that ain't so ...* that's the problem !

Troops capture major Abu Sayyaf camp



On Feb. 24, Philippines troops captured a camp of the Al-Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) on the southern island of Jolo, killing at least 10 ASG rebels. About 400 soldiers overran the stronghold which was in the jungle outside Indanan town. According to a military commander, about 100 ASG defenders broke up into small groups as troops, backed by helicopter gunships firing rockets, assaulted the camp on top of the Budkaha mountain, about 940 km (580 miles) south of Manila. He said there were no government casualties. In an unrelated incident Feb. 24, soldiers killed ASG commander Ayob Ustadz Jacob Asmaul and an aide in a clash in Tuburan town in the southern island of Basilan.

COMMENT:

The capture of the long-established Karawan base eliminated a key ASG sanctuary. Military officials claim the camp, which could accommodate as many as 1,000 people, was also used for guerrilla training and includes a network of foxholes, trenches and bunkers. Two days earlier, the military hit the area with artillery to prepare for the assault on the camp. The camp had been used by Umbra Jumdail, alias Dr. Abu, who was among the ASG leaders involved in the abduction of Western tourists from the Malaysian resort of Sipadan in 2000. The camp was also a sanctuary for local Abu Sayyaf commander Albader Parad, whose gunmen killed three soldiers on security patrol in Indanan on Feb. 19. During a major offensive last week, the military also captured the main camp of followers of Nur Misuari, the jailed former leader of the Moro National Liberation Front.

Officials say Jemaah Islamiyah arrests thwarted planned terror attacks in Philippines



Police said Thursday they thwarted planned attacks on an airport, malls, a church and U.S. troops with the arrests of three members of an al-Qaeda linked terror group who allegedly came to the Philippines to train Muslim militants to make bombs. The men allegedly belonged to a previously unknown Jemaah Islamiyah terror cell in the country, the authorities said. The arrests were not immediately announced to allow authorities time to identify six of their local comrades, one of whom has been arrested. Police intelligence officials said the targets included a Roman Catholic church and the airport in the bustling port city of Davao, unspecified malls in Manila and U.S. soldiers participating in joint training with the Philippine military.

Full story: <http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/nation/terror/20050224-0651-philippines-terrorplot.html>

Saddam's half-brother captured in Iraq



Security forces in Iraq have captured Saddam Hussein's half-brother, one of the country's most wanted men and the first top-level Baathist to be caught in a year, the government announced Sunday. Sabawi Ibrahim al-Hasan al-Tikriti, an intelligence chief and one-time adviser to the former president, was number 36 on the U.S. military's list of the 55 most-wanted people in Iraq -- the six of diamonds. Last year, Iraqi officials said Ibrahim, who was born to the same mother as Saddam, was one of two former Baath Party officials directing the insurgency from Syria.

Full story: <http://www.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=worldNews&storyID=7748963>

Related reporting

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Saddam Hussein's half-brother captured

http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/1109509630407_105/?hub=CTVNewsAt11

Soldiers taking military tactics to the streets

Gang Members Learn Deadly Skills In Military



Some of America's most notorious street gangs are turning up in the military. But they aren't just serving their country. Instead, many are taking the opportunity to learn a very deadly trade. "We do know through intelligence that some gang members are actually sent into the military to learn about military tactics," Glass said. Glass showed NBC 17 footage of a known gang member just back from Iraq firing on two California police officers -- he kills one quickly using tactics perfected on the battlefield.

"Using strictly military tactics he learned in the Marine Corps, he applies suppressive fire power right into the corner," Glass explains. "He didn't learn those tactics as a gang member." A SWAT team eventually shoots and kills the Marine.

Full story: <http://www.nbc17.com/military/4228063/detail.html>

U.S. officials say Zetas have killed in Texas

Investigators say the feared band of ex-military elite forces are operating in Texas and other parts of the United States. The men are known as the Zetas, former members of the Mexican army who defected to Mexico's so-called Gulf drug cartel in the late 1990s. The Zetas' activities in North Texas were described in interviews with two U.S. federal law enforcement agents, two former Drug Enforcement Administration officials, a former Dallas undercover narcotics officer and two undercover informants. "We're aware of the Zetas' threat to U.S. cities, and we consider it a growing threat"

Full story: http://www.el-universal.com.mx/pls/impreso/noticia.html?id_nota=9559&tabla=miami

Related reporting

Mexico's drug war pits government against former elite commandos

http://www.skyhen.org/WarOnDrugs/mexicos_drug_war_pits_government_against_former_elite_commandos.php

Leader of *Mara Salvatrucha* Arrested in Texas



The leader of the Central American *Mara Salvatrucha* gang has been arrested by state police in Falfurrias, Texas, when he was found hidden in the trunk of a vehicle with 13 other illegal migrants from different countries. Ebner Aníbal RIVERA Paz aka Franklin Jairo RIVER Hernández (pictured) is believed to be responsible for 28 killings in Honduras in December 2004. Honduras has begun the extradition process for Rivera, who traveled through Mexico before entering the U.S. from Reynosa, Tamaulipas.

