

Special Contingency Risks (SCR)

Willis

Monthly Incident Report

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Algeria Militant Group Calls for Attack Against Westerners



In a web video posted on January 8, the leader of an al Qaeda-linked Algerian militant group known as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) called for attacks against the French and their allies in Algeria. He proclaimed that they had acquired weapons and ammunition and were awaiting instructions from Osama bin Laden to launch their attacks. Such threats have been issued in the past, and GSP has been blamed for most terrorist attacks in Algeria.

In December, a bus carrying foreign oil workers was bombed in the first attack on Western expatriates in many years. A Warden Notice for the estimated 800 US expatriates said the embassy in the oil- and gas-exporting North African nation would be open for normal business but is encouraging Americans in Algiers to review their security situation. Some expatriate oil executives said they would step up security as a result of the late afternoon attack.

The attack occurred in an affluent district, 10 km (six miles) west of Algiers and resulted in the death of the Algerian driver and the wounding of nine people, including four Britons and an American, authorities said. Residents said the bus was ferrying employees of Brown & Root-Condor, a joint

venture of Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg, Brown and Root (KBR) and Condor Engineering, an affiliate of Algerian state energy group Sonatrach.

KBR stated: "KBR can confirm that a bus carrying employees of Brown & Root-Condor (BRC), a joint venture between KBR and Sonatrach, was attacked in Algiers, Algeria."

"KBR's top priority remains the safety and security of our employees around the world. For this reason, we will not detail the measures undertaken to safeguard company personnel." The bombing took place in a heavily protected neighborhood that is home to some government ministers as well as the Sheraton Hotel, where several foreign firms have their offices.

East Africa US State Department Warns of Potential for Terrorist Action and Piracy

On January 4, the US Department of State issued the following statement.



"This public announcement is being re-issued to remind Americans of the continuing potential for terrorist actions against U.S. citizens in East Africa, particularly along the East African coast, to alert Americans to possible continuing sporadic violence in Somalia, and to note a number of incidents of maritime piracy

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near the horn of Africa and the southern Red Sea near Yemen. This supersedes the Public Announcement of 5 May 2006, and expires on 4 May 2007.

"A number of Al-Qaida operatives and other extremists are believed to be operating in and around East Africa. As a result of the conflict in Somalia, some of these individuals may seek to relocate elsewhere in the region. Americans considering travel to the region and those already there should review their plans carefully, remain vigilant with regard to their personal security, and exercise caution. Terrorist actions may include suicide operations, bombings, kidnappings or targeting maritime vessels. Terrorists do not distinguish between official and civilian targets. Increased security at official U.S. facilities has led terrorists to seek softer targets such as hotels, beach resorts, prominent public places, and landmarks. In particular, terrorists may target civil aviation and seaports. Americans in remote areas or border regions where military or police authority is limited or non-existent could also become targets.

"Americans considering seaborne travel near the Horn of Africa or in the southern Red Sea should exercise extreme caution, as there have been several incidents of armed attacks, robberies, and kidnappings for ransom at sea by pirates during the past several years. In early 2006, a number of merchant vessels were hijacked in Somali territorial waters, while others were hijacked as far as 200 nautical miles off the coast of Somalia in international waters."

India Extortion Demand Results in Death of Engineers



On January 20, a day after the killing of two engineers, a road construction company in Bihar's Madhepura district stopped work after its staff refused to report unless provided with adequate security.

An Indian construction firm, Narsingh Construction, was awarded a large contract by the state government to construct roads in Madhepura. The engineers were killed and four injured by organized crime elements for not surrendering 10% of the total contract.

The state government had reportedly assured that security would be provided to officials of the company.

Iraq Civilian Contractor Taken Hostage



On January 5, a US civilian contractor and his two interpreters were reportedly kidnapped from the al-Haritha area, north of the southern Iraqi city of Basra. According to a preliminary police report, the three were traveling in a car when three other cars full of gunmen ambushed them and took them hostage.

Video Released of Kidnapped Security Contractors

On January 4, kidnappers released a video of five Western private security contractors – four Americans and an Austrian – who were kidnapped in southern Iraq almost seven weeks ago. The video shows the men in apparently good health.

On November 16, the group was escorting a convoy in southern Iraq on behalf of Kuwaiti-based Crescent Security when it was captured by kidnappers wearing police uniforms.

