

Exclusive: NY Rail Plot Details Based on 'Reliable' FBI Source

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New Information in Last 48 Hours Led to Public Warning

November 27, 2008
 Report of Terror Threat on Subways
 By ANAHAD O'CONNOR

The New York Police Department deployed extra officers and stepped up security measures in the subways and other mass-transit stations on Wednesday after learning of al Qaeda discussions to coordinate a wave of explosions in the subway system over the holidays, the authorities announced.

These plans were undeveloped and had only reached "the aspirational stage," Paul J. Browne, the chief spokesman for the police department, said in a statement.

The city has learned of other plots to attack the subways, including one uncovered in 2005 that resulted in one of the more pronounced terror-prevention efforts the city has mounted since 9/11. While that plan was far along enough to prompt the Homeland Security Department to raise the nation's threat level, the latest plot is apparently so rudimentary that it has not prompted the federal government to make any changes.

Mr. Browne said the city was responding out of "an abundance of caution."

"It is not uncommon for the department to receive threat information and to adjust our resources accordingly," he said.

The intelligence that led to the warnings was included in an internal FBI memo obtained by the Associated Press. The memo said that the agency had received a "plausible but unsubstantiated" report that in late September, members of al Qaeda discussed the possibility of enlisting suicide bombers or detonating explosives in transit systems in the New York area.

"We have no specific details to confirm that this plot has developed beyond aspirational planning, but we are issuing this warning out of concern that such an attack could possibly be conducted during the forthcoming holiday season," the report said, according to the Associated Press.

Jeremy Soffin, a spokesman for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, said the agency was aware of the report and was working with the authorities to increase the police presence in the transit system.

The agency, he said, is "always on a heightened state of readiness during this season."

Terrorists have frequently targeted mass transit systems. In March of 2004, 191 people were killed in Madrid when a Qaeda-inspired terror cell detonated ten bombs on four commuter trains. A year later, four suicide bombers with links to al Qaeda killed 52 people when they detonated bombs on a bus and three underground trains in London.

The plot against the New York subway system that was uncovered in September 2005 was hatched in Iraq, apparently by three men who had undergone terrorist training in explosives. Law enforcement officials said that the plan involved setting off 19 bombs on various trains. Federal and city officials took the threat seriously and responded quickly with extra security.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/27/nyregion/27Subway.html?_r=1&em=&pagewanted=print

 FBI warns of possible Al-Qaeda subway plot
 1 hour ago

NEW YORK (AFP) — The FBI has warned US officials of a possible Al-Qaeda plot against New York's subway and transport grid, putting the city's police on heightened alert Wednesday.

DOWNLOAD FBI WARNING IN PDF [HERE]

Extra police were stationed around major hubs in the city even though the FBI said the threat, which came on the eve of the national Thanksgiving holiday, was unsubstantiated.

The FBI received "uncorroborated but plausible information that Al-Qaeda may have discussed a target at the transit system in New York City," Amy Kudwa, a spokeswoman for the Department of Homeland Security told AFP.

"Neither the Department Homeland Security nor the FBI has any specific information to confirm that this plot has developed beyond aspirational planning," she said.

The New York Police Department's deputy commissioner, Paul Browne, said authorities were "aware of an unsubstantiated report indicating that Al-Qaeda terrorists discussed targeting mass transit in New York City and vicinity."

He added that although there was no evidence to suggest the discussions had advanced any further, as a precaution "the NYPD has deployed additional resources in the mass transit system."

ABC television quoted unnamed law-enforcement sources as saying that the attack under discussion targeted Penn Station, a major subway and rail hub in Manhattan.

Extra police could be seen at Penn Station, with six squad cars parked together outside, as well as a command truck at a separate location.

Inside the station's hall for north-eastern Amtrak trains, five armed officers patrolled in helmets and flack-jackets, and with sniffer dogs.

"I see a lot of law enforcement, more than usual," said Wall Street worker Vishal Rawal, 25, who commutes daily between Manhattan and New Jersey.

"Of course I am concerned. Even if I am too busy with work, it is always on your back," he added.

At the nearby Port Authority bus terminal and at Grand Central rail and subway station, the police presence was not visibly higher than usual.

The US terror alert level has not been raised, officials said.

