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**Special Report for Alex Poole-Warren**

**Thursday, 09 October 2008**

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**US**

**North America Quarterly Terrorism Report**

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### **Executive Summary**

**Lone actors operating with little contact to global militant networks pose the greatest risk of carrying out attacks; foreign militants training in Pakistan pose a greater threat to US assets in Pakistani cities than to the US mainland in the next year.**

**While the number of attacks claimed by the Environmental Liberation Front (ELF) has fallen considerably, the overall number of similar attacks suggests that cells have simply stopped taking credit for attacks.**

**Though a vast majority of future Animal Liberation Front (ALF) attacks will not aim to cause injuries to humans, there is a growing risk of isolated violent attacks against researchers.**

**A poorly designed and executed alleged assassination attempt against Barack Obama demonstrates higher risk of political terrorism during the US elections; nonetheless, a successful assassination is**

**unlikely.**

**Compared with its competitors, Wal-Mart disproportionately suffers from bomb threats, leading to continued business interruption risks for the retailer.**

**Recently noted problems with port security initiatives are unlikely to improve.**

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### **20 Risk Relevant Terrorism Events since May 2008**

**20 Sep 08** In Farmington, Utah, several thousand mink were released from a farm; ALF recently took credit for a similar nearby August raid.

**18 Sep 08** In San Jose, California, several explosions occurred at a residence and cars were damaged; motorcycle gang ties are suspected.

**15 Sep 08** At the FBI's Puerto Rican headquarters, a woman fleeing police rammed her automobile through the front gate; she was arrested.

**09 Sep 08** Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff asserted that significant vulnerabilities still exist in aviation, despite progress.

**05 Sep 08** In Washington, D.C., police arrested a man after discovering weapons in his car near the Capitol.

**02 Sep 08** In and around Alger, Washington, a man shot several people and then led police on a highway chase; six died, including an officer.

**30 Aug 08** The Oregon state Capitol in Salem was damaged by fire; authorities began investigating it as a possible arson.

**25 Aug 08** FBI agents investigated possible threats against Barack Obama from a man detained with rifles in Denver near the DNC.

**13 Aug 08** In Little Rock, Arkansas, a man entered the state Democrats HQ and shot state

party Chairman Bill Gwatney; he later died.

**20 Jul 08** In Boone, North Carolina, a suspected bomb was found at a Wal-Mart; the bomb squad detonated the item.

**07 Jul 08** Government reports said that direct action by animal rights activists against research scientists has recently increased significantly.

**03 Jul 08** Experts reported a correlation between high foreclosure rates and increasing arson incidences in Ohio, Massachusetts and Nevada.

**30 Jun 08** A GAO report asserted that first response personnel lack sufficient gear and technology to respond to CBRN attacks.

**30 Jun 08** In Algonquin, Illinois, federal agents arrested a man who ordered sufficient amounts of tetrodotoxin to kill 100 people.

**19 Jun 08** In Talladega, Alabama, authorities destroyed over 200 grenades belonging to the Alabama Free Militia, a right-wing group.

**14 Jun 08** Six city officials in Chicago received suspicious packages containing white powder over a week.

**10 Jun 08** In Edmond, Oklahoma, military explosives were discovered at a residence; the bomb squad removed and detonated 15 devices.

**08 Jun 08** In Austin, Texas, the governor's mansion was severely damaged by fire; investigators believe the fire was arson.

**05 Jun 08** Proceedings in the trial of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and four alleged 9/11 conspirators began; Mohammed said he seeks martyrdom.

**03 Jun 08** Christopher Paul, a member of the Ohio al-Qaeda cell, pleaded guilty in court to planning to use a WMD against the US.

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## **Detailed Analysis**

### **I. Jihadi Terrorism**

**Lone actors operating with little contact to global militant networks pose the greatest risk of carrying out attacks; foreign militants training in Pakistan will pose a greater threat to US assets in Pakistani cities than to the US mainland in the next year.**

The part of al-Qaeda that can be described as a structured organisation is focused on supporting the Afghan insurgency and maintaining a network of camps of safe houses in Afghanistan and Pakistan's North West Frontier Province that allow it to do so. It likely has very little energy or finances available to carry out an attack on US soil and what energy it does have is focused on producing online media aimed to inspire self-radicalised groups around the world to launch attacks in al-Qaeda's name. Self-radicalised Western nationals (with Western European nationalities more prevalent than North American ones) are travelling to the border areas to participate in camp training and to do so are working with allied groups such as the Uzbek Islamic Jihad Union.