The short tape begins with a text claiming responsibility for the kidnapping on behalf of the "Islamic National Resistance in Iraq, Al Forkhan Brigades," and scenes are time-stamped December 21 or December 22. "I'm 44 years old. I'm from Kansas City, Missouri. The date is 21 December, 2006. I'm well, my friends are well, we've been treated well," one of the men says in the video.

Several Islamist and nationalist resistance groups operate in Iraq, along with illegal political militias, corrupt security force units and criminal gangs who kidnap hostages for ransom.

Ireland Balkan Training for Tiger Kidnap Gangs



Criminals in Dublin associated with "tiger" kidnappings and armed robberies have attended commando-style courses in Eastern Europe. There they are trained in counter-surveillance and the use of firearms which are provided by former Special Forces in Croatia, Serbia, Slovakia and possibly Romania. Tiger kidnapping primarily involves kidnapping of bank personnel with access to large sums of money.

There have been about 10 tiger kidnapping in the past 10 months, netting a few gangs in excess of €2.5M. Among the

high-profile raids was the theft of €800,000 from the Permanent TSB in Coolock, Dublin. A kidnap gang held the manager's family hostage overnight before forcing her to hand over the cash.

Mexico / Texas



Texas Man Threatened with Kidnap of His Children

On January 8, 2007, Dallas resident Alejandro Trejo was sentenced to 51 months imprisonment for a threatening communication. Trejo admitted that on April 27, 2006, he mailed a letter to Alberto Martin in Irving, Texas, with the specific intent of extorting money from Martin. That letter stated:

"We invite you this one time only through this means, to buy peace of mind for you and for your loved ones with a small investment."

and then went on to give three options. **Option one** was

"\$180,000. American dollars on May 5 in used bills of small denominations, 20s and 50s."

Option two was

"\$360,000. American Dollars on May 11 in used bills of small denominations, 20s and 50s."

Option three stated,

"If we receive no answer to one of the first two options in the time or in the matter requested, it will be \$2,000,000. American dollars on the day we say, after the two mentioned dates, in exchange for one of your children."

The threatening letter went on to say,

"We know all your movements in Mexico; we know what schools your children attend, their activities, their schedules. They would never again be at peace."

Trejo also stipulated that on May 5, 2006, he contacted Martin via cell phone and requested the number of the individual that would be delivering the money. Trejo admits that after acquiring a telephone number from Martin, he contacted an individual he believed to be delivering the \$180,000.00. Trejo gave instructions to that individual as to how and where to deliver the requested money. That person, however, was an undercover

agent, and Trejo was arrested by law enforcement after he retrieved what he thought was the extortion money.

Local Police Stop Patrolling in Tijuana

A January 5 report stated that officials in Mexico have taken guns away from the municipal police officers because of the threat the officers pose to residents and visitors. Mexican President Felipe Calderon sent more than 3,000 soldiers and federal police to Tijuana to hunt down drug gangs and seize police weapons.

The move came amid allegations that corrupt officers are in league with drug smugglers in the border city. The drug gangs are blamed for more than 2,000 murders in Mexico.

One Tijuana resident, Esther Castillion, who spoke to NBC said, "To us, it's a very good idea for the president to do that, because there are a lot of Mexican police who like to kidnap others. Also, they are dealing with drugs at the same time."

US Embassy Warns US Citizens to be Security Conscious

On December 22, 2006, the US Embassy in Hermosillo issued the following Warden Message:

"This Warden Message is being sent to alert U.S. citizens of recent violence in Hermosillo, Mexico and to advise U.S. citizens traveling in the region to be mindful of their personal safety and surroundings at all times.

"On Wednesday afternoon, 20 December, two individuals were assassinated in Hermosillo, Sonora while in their vehicle at the corner of a main boulevard close to the U.S. Consulate. According to local law enforcement authorities, the perpetrators fired 30 rounds from an assault rifle.

"Although no U.S. citizens were targeted in this gang-style execution, the incident took place during daylight hours near several restaurants and businesses frequented by U.S. citizens. The Consulate reminds all U.S. citizens living in or visiting Mexico to be alert and aware of their surroundings. Violence can occur in public areas including restaurants, shopping centers and public areas of congregation.

"We reiterate the following points made in the 14 September 2006 public announcement concerning the rising level of violence in areas of Mexico. U.S. citizens residing and traveling in Mexico should exercise extreme caution when in unfamiliar

areas and be aware of their surroundings at all times. Though there is no evidence that U.S. citizens are targeted, criminals look for every opportunity to take advantage of unwary travelers. It is preferable for U.S. citizens to stay in areas of the cities with more adequate security, and provide an itinerary to a friend or family member not traveling with you. U.S. citizens should refrain from displaying expensive-looking jewelry, large amounts of money, or other valuable items."