However, the Al-Qaeda scare came ahead of Thursday's Thanksgiving holiday, when millions of Americans travel to see friends and family.

According to the ABC report, the plot involved a "Madrid-like attack" on Penn Station, a reference to the bombing of Spanish trains in March 2004 that killed 191 people.

Spanish courts last year ordered 21 people jailed for life in connection to the synchronized wave of bombings against Madrid commuter trains on March 11, 2004. Four have since been acquitted after appeals.

Those attacks came less than three years after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States in which Al-Qaeda members riding hijacked planes slammed into the World Trade Center in New York, and into the Pentagon.

Just under 3,000 people were killed in those attacks.

AFP

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5grjqagmSrRWJsfVj_wCK_dP4j6rw

New York warns of possible al Qaeda attack
Wed Nov 26, 2008 3:18pm EST
By Michelle Nichols

NEW YORK (Reuters) - U.S. authorities have warned of a possible al Qaeda threat to transit systems in and around New York City, a Homeland Security official said on Wednesday.

New York police said they were increasing security in response to the warning but said this was "in an abundance of

caution." The warning comes at the start of the Thanksgiving holiday weekend, one of the busiest U.S. travel periods of the year.

"The New York City Police Department is aware of an unsubstantiated report indicating that al Qaeda terrorists discussed targeting mass transit in New York City and the vicinity," Deputy Police Commissioner Paul Browne told Reuters.

Homeland Security Department spokesman Russ Knocke said the warning was issued on the basis of "plausible but uncorroborated information" and that al Qaeda may have discussed such attacks in late September.

Knocke said Homeland Security and the FBI had passed on the warning to state and local officials on Tuesday but there was no specific information to confirm that the plot had developed "beyond aspirational planning."

The warning was issued as a routine matter and no adjustments were being made to the nation's threat level.

New York City's Metropolitan Transportation Authority said it was aware of "threats against transit properties during the holiday season" and was working closely with officials to increase police presence throughout the sprawling bus and rail system.

Browne said: "In an abundance of caution the NYPD has deployed additional resources in the mass transit system."

New York has remained on an orange alert -- the second highest level, below red -- since the September 11, 2001, attacks that destroyed the World Trade Center. The rest of the United States is on yellow alert, one level below orange.

In October 2005, New York City's subway system was on high alert after detainees in Iraq were thought to be plotting a bomb attack. but the threat was later found to lack credibility.

In August 2007 police stepped up security throughout Manhattan and at bridges and tunnels in response to an unverified Internet report that al Qaeda might be plotting to detonate a dirty bomb in the city.

(Additional reporting by Deborah Charles in Washington; editing by Philip Barbara)

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<http://www.reuters.com/articlePrint?articleId=USTRE4AP5U220081126>

Exclusive: NY Rail Plot Details Based on 'Reliable' FBI Source
New Information in Last 48 Hours Led to Public Warning
By RICHARD ESPOSITO
Nov. 26, 2008

Uniformed police officers have flooded New York City's Penn Station, home to the Long Island Rail Road, following a warning from the FBI of a "plausible but unsubstantiated" threat of a terrorist bomb attack against the system during the holidays.

Law enforcement officials tell ABCNews.com, the plot involved a "Madrid-like attack," a reference to the synchronized bombing of the commuter rail system in Spain in March 2004 that killed 191 people.

A terror suspect arrested in Pakistan by the FBI in recent days provided authorities with details of a bomb plot against the Long Island Rail Road and other information that led to series of high level intelligence and law enforcement conference calls over the past 24 hour and the issuing of a bulletin warning of an unspecified holiday attack on the New York City region's commuter rail system, ABC News has learned.

The suspect - according to some reports the arrest took place in Pakistan - recently met with Al Qaeda leaders and was able to provide authorities with significant detail as to how the plotters would have carried out an attack if their plans had gotten beyond the so-called "aspirational" stage.

Authorities had no evidence to substantiate the suspect's charges and there is no evidence of any active plot, multiple officials said.

The suspect is believed to have in the past resided in Suffolk County, Long Island. The island is a 7.5 million population peninsula that contains two boroughs of New York City - Brooklyn and Queens - as well as two suburban counties -

Nassau and Suffolk, which have more than 1.4 million residents.

