



Top Stories

Police in Britain uncovered a suspected terrorist plot

The British government has announced that a plot to blow up a number of planes has been disrupted this morning.

Israel pushes further into Lebanon

Armoured columns of the Israeli Defense Forces are meeting resistance as they move deeper into Lebanon in an attempt to capture the Hezbollah stronghold of Khiam.

Featured story

Edinburgh Fringe festival begins

The "world's largest arts festival", the Edinburgh Fringe opened on Sunday, with religious and political satire getting top billing this year.

Wikipedia Current Events

- A terrorist plot to blow up planes in mid-flight from the UK to the US has been disrupted, Scotland Yard has said.
- Pakistan's intelligence service claims that its cooperation with British intelligence helped to uncover the plot. CNN reports that sources have informed it that it was recent arrests in Pakistan that convinced Britain to act quickly.
- Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney has activated the National Guard to help with security at Logan Airport.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Heathrow Airport closed to most European flights as a result on bans on flights of three hours or less. Congestion builds due to ban most types of hand luggage.
- Intelligence officials claim that the suspects were intending to hold a dry run within the next 2 days with the actual attack to be held within 10 days.
- United States President George W. Bush said the plot was "a stark reminder that this nation is at "war with Islamic fascists" who will use any means to destroy those of us who love freedom, to hurt our nation" drawing condemnation from the Council on American-Islamic Relations and the Muslim Public Affairs Council who discourage the use of term 'Islamofascism.'
- Hugo Chavez states that Fidel Castro is in a "great battle for life" but expresses optimism about his recovery.
- In Marietta, Ohio, United States two men were arrested on money laundering in support of terrorism. They were found with lists of travelers on airplanes and information on airport security checkpoints.
- More than 1.5 million Chinese evacuate while Super Typhoon Saomai, the strongest to land in China in 50 years, makes landfall in Wenzhou, Zhejiang.

Police in Britain uncovered a suspected terrorist plot

The Metropolitan Police's anti-

terrorist branch and security service in London have claimed today that a terrorist plot to detonate bombs on nine planes travelling mid-air from the United Kingdom to the United States has been thwarted.

The bombs were to be smuggled onboard in passengers' hand luggage. They could have been the biggest terrorist attacks since 9/11, government officials have said. Information gathered after recent arrests in Pakistan convinced British investigators they had to act urgently to stop the plot. U.S. intelligence officials said the plotters hoped to stage a dry run by August 10, the Associated Press reported. The actual attack would have followed days later, the officials told AP.

The counter-terrorism operation took several months to complete. Scotland Yard say twenty-four people are in custody, and they were arrested in London, Birmingham and the Thames Valley. A senior U.S. intelligence official suggests that those arrested are British citizens, and some have links with Pakistan. Among those arrested were a Muslim charity worker and a Heathrow Airport employee with an all-area access pass, according to Britain's Channel 4. According to ABC News, five more suspects who are still at large in Britain are being "urgently sought". At a press conference this afternoon, Home Secretary John Reid said the police believe the "main players" are accounted for.

Paul Stephenson, the Metropolitan Police's Deputy Assistant Commissioner, said this morning: "We are confident that we have disrupted a plan by terrorists to cause untold death and destruction and to commit, quite frankly, mass murder. We believe that the terrorists' aim was to smuggle explosives on to aeroplanes in hand luggage and to detonate these in flight. We also believe that the intended targets were flights from the United Kingdom to the United States of America. I can confirm that a significant number of people are currently in custody and the operation is ongoing."

A senior congressional source said it is believed the plotters planned to mix a British sports drink with a gel-like substance to make an explosive that they would possibly trigger with an MP3 player or cell phone. The sports drink could be combined with a peroxide-based paste to form a potent "explosive cocktail," if properly done, said a U.S. counterterrorism official. "There are strong reasons to believe the materials in a beverage like that could have been part of the formula," the official said. "What makes it frightening is the sophistication to turn relatively common materials into a dangerous bomb," said a U.S. intelligence official.

U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff, said it was unclear if all suspects were now in custody. U.S. and British officials said some suspects could still be on the loose and their investigations were continuing.

Prime Minister Tony Blair, who is currently holidaying in the Caribbean, paid tribute to the security services and the police. "I thank them for the great job they

are doing in protecting our country. There has been an enormous amount of co-operation with the US authorities which has been of great value and underlines the threat we face and our determination to counter it," he said in a statement.