Translated from 24 February 2005 source: <http://www.elorbe.com.mx/article/articleview/8698/1/7/>
(Ebner Aníbal RIVERA Paz aka Franklin Jairo RIVER Hernández was the subject of a 02/08/05 Officer Safety Alert)

Related reporting

Gang leader's intentions probed

Ebner Anibal Rivera Paz, 29, known throughout Central America as "El Culiche" -- the Tapeworm -- was arrested with 12 other illegal aliens near Falfurrias, Texas, by a state highway patrolman

<http://washingtontimes.com/national/20050224-110958-9508r.htm>

Honduras Bus Massacre Suspect Arrested In South Texas

The reputed leader of a violent Honduran gang was using an alias, but the tattoos on his body gave him

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away.

<http://www.ksat.com/news/4228060/detail.html>

Maras could have links with international terrorists groups



Salvadorian President Elías Antonio Saca (pictured) stated during the First International Conference to Fight Gangs in El Salvador that one of the major regional concerns is that gangs could have or develop ties to international terrorist organizations.

According to Saca, there are about 10 thousand *Mara* members in El Salvador. The government has been trying to fight the gangs with Operation *Super Mano Dura*, which began in August 2004 and involved toughening anti-gang laws and stiffening punishments for gang members. During the operation, El Salvador has arrested over five thousand gang members, including 86 ringleaders. Saca explained that the *Mara* problem is not limited to El Salvador but is a regional issue, because

the violence of these groups also affects the U.S., Mexico, and Central America and is becoming a national security problem for many countries.

Translated from 22 February 2005 source: <http://estadis.eluniversal.com.mx/internacional/34804.html>, and <http://www.elheraldo.hn/detalle.php?nid=26909&sec=6&fecha=2005-02-22>

FBI confronts new gang threat

A notorious street gang based in El Salvador has rapidly spread into 31 US states and raised enough concern for the Justice Department to create a new high-level task force to battle it. But the head of the task force says the gang has no Al Qaeda connections - despite comments made Monday by El Salvador's president. "The FBI, in concert with the US intelligence community and government of several Central American republics, has determined that there is no basis in fact to support this allegation of Al Qaeda or even radical Islamic ties to MS13 [a.k.a. Mara Salvatrucha]," says Robert Clifford, director of the new force, who is in El Salvador this week to discuss cooperation with his Central American counterparts. Last year, Honduran Security Minister Oscar Alvarez raised an alarm when he said that Al Qaeda might be trying to recruit Central American gang members to help terrorists infiltrate the US. On Monday, Salvadoran President Tony Saca echoed this theme, saying he could "not rule out a link between terrorists and Central American gang members."

Full story: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0224/p01s02-woam.html>

U.S., Mexico, and Central America are unified against the *Maras*

Police authorities and experts from the U.S., Mexico, and Central America met to discuss and share information about the *Mara Salvatrucha* gangs. Meetings included that of Mexican President Fox with Guatemalan President Berger and police gatherings in San Salvador and Washington, D.C. The meetings are meant to allow nations to share intelligence on the gangs and create a cohesive plan to combat their influence.

Translated from 23 February 2005 source: <http://www.terra.com.gt/noticias/nacionales/articulo/html/nac35648.htm>

Border between Mexico and Guatemala “Sealed” to combat crime

Mexico and Guatemala have agreed to ‘seal’ the border between the two nations in order to fight organized crime, human smuggling, drug smuggling, weapons smuggling, and terrorists. There will be an exchange

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of intelligence information between law enforcement agencies of the two nations. The intent is to funnel legal traffic into areas where they can be quickly processed for border crossing.

COMMENT:

Note that, in the context of this article, "sealed" is used to designate a closely monitored border not the complete forbiddance of traffic across the border. The provision for closure of the Guatemala border has raised very little protest; vice, the proposal of increased security along the U.S. border draws criticism and charges of human rights violations. Mexico as a nation should resolve the dichotomy of its positions to legitimize its protests against U.S. border policy.