Federal and regional authorities are deploying additional assets throughout the North East transportation corridor today, officials said, following a 1 p.m. conference call.

Assets under consideration for including in the beefed up law enforcement presence included a new cadre of federal air marshals that will be deployed alongside Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) officers in Penn Station, Grand Central Station and other locations throughout the rail corridor.

Regional and federal authorities held the first in their series of conference calls on the threat yesterday evening. Today's call members included Kip Hawley, the head of TSA, Deputy Chief Jim Waters, the New York City Police Dept. Chief in charge of the Joint NYPD-FBI Counter Terror Task force, and high level officials from the federal government.

Dept. of Homeland Security, the states of Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York, as well as representatives of New York's suburban Westchester, Suffolk and Nassau Counties, and members of various railroad police agencies.

Authorities including the New York City Police, MTA, and New York State Dept of Homeland Security said that because traditionally heavy holiday police deployments had already been anticipated, they were able to quickly move to shift deployments, increase them in some areas, and adjust their response to the perceived threat.

Following the public release of the warning by the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security, officials in Washington made efforts to dampen public concern.

"There is nothing concrete to suggest this plot ever went beyond the aspirational or talking stage," said a U.S. official familiar with the intelligence that led to the warning.

Law enforcement officials told ABCNews.com the information was based on an FBI source who has proved "reliable and knowledgeable in the past."

Officials told ABCNews.com unspecified new information in the last 48 hours led to the public warning "out of an abundance of caution."

FBI Officials Say Group Began Discussions in September

Congressman Peter King (R-NY), the top Republican on the House Homeland Security Committee, told the Associated Press "authorities have very real specifics as to who it is and where the conversation took place and who conducted it."

The FBI's source reportedly told agents of an al Qaeda-connected group's desire to place bombs or suicide bombers inside the first and last Long Island Rail Road commuter cars and detonate them as the train entered Pennsylvania Station in Manhattan, also used by the Washington-New York-Boston Amtrak system and the New York City subway.

Senior FBI officials said their source said the group began its discussions "in late September."

The officials confirmed the nature of the plot and said that FBI agents worked through the night Monday to shape the language of a memo sent to local law enforcement.

"Transit passengers in larger metropolitan areas like New York may see an increased security presence in the coming days. This includes uniformed and plain clothed behavior detection officers, federal air marshals, canine teams, and security inspectors," said Russ Knocke, a Department of Homeland Security Spokesman. He said there were no plans to raise the current threat level.

More Security on Busiest Travel Day of the Year

New York City Deputy Police Commissioner for Public Information Paul Browne said in a statement: "The New York City Police Department is aware of an unsubstantiated report indicating that Al Qaeda terrorists discussed targeting mass transit in New York City and vicinity. We have no information indicating that these discussions advanced beyond the aspirational stage, but in an abundance of caution, the NYPD has deployed additional resources in the mass transit system. It is not uncommon for the department to receive threat information and to adjust our resources accordingly."

FBI and New York counter-terrorism officials involved in assessing the threat said they hardly viewed the warning as a "routine matter."

"We are coordinating and communicating with the region's transit and security agencies to provide seamless operations during this exceptionally busy time," said Michael Balboni, the NY State Deputy Secretary for Public Safety. "This is a continuation of ongoing operations that have been in place for some time, with different patrolling mechanisms to ensure the safety of mass transit."

The FBI warning was made public on the morning of the busiest travel day in the country. Many New York commuters leave their city jobs early on Thanksgiving eve.

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<http://www.abcnews.go.com/print?id=6338514>

Feds Warn Of Possible NYC Terror Plot

WASHINGTON, Nov. 26, 2008

(AP) Federal authorities are warning law enforcement personnel of a possible terror plot against the New York City subway and train systems during the holiday season, and police are beefing up security in preparation.

An internal memo obtained by The Associated Press says the FBI has received a "plausible but unsubstantiated" report that al Qaeda terrorists in late September may have discussed attacking the subway system.

A person briefed on the matter, speaking to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the intelligence-gathering work, said the threat may also be directed at the passenger rail lines running through New York, such as Amtrak and the Long Island Rail Road, which are particularly busy with Thanksgiving holiday travelers.

