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Counter-Terrorism Activities

Considering Terrorist Threat, Commission Urges Stronger Approach to Weapons of Mass Destruction

- A report released recently by the independent Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission chaired by former UN weapons inspector Hans Blix, recommends far-reaching initiatives to keep WMD out of the hands of terrorists around the world. The ultimate goal, according to the report, is the elimination of all WMD, including nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, and a strong international norm against their use. The report is described in further detail below, under “New Books.”

Three UN Security Council Anti-Terrorism Panels Attempt Coordination

- The chairs of three UN Security Council anti-terrorism panels, the first dealing with Al Qaida and the Taliban, the second dealing with counter-terrorism, and the third dealing with weapons of mass destruction, outlined their plans to improve their operations as well as their efforts at inter-panel coordination to the 15 Security Council members on May 30. Among the subjects broached at the meeting were streamlining national reporting procedures, coordinating country visits, improving the quality of the list of sanctioned individuals, improving communication between member states and committees, and strengthening the links between committees and global and regional bodies.

Penn State University Opens Terrorism Research Center

- On May 25, Penn State University officials announced the opening of a new terrorism research center on their campus. The center is supported by a consortium of universities both inside and outside the United States, and will draw on the expertise of scholars and practitioners from around the world. Topics to be studied include all aspects of terrorism, from the psychological causes of terrorism to its long-term effects on a society.

For more information: <http://www.centredaily.com/mld/centredaily/14665101.htm>

Malaysia Plans for Center to Fight Cyber-Terrorism

- Malaysia is preparing to open a new center to fight cyber-terrorism, called the International Multimedia Partnership Against Cyber-Terrorism (IMPACT). IMPACT intends to serve as a site for the interaction of government and industry around the world to share best practices, as well as for training in the latest technology. Its funding will come from various government and private sources, and it will be modeled after the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta.

Recent Events

- 8-12 May, 2006: Seminar for Prosecutors on Terrorism and Human Rights, CICTE/UNODC/Government of Spain, Cartagena de Indias – Colombia.
- 22-26 May, 2006: TSA Instructor Training in Grenada.
- 25-31 May, 2006: Association of Caribbean Chiefs of Police (ACCP) meeting, Aruba.
- 2-8 June, 2006: OAS General Assembly in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.
- 3-9 June, 2006: TSA National Development Program in Trinidad and Tobago.

Future Events

- 19-23 June, 2006: TSA National Development Program in St. Lucia.
- 19-23 June, 2006: FATF on Money Laundering Plenary in Paris, France.
- 22-24 June, 2006: Terrorism and Security Conference, Center on Law and Security at New York University School of Law, New York City.
- 11-13 July, 2006: Document Fraud Training in Miami, Florida.
- 13-14 July, 2006: Latin American Cargo and Border Security Summit in Miami, Florida.

Latest News

- After much recent speculation about “home-grown terrorists” and the possibility of a terrorist attack on Canadian soil, the **Canadian police arrested 17 Ontario residents on June 2 and 3 on charges of plotting to bomb Canadian targets.** FBI sources say that Canadian police and security officials identified the group last fall and proceeded to seek the cooperation of as many as six other countries to unravel the case. The group had acquired three tons of ammonium nitrate, which is more than was used in the Oklahoma City bombing, and all of its targets seem to have been located within Canada. Officials claim that some of the 12 men and 5 youths arrested had connections to the two United States residents arrested in Georgia in March, as well as to some of those responsible for the London bombings last summer. While the Ontarians arrested apparently follow Al Qaeda’s violent ideology, no actual links between the two groups have been established, and experts are now concerned that the next wave of terrorism will come from within, rather than from infiltration.

- **At a ceremony on May 26, Grenada deposited the instruments of ratification for the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism.** As the 18th member of the Organization of American States to do so, Grenada's action is especially significant because a majority of member states are now party to the convention. Secretary General José Miguel Insulza expressed the hope that other nations will follow suit, citing the considerable security benefits to those who do so. Grenada's Permanent Representative to the OAS, Ambassador Denis Antoine, emphasizes that his country "has taken its commitment seriously and [that it has] begun to put in place the legislation and all the necessary physical and institutional framework to ensure that Grenada remains a strong partner in the fight against terrorism."

For more information: <http://www.caribbeannetnews.com/cgi-script/csArticles/articles/000017/001771.htm>

- **In early May, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan recommended a new global strategy to fight terrorism, emphasizing the need for protective measures in the field of bioterrorism, and linking it to the fight against cyber crime.** It is hoped that his recommendations will lead to a new convention to supercede previous ones which are either too weak or not sufficiently comprehensive. While Mr. Annan did not attempt to define terrorism, a task that has stymied many, he did note the need for a balance between effective counter-terrorism measures, and a continued commitment to human rights and international humanitarian law.
- **The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is considering using satellite tracking of ships to combat terrorism.** For the new technology to be effective, however, nations would have to identify which cargo was potentially illicit, and which legitimate cargo could be dangerous if it fell into the wrong hands. Such knowledge is a requirement of the International Ship and Port Security code that was implemented in July 2004.

For more information: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L11756360.htm>

New Books

- Terror on the Internet: the New Arena, the New Challenges, by Gabriel Weimann. Weimann's book recounts the difference that new technology and access to the internet has made to the operations of terrorists. Adapting to the new fluidity of information flows, terrorist threats have become more dispersed and spontaneous, and the broadcasting power of the internet has allowed progress towards the creation of the pan-Islamic community that has been stymied elsewhere. Websites established by terrorist groups may have videos, downloadable posters, chat rooms, and may even take the form of online training academies. Terrorist activities can be coordinated through disguised chat rooms or coded messages. The power of the internet, however, can aid security and law enforcement agencies as well.

For more information: <http://www.washtimes.com/op-ed/20060522-101437-1668r.htm>

- Weapons of Terror: Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Arms, by the Weapons of Mass Destruction Committee. This comprehensive report, compiled by a commission of 15 luminaries in the field of international security, notes that while nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons have very different characteristics that dictate a distinct set of controls for each, they are similar in that they are the most inhumane of arms, and the current safeguards preventing their acquisition by terrorists are inadequate. To progress toward eventual elimination of these weapons and decrease the danger that they now pose, the report makes 60 detailed recommendations, among them the following: that WMD be securely stored, that universal adherence to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material be achieved, that implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1540 be promoted, that wealthier nations provide resources to help poorer nations implement UN Resolution 1540, that states conduct audits of their export control agencies to ensure effectiveness, and that the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention be fully and universally implemented. The report further emphasizes that WMD constitute a global problem for which a cooperative global approach is needed.

For more information: www.wmdcommission.org