



Top Stories

Police in Britain uncover suspected terrorist plot

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

U.S. issues warning of terrorist attacks in India

The United States Embassy in New Delhi, India has warned citizens in a statement on its website, that "foreign terrorists possibly members of al-Qaeda" may be planning a "series of bombings" that would take place "in or around New Delhi and Mumbai."

Featured story

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.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The UN Security Council adopts a resolution, 15-0, calling for a ceasefire in the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict.
- Ehud Olmert accepts the emerging Middle East peace deal after earlier threatening an expansion of ground war in Lebanon. The agreement calls for the deployment of 30,000 Lebanese and U.N. troops along the Israel-Lebanon border.

Wikipedia Current Events

- 40 people have been arrested throughout Italy, in Muslim communities "as part of an extraordinary operation that followed the British anti-terrorist operation."
- The date the plot was to be carried out has been revealed to be August 16.
- Typhoon Saomai kills 104 people in eastern China as it moves overland.
- White Hen Pantry is bought out by the 7-Eleven chain.

U.S. issues warning of terrorist attacks in India

The United States Embassy in New Delhi, India has warned citizens in a statement on its website, that "foreign terrorists possibly members of al-Qaeda" may be planning a "series of bombings" that would take place "in or around New Delhi and Mumbai" in India before or during India's celebration of independence day on August 15, 2006. The statement also says that the likely "time frame" for the attacks may be around "August 11-16," 1006.

"The Embassy has learned that foreign terrorists, possibly including members of Al-Qaida, allegedly intend to carry out a series of bombing attacks in or around New Delhi and Mumbai (Bombay) in the days leading up to India's Independence Day on August 15, 2006," said the statement.

The statement warns that "likely targets include major airports, key central Indian government offices, and major gathering places such as hotels and markets."

The statement also warns all Americans in the region to "keep a low profile" and to be "attentive" of their surroundings.

The embassy in new Delhi will be closed on August 15 in recognition of the Indian Independence Day along with the Consulates in Mumbai, Chennai and Calcutta. The embassy in New Delhi and the Consulate in Chennai will be closed on August 16 in recognition of Janmashtami [Krishna Jayanthi] also an Indian holiday; however, the embassy in Mumbai and Calcutta will remain open.

The Federal Home Ministry in India has told New Delhi Police to step up security at all "vital installations" and also asked them to maintain "the highest state of alert."

"All vital installations like bus and railway stations, airports, metro services and government buildings are under the scanner," said Ministry officials.

The Home Ministry also said that the warning should be treated only as an "advisory."

"It is a very innocuous advisory. And that's about it. I have read the advisory. We have no comments," said home secretary VK Duggal.

Indian junior foreign minister, Anand Sharma said that the ministry is "aware that there is a threat, as India has been a target for militants."

7-Eleven acquires Chicago-based White Hen chain

WHP Holdings Corp., the parent company of White Hen Pantry, has been acquired by Tokyo based Seven & I Holdings Co. for \$35 million from New York investment firm, Angelo, Gordon & Co. White Hen has previously declared bankruptcy. Seven & I is the owner and operator of the 7-Eleven convenience store chain. This is the largest buyout for the 7-Eleven brand in two decades and signals a continuance of the expansion Seven & I has pursued in recent years.

"This acquisition is a strategic fit for 7-Eleven and enhances market presence in the Chicagoland area," said 7-Eleven Inc. President and Chief Executive Joseph DePinto. The addition of White Hen stores will allow the company to increase their presence in greater Boston (55 stores) and metropolitan Chicago (206 stores) bringing their North American store count to over 7,100.

Typhoon Saomai batters China

Super Typhoon Saomai made landfall in the eastern province Zhejiang in China around 5:30 p.m. Thursday afternoon. By Friday evening Saomai had left a path of destruction in Zhejiang and neighboring province Fujian. Over 100 people have been reported dead with even more missing. An estimated 3.5 million people were affected by the storm, some 1.6 million of whom were evacuated.

The reports from the civil affairs bureau tell of large-scale material

destruction. In Zhejiang, 18,000 houses were destroyed and in Fujian, 32,000. Hundreds of thousands of buildings have been damaged. Phone and powerlines were knocked down and outages were wide-spread.