A U.S. counterterror official, also speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to do so publicly, said senior government officials have been briefed because the FBI very recently received credible information about possible attacks over the holiday season, and authorities are particularly concerned about this long holiday weekend.

FBI spokesman Richard Kolko confirmed only that his agency and the Homeland Security Department issued a bulletin Tuesday night to state and local authorities, and the information is being reviewed.

Department of Homeland Security spokesman Russ Knocke said the warning was issued as a routine matter, but added that there may be an increased police presence in New York and other large cities.

The internal bulletin says al Qaeda terrorists "in late September may have discussed targeting transit systems in and around New York City. These discussions reportedly involved the use of suicide bombers or explosives placed on subway/passenger rail systems," according to the document.

"We have no specific details to confirm that this plot has developed beyond aspirational planning, but we are issuing this warning out of concern that such an attack could possibly be conducted during the forthcoming holiday season," according to the warning dated Tuesday.

NYPD spokesman Paul Browne said they have received an unsubstantiated report and as a result have "deployed additional resources in the mass transit system."

While federal agencies regularly issue all sorts of advisory warnings, the language of this one is particularly blunt.

Intelligence and homeland security officials are working with local authorities to try to corroborate the information "and will continue to investigate every possible lead," the memo says.

Rep. Peter King, the top Republican on the House Homeland Security Committee, said authorities "have very real specifics as to who it is and where the conversation took place and who conducted it."

"It certainly involves suicide bombing attacks on the mass transit system in and around New York and it's plausible, but there's no evidence yet that it's in the process of being carried out," King said.

Knocke, the DHS spokesman, said the warning was issued "out of an abundance of caution going into this holiday season."

No changes are being made to the nation's threat level, or for transit systems at this time, he said.

"However, transit passengers in larger metropolitan areas like New York may see an increased security presence in the coming days," Knocke said.

The increased personnel could include uniformed and plainclothes "behavior detection" officers, federal air marshals, canine teams, and security inspectors, Knocke said.

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<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/11/26/national/printable4634394.shtml>

FBI Warns of Possible Terror Plot Against New York City Subway During Holidays
Wednesday, November 26, 2008

Federal authorities are warning of a possible Al Qaeda-orchestrated terror plot against New York City subway and other transit systems during the holidays, FOX News has confirmed.

The potential threat — described in an internal FBI memo as "plausible but unsubstantiated" — does not extend beyond the New York City area, sources told FOX News. But commuters could see security tighten across the country.

The FBI and the Department of Homeland Security issued a joint bulletin late Tuesday night to local and state law enforcement authorities about the possible plot, a Homeland Security official told FOX News.

The report states that in late September, Al Qaeda may have talked about attacking transit systems in and around New York City during the holiday season.

"These discussions reportedly involved the use of suicide bombers or explosives placed on subway/passenger rail systems," the bulletin says.

The FBI said it had no indication that any such plot was beyond the very earliest stages of planning.

"We have no specific details to confirm that this plot has developed beyond aspirational planning, but we are issuing this warning out of concern that such an attack could possibly be conducted during the forthcoming holiday season," states the warning, which is dated Tuesday.

While federal agencies regularly issue all sorts of advisory warnings, the language of this one is particularly blunt.

Intelligence and homeland security officials are working with local authorities to try to corroborate the information "and will continue to investigate every possible lead," according to the memo.

A source with close knowledge of the bulletin says the information has links to the tribal areas of Pakistan.

"Every resource is being brought to bear on corroborating this information," the source told FOX News.

FOX News' Catherine Herridge and The Associated Press contributed to this report.

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,457747,00.html>

Feds warn of potential NYC terror plot
Memo cites 'unsubstantiated' report on plan to attack subway over holidays
The Associated Press
updated 10:59 a.m. ET, Wed., Nov. 26, 2008

WASHINGTON - Federal authorities are warning police of a possible terror plot against the New York City subway and train systems during the holiday season, prompting local officials to beef up security at stations.

An internal memo obtained by The Associated Press says the FBI has received a "plausible but unsubstantiated" report that al-Qaida terrorists in late September may have discussed attacking the subway system.

A person briefed on the matter, speaking to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the intelligence-gathering work, said the threat may also be directed at the passenger rail lines running through New York, such as Amtrak and the Long Island Rail Road, which are particularly busy with Thanksgiving holiday travelers.