Translated from 22 February 2005 source:

http://www.notimex.com.mx/restringido/indexmex.php?going_to=noticiamex.php¬icia_id=1352574&ateg=&categoria_id=A and

[http://www.yucatan.com.mx/noticia.asp?cx=9\\$0924000000\\$2975799&f=20050223](http://www.yucatan.com.mx/noticia.asp?cx=9$0924000000$2975799&f=20050223)

U.S. claims deficiencies at N.Y. Arab Bank

U.S. regulators said Friday that Arab Bank PLC, one of the largest financial institutions in the Middle East, has inadequate controls against money laundering at its New York branch and has been ordered to stop transferring funds or opening new accounts there. "The inadequacy of the branch's controls over its funds transfer business is especially serious in light of the high-risk characteristics of many of the transfers," the comptroller's office said in the order, which was dated Thursday and announced Friday

Full story: <http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D88FQLP80.htm>

Increased illegal border crossings continue to raise concerns

According to U.S. Border Patrol statistics, nearly 1.2 million individuals were caught trying to enter the U.S. illegally from Mexico in 2004, only about one-third of the estimated three million who made the attempt. Border agents are noticing an increase in sophisticated, organized people-smuggling operations with, as one official noted, "extensive counterintelligence" capabilities that continue attempts to defeat border security measures. Of concern to authorities is the significant rise in the number of non-Mexicans netted by border agents. In 2004, 65,814 non-Mexicans were apprehended, significantly higher than the 39,215 in 2003. The majority of these illegal entrants are from other Latin American countries, but the number of individuals from China and countries in Southeast Asia and the Middle East is increasing. The statistics are worrisome to intelligence agencies, which continue to warn of terrorist border infiltration, especially from Mexico. In testimony before a congressional committee Feb. 23, James Loy, deputy secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) said that recent intelligence information "strongly suggests that Al-Qaeda has considered using the Southwest border to infiltrate the [U.S.]." He also added that investigations have yielded "no conclusive evidence" that terrorist operatives have crossed the border but warned that infiltration attempts remain a planning "priority."

COMMENT:

Improvements in high-tech equipment, remote ground and aerial video surveillance, motion, heat and other sensing devices above and below ground has aided border security. But border agents, INS officials and members of the U.S. Congress continue to call for additional manpower to patrol the 3,141 km U.S.-Mexico and the 8,893 km U.S.-Canada border (the Canada figure includes 2,477 km between Alaska and Canada). Roughly 85 percent of the current force of nearly 11,000 agents are assigned to the southern border. Provisions of the National Intelligence Reform Act call for the addition of 10,000 new agents by 2010 (2,000 in 2006 alone). But the budget proposed by the White House allows for only 210 new hires. Outgoing DHS chief Tom Ridge said that adding 2,000 agents would be an inefficient use of Homeland Security funds and an official spokesperson for the DHS, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) branch called the administration's personnel and budget allocation adequate. The warning by Loy and the statements by Ridge and the CBP directly contradict one another. With the reported nearly two-thirds success rate for illegal entrants, it seems obvious that an addition of 210 agents and "equipment" would do

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little to stifle border infiltration. Despite the White House budget proposal, the full compliment of 2,000 agents being deployed in 2006 is likely due to strong bipartisan support in Congress.

Mississippi law enforcement helps bring down suspected terrorists

In court documents filed February 18th, the tale of international intrigue began on a Carnival cruise ship from New Orleans to the western Caribbean Sea. That's where Lamont Ranson and Cedric Carpenter met a man they believed could supply them with cash and heroin in exchange for phony Mississippi drivers licenses and other identification. The bogus documents, they were told, would go to members of Abu Sayyaf, a radical Islamic separatist group based in the Philippines with ties to Al Quaida and known for acts of terrorism.

Full story: <http://www.wlbt.com/Global/story.asp?S=3001037&nav=2CSfWqN6>

UPDATE:

Both defendants entered their guilty pleas earlier today (02/28/05) before United States District Judge Tom S. Lee in federal district court in Jackson, Mississippi, where the defendants had traveled during the conspiracy. CARPENTER, whose status as a previously convicted felon prohibited him from owning a gun, also pleaded guilty to possessing a firearm at the time of his arrest in New Orleans.

Featured Internet Site



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