Nigeria

Chinese Oil Workers Abducted



On January 25, China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC) reported that nine Chinese oil workers employed by CNPC were abducted following an attack on their facilities. Thirty-eight foreign workers are now being held by four different armed groups in

Africa's top oil producing country, where violent crime and militancy has surged in the past 12 months. CNPC was conducting a seismic study in the Sagbama area of Bayelsa State under contract with Royal Dutch Shell when the raid took place.

Militants and criminals seeking ransom have intensified attacks and kidnappings against foreign workers in the Niger Delta, a vast wetlands region, which contains all Nigeria's oil. Oil output from Nigeria, the world's eighth largest oil exporter, has been reduced by 20 percent since a series of militant attacks last February.

Nearly 100 foreign hostages, mostly oil workers, have been released unharmed, usually after a ransom is paid. However, a Briton and a Nigerian were killed in a gun battle between militants and Nigerian security forces trying to free the hostages. Thousands of foreign oil workers have left in the past year.

Militants Kill Dutch Expatriate and Three Nigerians

A January 18 report states, that militants killed a Dutch expatriate and three Nigerians in Bonny Island of Rivers State in Nigeria.

The boat, which belongs to Hyundai Construction Company, was attacked along the Bonny River. During the incident, two other expatriates and three Nigerians were wounded.

Nine South Korean Construction Workers Kidnapped

On January 10, kidnappers raided a riverside compound housing expatriate workers, seizing nine South Korean employees of Daewoo Engineering and Construction.

Militants with guns and sticks of dynamite jumped from a half-dozen speedboats and overpowered about 45 Nigerian troops and security guards at the Yenagoa complex in the oil-rich southern Niger Delta region, witnesses and officials said.

Palestine

Foreign Nationals Urged to Leave Gaza Due to Kidnap Threat



On January 3, Palestinian security services reportedly urged foreign nationals – especially European and US nationals – to leave the Gaza Strip out of fear of further kidnappings. A senior security official said Palestinian security agencies had received alerts of possible kidnappings. The warning came as police forces continue their search for a Peruvian photographer who was abducted by unknown militants in Gaza on January 1.

AP Photographer Abducted

On January 1, Palestinian gunmen reportedly kidnapped an Agence France-Presse photographer in Gaza City as he was entering the agency's office. No group has claimed responsibility for the abduction. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has called for all Palestinian security forces to search for and free the man.

Philippines

Officials Warn of Plot to Kidnap Foreign Executives Following Extortion Demands



Government officials warned on December 19, 2006 that there may be a plot to kidnap foreign executives involved in the New Bacolod International Airport construction project in Silay City, Negros Occidental. Police officials had increased security at the facility after New People's Army (NPA) rebels attacked it on October 8, causing US\$650,000 worth of damage.

The NPA rebels reportedly staged the attack because the construction project firm refused to pay a protection tax; the firm has received approximately seven extortion letters from the NPA since 2005. It is not known if the latest threat is also an NPA plot to extort money from the construction project, in which the South Korean-based Hanjin International and Japan-based Takinaka Itochu are participating.

Russia

Aeroflot Flight to Geneva Makes Emergency Landing Due to Hijack Attempt



On December 28, 2006, an Aeroflot flight from Moscow to Geneva made an emergency landing at Prague International Airport (LKPR/PRG)

following an attempted hijacking by a passenger who allegedly claimed that he had an explosive device. The passenger, who ordered the crew to change the Airbus A-320 aircraft's course to Cairo, was overpowered and tied up. The aircraft landed safely at LKPR after the pilot declared an emergency onboard. A total of 168 people were on board the aircraft at the time of the incident; none were injured.

United States

Oprah Winfrey Faces Extortion Threat



On January 7, it was reported that a man allegedly tried to extort \$US1.5M from Oprah Winfrey by threatening to release taped telephone conversations that he claimed would hurt her reputation. Keifer Bonvillain, 36, allegedly demanded that a Winfrey representative pay him in exchange for 12 hours of recorded telephone conversations he had had with a Winfrey employee he met two years earlier at a party.

Over the next few weeks, Bonvillain allegedly told the associate that he wanted to publish a book based on the "shocking" and "newsworthy" tapes, claiming he had received offers of \$500,000 to \$3,000,000 from tabloids and book publishers.



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