A U.S. counterterror official, also speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to do so publicly, said senior government officials have been briefed because the FBI very recently received credible information about possible attacks over the holiday season, and authorities are particularly concerned about this long holiday weekend.

FBI spokesman Richard Kolko confirmed only that his agency and the Homeland Security Department issued a bulletin Tuesday night to state and local authorities, and the information is being reviewed.

Department of Homeland Security spokesman Russ Knocke said the warning was issued as a routine matter, but added that there may be an increased police presence in New York and other large cities.

'Targeting transit systems'

The internal bulletin says al-Qaida terrorists "in late September may have discussed targeting transit systems in and around New York City. These discussions reportedly involved the use of suicide bombers or explosives placed on subway/passenger rail systems," according to the document.

"We have no specific details to confirm that this plot has developed beyond aspirational planning, but we are issuing this warning out of concern that such an attack could possibly be conducted during the forthcoming holiday season," according to the warning dated Tuesday.

The Big Apple's tightly packed passenger trains and subway cars have long been a source of concern for cops — and a tempting target for would-be terrorists — but there is often disagreement as to how seriously authorities should take specific intelligence reports.

A Pakistani immigrant was arrested and convicted for a scheme to blow up the subway station at Herald Square in 2004. There was also a planned cyanide attack on the subways by al-Qaida operatives that authorities say was called off in 2002; another aborted al-Qaida plot to destroy the Brooklyn Bridge in 2003; and a plot to bomb underwater train tunnels to flood lower Manhattan, which was broken up in 2006 by several arrests overseas.

Three years ago, authorities weighed reports that bombers might try to use baby strollers to bring explosives into city trains. Many security officials later concluded that was a false alarm.

NYPD spokesman Paul Browne said they have received an unsubstantiated report and as a result have "deployed additional resources in the mass transit system."

Blunter than usual

While federal agencies regularly issue all sorts of advisory warnings, the language of this one is particularly blunt.

Intelligence and homeland security officials are working with local authorities to try to corroborate the information "and will continue to investigate every possible lead," the memo says.

Rep. Peter King, the top Republican on the House Homeland Security Committee, said authorities "have very real specifics as to who it is and where the conversation took place and who conducted it."

"It certainly involves suicide bombing attacks on the mass transit system in and around New York and it's plausible, but there's no evidence yet that it's in the process of being carried out," King said.

Knocke, the DHS spokesman, said the warning was issued "out of an abundance of caution going into this holiday season."

No changes are being made to the nation's threat level, or for transit systems at this time, he said.

"However, transit passengers in larger metropolitan areas like New York may see an increased security presence in the coming days," Knocke said.

The increased personnel could include uniformed and plainclothes "behavior detection" officers, federal air marshals, canine teams, and security inspectors, Knocke said.

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Al Qaeda may target New York trains, feds say
Story Highlights
Suicide bombers may be used against New York City transit, government says

Joint FBI, Department of Homeland Security statement says plot unconfirmed

Attack could be planned for holiday season, statement says

From Kelli Arena and Mike Ahlers
CNN

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- Federal authorities have received a "plausible but unsubstantiated" report that al Qaeda may have discussed targeting transit systems in or around New York City, the Department of Homeland Security said.

"These discussions reportedly involved the use of suicide bombers or explosives" on subway or passenger rail trains, according to a joint DHS and FBI statement issued Tuesday.

"We have no specific details to confirm that this plot has developed beyond aspirational planning, but we are issuing this warning out of concern that such an attack could possibly be conducted during the forthcoming holiday season," the statement said.

The uncorroborated information indicates al Qaeda may have discussed in late September targeting New York transit systems, DHS spokeswoman Laura Keener said. She said the memo was issued as a precaution so that local officials could make decisions appropriate for their areas.

While no adjustment is being made to the national threat level, she said, transit passengers in large metropolitan areas such as New York may see increased security in the days to come. That presence might include uniformed or plainclothes security officers, federal air marshals, canine teams and security inspectors, Keener said.

New York police also are deploying additional resources on the city's mass transit systems as a precaution, said a statement by Deputy Commissioner Paul Browne.