It is believed that terrorists planned to detonate explosives on three US airlines. A US-administration official said the plot targeted Continental Airlines, United, British Airways and American Airlines flights to New York, Washington and California.

The White House has said the plot had been a direct threat to the US, and security officials there say aspects of the plan were suggestive of al-Qaeda. Terror analyst Peter Bergen said two factors pointed to the influence of al Qaeda. He said Al Qaeda is "obsessed" with commercial aviation, and he added that the timing of the plot was "very interesting." "It's not clear when this was going to be implemented ... but we are coming up on the fifth anniversary of 9/11. They do want to make a big statement," he said.

Michael Chertoff said the plan was reminiscent of the 1995 plot by 9/11 coordinator Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, who envisioned detonating bombs on 11 airlines possibly traveling over the Pacific Ocean. He also said that the plotters were "getting close to the execution phase".

The US is also sending out more air marshals on flights between the UK and the US. President Bush said the arrests are a "stark reminder" that the U.S. is "at war with Islamic fascists." He thanked British Prime Minister Tony Blair for "busting this plot."Contents

MI5, the British internal security service, has raised the threat level to critical, meaning "an attack is expected imminently and indicates an extremely high level of threat to the UK".

As a result, increased security at all British airports has been implemented, leading to delays in departing flights.

Significant disruptions include: At Heathrow Airport, incoming short-haul flights have resumed. However, long-haul services are still delayed and numerous outbound flights have been cancelled.

At Gatwick Airport all EasyJet flights have been cancelled All flights from Brussels Airport to the UK have been cancelled.

All airlines departing from UK airports have told their passengers that they are not permitted to carry any hand baggage on board any aircraft departing from any airport in the UK.

Only the following items are permitted in the cabin, and must be carried in transparent bags:

- Wallets and purses, plus their contents.
- Travel documents, including passports and travel tickets.
- Prescription medicines, but not in liquid form, unless they can be verified as authentic.
- Essential medical items, such as a diabetic kit.
- Glasses and sunglasses, but not in their cases.
- Contact lens holders, but with no bottles of solution.
- Baby food and milk, but contents must be tasted by accompanying passenger.
- Sanitary items for babies.
- Female sanitary items, unboxed.
- Handkerchiefs and tissues, unboxed.

•Keys, but with no electric key fobs.

No fluids at all are allowed onboard. "We hope that these measures, which are being kept under review by the government, will need to be in place for a limited period only," said a statement issued by the Department for Transport.

Weblog journalists have criticized whether the physical handling of potential explosive liquids reflects the threat authorities claim. In response to CNN reporting, "Because the plot involved taking liquid explosives aboard planes in carry-ons, passengers at all U.S. and British airports, and those boarding U.S.-bound flights at other international airports, are banned from taking any liquids onto planes." XOPL observes, "And then they have the photo of the TSA guy dumping a tub of confiscated possibly explosive liquids into a garbage can in a crowd of people. ... Nevermind that the plot specifically mentions mixing chemicals and/or nitroglycerin... which explodes if handled too roughly." Responding to "A.J. Leoni, pours the last of her drink into the receptacle while in line for the security checkpoint at the Asheville Regional Airport," in the Asheville Citizen-Times, Gabriel Meister writes, "Pour it into a receptacle? Don't you think that some of these potentially explosive liquids might be more dangerous when, I don't know, mixed in a big vat in the middle of an airport?"

The United States Department of Homeland Security said in an email: "The U.S. threat level is raised to Severe, or Red, for all commercial flights flying from the United Kingdom to the U.S. The U.S. threat level is raised to High, or Orange for all commercial

aviation operating in the U.S., including international flights. Flights from the U.S. to the U.K. are also Orange. PROHIBITED ITEMS CHANGE: All liquids and gels are now prohibited at the screening checkpoints. For more information please visit www.tsa.gov." Increased security means airline passengers around the country should show up at least two hours early for all flights, an official with the Transportation Security Administration told.

The nation's overall terror threat level has not been altered. August 10 2006 was the first time the Department of Homeland Security has raised the threat level for a specific group of flights. British Airways canceled all short haul flights in or out of Heathrow Airport for August 10, 2006, and delays were stacking flights up at airports across Europe.

Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney ordered the National Guard to Boston's Logan Airport, and California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger ordered the National Guard to airports in his state.