With wind speeds of 216 km/h (135 mph) at the time of landfall it is the strongest typhoon to hit China since August 1, 1956, when a storm with wind speeds of 244 km/h killed 4,900 people.

Emergency plans have been implemented and supplies are being sent in from other provinces. The central government has allocated 166 million yuan to assist the affected region.

Police in Britain uncover suspected terrorist plot

The Metropolitan Police's anti-terrorist branch and security service in London yesterday claimed 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. The planned terrorist attacks could have been the biggest 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. The original information about the plan came from the Muslim community in Britain, according to a British intelligence official. The tip resulted from a person who had been concerned about the activities of an acquaintance after the July 7, 2005 terror attacks in London, the official said.

The counter-terrorism operation

took several months to complete. Scotland Yard said twenty-four people are in custody, and were arrested in north and east London, Birmingham and High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. An undercover British agent infiltrated the group, giving the authorities intelligence on the alleged plan, several U.S. government officials said. The men had not bought plane tickets, the officials said, but they were in the process of perusing the Internet to find flights to various cities that had similar departure times. Pakistani officials have said two Britons were arrested last week, and that five Pakistanis have been detained on suspicion of "facilitating" the plot. As many as 50 people were involved in the plot, an internal Department of Homeland Security document said.

Speaking on August 11, UK Home Secretary John Reid said although officials believed the main suspects were in custody, the UK threat level remained "critical," the highest level. He said UK citizens faced a "common threat" and appealed for tolerance and resilience. Reid said, in addition, that Britain was grateful for Pakistan's cooperation in breaking up the suspected plot.

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." 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.

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. Terrorism 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.

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

York, Washington and California.

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. The suspected terrorists had been under surveillance in Britain since last December, the channel reported. According to ABC News, five more suspects who are still at large in Britain are being "urgently sought". At a press conference at the afternoon on August 10, Home Secretary John Reid said the police believe the "main players" are accounted for. Two of the suspects left "martyrdom tapes," according to Pakistani sources familiar with the details of the British investigation.

A senior US 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.

Two of the suspects held in connection with the alleged plot to down commercial jetliners with explosives may have had contact with a Pakistani suspected of being

an al Qaeda operative, government officials in Britain and the United States told. The officials allege that Matiur Rehman, described as an explosives expert in Pakistan who is now at large, met two of the British suspects in Pakistan. But officials -- who say the plot displays signs of al Qaeda participation but are still investigating that angle -- do not know whether Rehman was involved in the plot. After the two people returned to Britain, they received a wire transfer of money from Pakistan, the officials said.

Michael Chertoff, the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security, 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 U.S. is also sending out more air marshals on flights between the UK and the U.S. 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." U.S. government officials say there were two phone calls made from London to the United States recently by suspects. Those calls were tracked down and investigated, but there is no evidence of any involvement of people in America in the alleged plot.

The U.S. Embassy in New Delhi on August 11 warned American citizens of possible terrorist attacks across India in the week from August 14 to August 20.

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 was implemented, leading to delays in departing flights.

Air passengers across Europe faced a second day of delays on August 11, though the situation had eased from the previous day when London's Heathrow Airport was closed to many incoming flights.

The alleged plot to smuggle liquid explosives onto planes has led to drastic new security measures at airports around the world.

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." Continental, Delta, Northwest and United Airlines advised passengers to arrive three hours before takeoff for domestic and international flights, according to the airlines' Web sites. American Airlines advised passengers to allow "extra time." Passengers in the U.S. faced a second security check starting August 11.

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 United States on August 11 renewed its warning to U.S. citizens to defer non-essential travel to Pakistan amid rising concerns over terror activity that would be directed against U.S. interests.

The Bank of England has notified financial institutions to freeze accounts of of 19 people under terrorist financing laws, according to a statement on the Bank's web

site. The individuals were identified as Ali Abdula Ahmed, Ali Cossor, ALI Shazad Khuram, Hussain Nabeel, Hussain Tanvir, Hussain Umair, Islam Umar, Kayani Waseem, Khan Assan Abdullah, Khan Waheed Arafat, Khatib Osman Adam, Patel Abdul Muneem, Rauf Tayib, Saddique Muhammed Usman, Sarwar Assad, Savant Ibrahim, Tariq Amin, Asmin, Uddin Shamin Mohammed, and Zaman Waheed.