"It is not uncommon for the department to receive threat information and to adjust our resources accordingly," Browne said.

The FBI received the information through a channel that has provided reliable information in the past, so the agency is taking the threat seriously, counterterrorism sources said.

The FBI and DHS said they had no further information on the threat. "We are working closely with the U.S. intelligence community, state and local law enforcement and homeland security officials to vet and corroborate this reporting, and will continue to investigate every possible lead. We'll provide updates as we obtain further information," the statement said.

The public should remain vigilant and report suspicious activity to authorities, it said.

Al Qaeda has the means to launch such an attack, said CNN senior international correspondent Nic Robertson, who has covered al Qaeda extensively since before the September 11, 2001, attacks.

"The al Qaeda-affiliated groups are still willing to make these attacks," Robertson said. "What we've seen in the past is, they've become capable of making these homemade bomb devices with detonators and exploding them by cell phones or by suicide bombings."

However, he said, it also would be possible for al Qaeda deliberately to plant false information.

"They would love to sort of create fear when they're not actually capable of creating a strike. ... I've seen it myself, in Afghanistan. You get the Taliban out there on the ground, and they're very capable of knowing that the troops are listening to them, and feeding and sowing false information trails saying, 'We're over on this part of the hill' when they're nowhere near it. They're very capable and knowledgeable about feeding false information."

All About Al Qaeda & New York City

Find this article at:
<http://www.cnn.com/2008/US/11/26/al.qaeda.transit.plot/?iref=mpstoryview>

Al-Qaeda Increases Efforts to Develop 'Dirty bomb' By Gordon Thomas G-2 Bulletin

London—MI6 has issued a global priority warning to all security services that Islamic terrorists are now closer to obtaining material to create a "dirty bomb" to launch against Western targets.

Osama bin Laden has long made this a priority and reinforced it with regular messages from his mountain redoubt in the north-west province of Pakistan. He has repeatedly said every "true Muslim must make it his duty to assist in all ways possible to find the next powerful weapon to destroy our enemies".

After the election of the new Pakistani president, the controversial Asif Ali Zardari, who has served a nine-year jail term on corruption charges he has strongly denied, MI6 fear there will be little ability to provide strong leadership against the new wave of Islamic extremism that al-Qaeda has launched across the country.

Groups such as the newly formed Pakistan Taliban have proclaimed it is focussing on creating a "dirty bomb".

MI6 agents based in Islamabad fear the mounting instability in Pakistan will make it easier for them to do so.

While Pakistan is the only Muslim country with a nuclear arsenal, it has in the past provided its expertise to Iran.

Pakistan's Islam bomb was developed in the 1990s by the rogue scientist, Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan. He sold them to pariah states like North Korea and Libya. He was placed under house arrest by Pervez Musharraf.

But since Musharraf was forced to resign, restrictions on Khan's detention have been virtually lifted—a decision that has alarmed Western diplomats in Pakistan.

While Musharraf readily agreed for the US to place stringent security around Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, there are serious concern that President Zardari will not be able to resist the rampant pressure al-Qaeda is mounting from its terrorist infrastructure base in Waziristan province in the north-west of the country.

A senior U.S. security official in Islamabad said: "Our concern is the sudden rise in intelligence which strongly indicates that al-Qaeda has renewed plans to gain access to nuclear material that could form a primitive nuclear device, one perhaps that a suicide truck bomber could use".

In a "dirty bomb", conventional explosives are surrounded with radioactive material. The MI6 priority alert says such a device, while having a limited effect as a nuclear weapon, would create widespread panic.

An indication of how the threat has increased has been the number of terrorist-related websites which contain details of how to create a "dirty bomb". As soon as the sites are discovered, they are eradicated by MI6's experts. But within days they reappear elsewhere.

Gordon Thomas is the author of a new edition of Gideon's Spies: The Inside Story of Israel's Legendary Secret Service, The Mossad, by JR Books of London and available on Amazon Books.

(C) G-2 Bulletin, Washington D.C., USA, and Gordon Thomas. Last Updated
Nov 22, 2008

<http://en.epochtimes.com/n2/world/al-qaeda-develop-dirty-bomb-7569.html>

FBI warns NY officials of Turkey Day terrorist plotting
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By Austin Modine • Get more from this author

Posted in Security, 26th November 2008 20:09 GMT

Webcast: Building Applications for the 21st Century

Happy Thanksgiving holiday, United States. Here's your first helping of holiday terrorist panic.