The suspected terror plot involved concealing a liquid or gel explosive inside a modified sports beverage drink container and using a electronic device like a flash from a disposable camera as a trigger.

ABC News is reporting that the plotters planned to leave the top of the bottle sealed and filled with the original beverage but add a false bottom, filled with a liquid or gel explosive. The terrorists planned to dye the explosive mixture red to match the sports drink sealed in the top half of the container.

There are several different types

of liquid or gel based explosives and government sources have not released information regarding the type the terrorists were using. Some reports mention a peroxide-based solution so it may be Methyl ethyl ketone peroxide, which is a high explosive in the form of a colorless, oily liquid at room temperature and pressure. It is related to acetone peroxide which is an old standby for various terrorist organizations because of the fact that it can be made from fairly common household items.

Other types of liquid explosives include: Astrolite, Ethylene glycol dinitrate, Oxyliquit, and various types of Sprengel explosive.

Chavez equates Israel invasion of Lebanon and occupation of Palestine with Nazi oppression of Jews

Venezuelan President, Hugo Chavez, is comparing Israel's activities in Lebanon and the West Bank and Gaza to what Hitler did to the Jews. "They are doing what Hitler did against the Jews," Chavez said to the Arabic news network Al Jazeera and on his radio program.

Chavez condemned the Israeli attacks and accused the Jewish state of committing a "new Holocaust" with the help of the United States, which Chavez called a "terrorist" country.

"Israel has gone mad and is inflicting on the people of Palestine and Lebanon the same thing they have criticized, and with reason: the Holocaust. But this is a new Holocaust." Chávez said.

The Jewish Anti-Defamation League responded: "Clearly, President Chavez needs a reality check when it comes to the Middle East conflict."

A much weaker criticism against Israel involving claims that Israel is involved in systematic racism consists of the allegations of Israel apartheid.

War Crimes Act amendments to indemnify retroactively

Amendments to the War Crimes Act, drafted by the Bush administration, will retroactively indemnify policymakers and government officials from criminal charges for authorizing abuse and torture of prisoners captured in the War on Terrorism campaign.

The White House stated that these amendments "will apply to any conduct by any U.S. personnel, whether committed before or after the law is enacted." The amendments are intended to be put before Congress after Labor Day, said two anonymous sources claimed to be lawyers currently revising the Act.

According to Eugene Fidell, president of the National Institute of Military Justice, "I think what this bill can do is in effect immunize past crimes. That's why it's so dangerous." Scott Horton, a fourth attorney examining the amendments, remarked, "The administration is trying to insulate policymakers under the War Crimes Act."

Currently, the War Crimes Act of 1996 includes the use of capital punishment should prisoners held in U.S. camps die from abuse while detained.

Google to warn users about "bad" websites

Google is introducing warnings in its search results, notifying users about websites which are known to distribute "badware", malicious software such as spyware, deceptive adware, viruses and

trojans that disrupt the smooth running of computers. Google search users will be warned before they enter suspect websites: "The site you are about to visit may harm your computer!"

"To begin we'll only be identifying a small number of sites, but we'll be expanding our coverage over time," the company said. "Finding new and better ways to protect our users is a perpetual project, and we'll continue to work hard in this area."

Google, along with Lenovo and Sun Microsystems, has sponsored StopBadware project, in which researchers from Harvard and Oxford universities are creating a clearinghouse for information on spyware and other malicious software and the ways they are disseminated.

Jonathan Zittrain, a Harvard and Oxford professor involved with StopBadware, said the project may one day release lists of suspect sites still under investigation, but would most likely do so for everyone and not just sponsors like Google.

Senior Chinese official executed for spying for Taiwan

A Chinese government official convicted of working for the Taiwanese government has been executed, and thousands of civil workers viewed the taped trial for "educational purposes" on Monday. The prisoner's name was Tong Daning and was in his mid-50's and held a rank just under "Assistant-Minister" before he was found guilty of espionage. According to the anonymous sources, Daning had been selling state sources for over 15 years, making a profit of about US\$250,000.

Daning is the highest ranking person executed in China since 1999, when a Major General and Senior Colonel were executed for selling state secrets. China and Taiwan have been spying on each other ever since 1949, when the People's Republic of China was officially created, but that has not stopped over 1 million Taiwanese citizens from working and investing over 100 billion USD in China. There have been many cases of espionage within the last few years, with all but two resulting in a death sentence.