Controversial Liverpool 'Evil Cabal' blog is legal

Merseyside Police concluded after a brief inspection that the controversial blog Liverpool Evil Cabal does not break criminal law. However the council officers continue to search for the editor.

The blog has been blocked on computers controlled by Liverpool Direct Ltd, a company jointly owned by Liverpool City Council and British Telecom. The council's elected officials have denied ordering the block and are currently investigating its origin.

Previous fights between Liverpool city councillors and executive staff have resulted in controversy before, most notably in the resignation of leader Mike Storey and CEO Henshaw.

Greens Party refines 'Buy Kiwi Made' scheme

The New Zealand Government has asked the Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand to start refining its taxpayer funded 'Buy Kiwi Made' scheme to also include products designed in New Zealand but manufactured elsewhere.

The Buy Kiwi Made scheme was a NZ\$11 million post-election deal between the Labour Party and the Green Party.

Political experts say the reason for Labour to ask the Greens party to refine the scheme was because it was afraid that companies, like clothes maker Icebreaker which manufactures its clothes outside of New Zealand would not be included.

Robert Linterman, Norsewear New Zealand CEO, said "The decision to include companies which manufacture overseas undermines the credibility of the entire campaign. We were assured that the purpose of Buy Kiwi Made was to encourage the production in New Zealand, help build up our manufacturing capability and create employment. It's hard to see how classing Icebreaker – a company which does much of its processing and manufacturing in China – as Kiwi Made will help those achieve those aims. The Buy Kiwi Made campaign should support products which are actually Kiwi made – not just Kiwi designed."

Sue Bradford, Green MP (Member of Parliament) who is responsible for Buy Kiwi Made scheme, said she is making her proposal clearer so such companies can be associated with it and that she is confident all sides will be pleased with the final proposal. "It is good to clarify the details because there is a lot of taxpayer's money at stake," Bradford said.

The New Zealand Council of Trade Unions does not want the scheme to be extended to the changes. Ross Wilson, President of the Council of Trade Unions, said "It would not be in the interests of many ordinary companies and their staff. I plan to raise union concerns with government ministers."

Colombian reporter slain in home

Milton Fabian Sanchez was killed on Wednesday evening in his house in Yumbo municipality in Valle del Cauca, Colombia, when gunmen entered the home and shot him dead.

Sanchez, 30, worked for a local radio and television station. Police could not immediately provide a motive for his killing.

Jose Leon, chief of the local police said that the investigation is following three leads: "incidents relating to his journalism, the second those relating to his family, and finally what he was doing at the time of the murder,".

Some press organizations have ranked Colombia among the most dangerous for journalists to work in.

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

Venezuelan President, Hugo Chavez, compared 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. Over

1,000 Lebanese civilians are reported to have been killed in the Israeli offensive.

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

Other accusations of Israel claim that Israel is involved in systemic racism via an "Israeli apartheid".

Today in History

1099 - The First Crusade concluded with the Battle of Ascalon, and Fatimid forces under Al-Afdal Shahanshah retreating to Egypt.

1121 - Forces led by David the Builder decisively won the Battle of Didgori, driving Ilghazi and the Seljuk Turks out of Georgia.

1851 - Isaac Singer was granted a patent for his sewing machine.

1877 - Asaph Hall discovered Deimos, the smaller of the two moons of Mars.

1953 - History of nuclear weapons: The first Soviet thermonuclear bomb, Joe 4, was detonated at Semipalatinsk, Kazakh SSR.

August 12 is Mother's Day in Thailand; International Youth Day

Quote of the Day

"The world is given to me only once, not one existing and one perceived. Subject and object are only one. The barrier between them cannot be said to have broken down as a result of recent experience in the physical sciences, for this barrier does not exist." ~ Erwin Schrödinger

Word of the Day

malevolence; n

1. Evil disposition or hatred towards another; the intention to harm others.

2. Behaviour indicating spite and ill will.

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