The US Department of Homeland Security and FBI has been issuing warnings to New York state officials and law

enforcement of a "plausible but unsubstantiated" threat of a terrorist bomb attack on the New York City subway and train systems during the holidays.

An internal memo sent out Tuesday and obtained by the Associated Press says the FBI received a report that al Qaeda terrorists in September may have discussed a plot involving suicide bombers or explosives placed on transit systems in or around New York city.

DHS spokesman Russ Knocke told the AP the warning was issued as a routine matter, but said there may be an increased presence of police in New York and other larger cities.

"We have no specific details to confirm that this plot has developed beyond aspirational planning, but we are issuing this warning out of concern that such an attack could possibly be conducted during the forthcoming holiday season," stated the memo.

DHS isn't changing the national threat level as a result of the warning, which has been yellow (indicating a "significant risk of terrorist attacks" since March.) The threat level for domestic and international flights remains orange (for "high" risk). ®

http://www.theregister.co.uk/2008/11/26/fbi_warns_ny_subway_plausible_attack/

Warning issued for NY subway plot

Federal authorities in the US have warned local police of a possible al-Qaeda plot to target New York's subway.

There was "plausible but uncorroborated" information that al-Qaeda may have discussed a plot in late September, an official said.

He said the warning was being issued out of an "abundance of caution" ahead of the holiday season.

Thursday marks Thanksgiving in the US, seen as the beginning of a holiday season that ends with New Year.

A leaked memo obtained by the Associated Press news agency said al-Qaeda "may have discussed targeting transit systems in and around New York City".

"These discussions reportedly involved the use of suicide bombers or explosives placed on subway/passenger rail systems," it said.

But Homeland Security spokesman Russ Knocke said neither his agency nor the FBI had any information to suggest that the plot has developed "beyond aspirational planning."

There were no changes to national threat levels, though more security officials might be deployed in large cities, he said.

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/americas/7751068.stm>

Published: 2008/11/26 17:50:29 GMT

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<http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/>

news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/7751068.stm?ad=1

NYPD Steps Up Security Following News Of Unsubstantiated Subway Terror Plot

By: NY1 News

The New York City Police Department has confirmed it is stepping up security around the city this holiday "out of an abundance of caution," following an unsubstantiated report of a terrorist plot against the subway system.

The NYPD says it is aware of the reported chatter among Al Qaeda terrorists, but adds there is no information indicating these discussions had moved beyond the talking stage.

While there are no specifics, Police Commissioner Ray Kelly says it's not uncommon especially at this time of year.

"There are no specific threats," said Kelly. "We always have to be concerned anytime we have large gatherings; that's precisely what we'll do Thanksgiving Day. We'll have sufficient deployment of officers in my judgment to ensure safety."

All of the local transit authorities including the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, New Jersey Transit, and Amtrak are urging their riders to be alert but say there is no reason for alarm.

The news comes as New Yorkers hit the roads, rails, and airports, heading to their holiday destinations.

The Port Authority says it's prepared for a busy travel weekend in the tri-state area.

Officials expect nearly five-million people to go through area airports, bridges, and tunnels.

But for the first time in years, the number of Americans traveling this weekend is expected to decrease as a result of worries about the economy.

AAA expects 41 million Americans to travel more than 50 miles this weekend – a decrease of about 1.5 percent, or 600,000 people. It would be the first drop in Thanksgiving travel since 2002.

Air travel is expected to be down more than seven percent.

The drop in travel comes in spite of rapidly falling gas prices, which are now on average less than \$2 a gallon nationwide.

New Yorkers who spoke with NY1 this morning said despite the bleak economic situation, they are willing to go the extra mile for the holiday.

"Families are supposed to get together and share the thanksgiving dinner together and it's not all the time we get to share a meal together as a family," said one Staten Island resident.

"I have curtailed my driving in the last several months and basically travel overall," said another. "But this is a family tradition, drive up to Cape Cod and enjoy the holiday."

In an effort to keep the city moving, law enforcement officials will be cracking down on drivers who block intersections.