New Zealand Maori angry over US tattoo kit

New Zealand Māori leaders have said that they will try to get a Maori temporary tattoo kit from the Los Angeles store Halloween Town withdrawn from sale, as they find it insulting to the Māori culture.

The Halloween Town, a store that specializes in Halloween costumes and accessories, is selling the tattoo kit for NZ\$16. The store's website features a photograph of a full facial Tā moko (Māori tattoo) instead of their usual caricatures.

Aroha Mead, Victoria University of Wellington Māori business lecturer said that the Tā moko is not frightening, "And he doesn't look scary to me – he looks quite handsome," but added "There didn't appear to be much that Māori could do. No-one likes to see their culture being denigrated but we are aware that the moko is in the public domain." Rotorua academic Ngahihi o te ra Bidois, who has a full facial moko, has asked the Halloween Town store to remove the tattoo kits. "It is insulting ... what they are doing is not portraying Māori correctly," Bidois said.

A full-face moko is traditionally restricted to male Māori and is used to represent mana (prestige).

Israel pushes further into Lebanon

Armoured columns of the Israeli Defense Forces are meeting resistance as they move deeper into Lebanon in an attempt to capture the Hezbollah stronghold of Kham as 40,000 Israeli troops mass on the Lebanese border following an Israeli cabinet decision to widen the war. Israel took control of the strategic southern Lebanese hub of Marjayoun on Thursday as part of its northern push.

On Wednesday, the Israeli government approved a plan to widen the war in Lebanon in an attempt to destroy Hezbollah installations and neutralize its ability to launch rockets. The cabinet has authorized the Israeli army to advance as far north as the Litani River, 30 kilometres (18 miles) north of the Lebanese-Israeli border. However, Israel says yesterday's push is not part of that campaign.

"It's a small operation that looks large from where we're looking right now, but this is not opening up any new front," IDF spokeswoman Miri Eisen said. "It's taking care of one that has been consistently hitting Kiryat Shmona."

Hezbollah officials reacted angrily to the Israeli cabinet's decision. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah appeared on Al-Manar television, and threatened to make southern Lebanon "a graveyard" for the Israelis.

"I say to the Zionists, you could come anywhere, invade, land

airborne forces, enter this village or that, but I repeat, all this will cost you a high price," he said.

The Israeli army says 15 of its soldiers were killed in combat on Wednesday, and that 40 Hezbollah fighters died the same day. Hezbollah fired more than 100 rockets into Israel, while no casualties from the Israeli side were reported.

The IDF says it currently has approximately 10,000 troops on the ground in southern Lebanon, a number that will swell to 50,000 in coming days.

As the fighting continues, U.S. sources said they no longer expect that a joint U.S.-French UN draft resolution calling for a ceasefire in Lebanon would reach a Security Council vote by a hoped for Thursday deadline. Disagreement over whether the resolution should call for an immediate Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon is an obstacle.

The resolution was to be co-sponsored by the United States and France, but the two countries are now at odds over how to reword the proposal in light of Arab objections to the original draft. The French have accepted a Lebanese offer to send 15,000 troops into the south to monitor the ceasefire if Israel withdraws immediately, while the U.S. wants Israel to be able to remain in southern Lebanon for a few weeks until a new multi-national force arrives.

More than 1000 Lebanese, mostly civilians, have died in the month-long conflict according to Lebanon's government. 100 Israelis, mostly soldiers, have also been killed.

Today in History

3114 BC - Epoch of the current era in the Maya Long Count Calendar begins.

480 BC - Spartan hoplites under Leonidas I, along with Thespians under Demophilus, fought to the last man in the Battle of Thermopylae, losing to a large Persian invasion force led by Xerxes I.

1919 - The Weimar Republic adopted its constitution.

1970 - A trademark application for the word Spork was published by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

1987 - Alan Greenspan became Chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve.

August 11 is Independence Day in Chad (1960)

Quote of the Day

"Love is the magician, the enchanter, that changes worthless things to Joy, and makes royal kings and queens of common clay. It is the perfume of that wondrous flower, the heart, and without that sacred passion, that divine swoon, we are less than beasts; but with it, earth is heaven, and we are gods."

~ Robert G. Ingersoll

Word of the Day

anachronism; n

1. Something which or someone who belongs in the past and doesn't fit anymore in present days.

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