Under a law that took effect in September, blocking the box is now considered both a parking and a moving violation, so traffic agents or police officers can issue tickets to violators. It comes as the city is putting 200 additional traffic agents to work.

"It's estimated that these 200 new traffic enforcement agents will generate about \$61 million in revenue and about \$66 million here on out each fiscal year, based on, I think it's an average of \$83 per summons that the city collects," explained Kelly.

There are seven more Gridlock Alert Days this year after today. The next one comes a week from today.

Meanwhile, in observance of Thanksgiving, many closing and schedule changes are in effect around the city.

http://www.ny1.com/content/news_beats/transit/89639/nypd-steps-up-security-following-news-of-unsubstantiated-subway-terror-plot/Default.aspx

"Plausible" al-Qaida threat to New York subway

Wednesday, 26 Nov 2008 19:50

"Plausible but unsubstantiated" report received of potential al-Qaida attack upon New York City subway Printer friendly version There is a "plausible but unsubstantiated" report that al-Qaida could be planning to attack public transport systems in New York City, the US government has revealed.

A joint statement from the FBI and department of homeland security (DHS) said terrorist chatter had been intercepted discussing a possible attack upon subway or passenger rail trains.

"We have no specific details to confirm that this plot has developed beyond aspirational planning, but we are issuing this warning out of concern that such an attack could possibly be conducted during the forthcoming holiday season," the statement said.

The DHS said al-Qaida was understood to have discussed in September the prospect of attacks on New York transport systems.

Although the United States' national threat level will not be changed, New York commuters are likely to experience a massive increase in security up to and during the holiday season.

"We have no further information on the threat at this time," the FBI/DHS statement said.

"However, we are working closely with the US intelligence community, state and local law enforcement and homeland security officials to vet and corroborate this reporting, and will continue to investigate every possible lead. We'll provide updates as we obtain further information."

<http://www.inthenews.co.uk/news/autocodes/reviews/united-states-america/-plausible-al-qaida-threat-new-york-subway-1251342.htm>

From Times Online November 26, 2008

Intelligence chiefs were expecting Al-Qaeda spectacular

Michael Evans, Defence Editor Bombay: a history of violence

Western intelligence services had been expecting an al-Qaeda spectacular terrorist attack in this crucial period between the end of President Bush's Administration and the succession of Barack Obama.

Signals intelligence "chatter" in recent weeks had indicated that Osama bin Laden's terrorist organisation might be plotting an attack "to grab the headlines" before Mr Obama takes over in the White House on January 20. British security and intelligence sources said there had been increasing concern, particularly in the United States, that a "terrorist spectacular" was on the cards.

The multiple attacks on Westerners in Bombay tonight showed all the signs of an al-Qaeda strategy — picking on vulnerable Western "soft targets" but not in a country where there would be maximum security. The bombing of Western targets in Bali in 2002 when al-Qaeda-linked terrorists planted bombs in tourist-favoured restaurants and nightclubs was another example where the terror group switched its resources to achieve maximum impact.

Counter-terrorist experts said that India would have been selected for the latest spectacular "probably because that's where al-Qaeda have sufficient resources to carry out an attack on this scale". One counter-terrorist expert told The Times: "They don't choose for the sake of it, they look to see where they have the greatest capability and then order an attack."

The key to this attack was the search by the armed terrorists for American and British passport holders. With a reported 40 Westerners being held hostage, the terrorists currently have the upper hand. The counter-terrorist sources said targeting Bombay's most luxurious hotels and a crowded railway station had all the hallmarks of an al-Qaeda operation.

Bombay has been targeted before, when 180 people died during a bomb attack on the railway station in 2006, but that incident was put down to militants, not al-Qaeda, and the Indian Government suspected that the attackers had links to Pakistan's intelligence service, the ISI.

This latest attack, however, involving the taking of Western hostages made it more likely that those behind the operation were from the core leadership of al-Qaeda, which is based in the lawless tribal regions close to the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

The Americans have been expecting a spectacular partly because of the recent CIA success in eliminating key figures in al-Qaeda, using Predator unmanned drones, firing Hellfire missiles at suspected hideouts in the tribal regions of Pakistan. About a dozen al-Qaeda figures have been killed this year.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article5241036.ece>