We assess that in Pakistan foreign fighters travelling to Pakistan al-Qaeda are unlikely to have access to more than 150 training sites. Only a small minority of these jihadi camps are run exclusively by al-Qaeda, according to our sources, and less than two dozen have any permanent structures such as barracks. Most are tents, village shooting areas or safe houses. The extent of 'training' is likely limited to explosives training, small arms firing and basic fitness with little in the way of counter surveillance or group leadership training (as indicated by trial testimonies and video footage publicising insurgent training). Fighters likely move every few weeks. Given this assessment it is unlikely that recent media reports of 8,000 foreign fighters 'tied to al-Qaeda' are accurate insofar as they refer to Western nationals. It is more likely that the majority of such a number would include exiled groups staying for extended periods in the region, such as Chechen and Uzbek groups. The

head of the Bundeskriminalamt, the German equivalent of the FBI, recently said 50 individuals living in Germany had received training at camps run by al-Qaida, the Taliban or the Islamic Jihad Union, and that some had recently returned to Germany. Nonetheless, these individuals are likely to be closely watched by German authorities and it appears the training that they received was rudimentary. Indicators of a change in the status quo in this area would be any signs in the US administration that a deal was being made with Pakistani tribesmen similar to the Sunni 'Awakening' movement fostered in Iraq. An increasing number of fights between tribal lashkars and foreign fighters would be a secondary indicator. These events, however, would raise risks to US assets in Pakistani cities, as some foreign fighters would seek the relative security of the vast suburbs of Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad. It is possible that some foreign fighters would support the Tehreek-e-Taliban group in order to maintain their security in the area.

In 2008, the US and its allies have had some success in countering al-Qaeda's message to supporters worldwide, though not yet replacing it with an alternate convincing narrative of their own. Public denunciations of formerly influential ideologues such as the imprisoned head of Egyptian Islamic Jihad Sayyid Imam al Sharif are useful public relations coups for the anti-al-Qaeda message, but the inclination for insurgent groups and their volunteers to obey ideologues is limited. The flourishing of al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia happened in spite of the public doubts of its sectarian tactics, especially of those expressed by ideologues such as Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi and Ayman al-Zawahiri. Of greater significance is an apparent reduction in the frequency of video publication by as-Sahab, al-Qaeda's media brand, during the summer of 2008 including a brief return to an old practice of delivering messages to media stations via courier. This points to some disruption of their operations in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The publication of al-Zawahiri's answers to 'questions' submitted via password-protected forums in February 2008, though likely heavily vetted, also demonstrated that as-Sahab was concerned that the organisation was not perceived to be living up

to its goals.

Senior US intelligence officials have stated that there has been a new influx of Western recruits in 2008, including Americans, receiving training at al-Qaeda camps in Pakistan. It is likely to be the networking with organised militant groups that has the most direct impact on their intent and capability, rather than the specifics of camp training, and if and when the al-Qaeda organisation in the tribal areas ceases to function effectively we expect these recruits to maintain these contacts. Yet, as the enterprise in Afghanistan is still going strong we do not assess that the threat posed by returnees from the tribal areas is imminent. In fact, most of the groups that have been arrested in North America (the last of which was a group of individuals arrested in Spring/Summer 2007, which were tied to a plot to target pipelines at JFK airport as well as at a pair of US military bases) do not show the same history of travel their Western European militants do. Even in the UK three recent arrested suspects showed no such travel inclination. In the most recent incident on 22 May 2008, a British convert to Islam, Nicky Reilly, staged a failed bomb attack on a restaurant in Exeter; another convert, Andrew Ibrahim, was arrested with explosives in Bristol on 17 April 2008. A third man, Hassan Tabbakh, of Syrian origin, was arrested in December 2007 in Birmingham for attempting, most likely on his own, to make bottle bombs from liquid fertiliser. Over the next year or two lone operatives acting without or on the very fringes of larger, more easily monitored networks, pose the most significant risk of actually carrying out an attack. The scale of a successful attack would be most likely moderate or small, more on the scale of a car or pipe bombing than the 7 July bomb attacks.

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## **II. Environmental Terrorism**

**While the number of attacks claimed by the Environmental Liberation Front (ELF) has fallen considerably, the overall number of similar attacks suggests that cells have simply stopped taking credit.**

There have been 15 attacks claimed by the ELF since 2005, far fewer than the 42 attacks the group claimed during the three-year period 2002-2004. Much of this decrease can be attributed the FBI's 2005-2006 sting entitled Operation Backfire, when over 18 prominent ELF members were arrested. Nonetheless, it also appears that ELF cells have changed tactics, as it now appears that the level of ELF-type attacks is higher than the number acknowledged, suggesting simply that cells do not always take credit for their actions. For example, though the number of ELF-claimed attacks on car dealerships and large sport utility vehicles (SUV's) has decreased over the past five years (two since 2006), the number of total attacks resembling previous ELF attacks remains significant (eight since 2006), suggesting that ELF affiliates are carrying out these attacks without identifying themselves.

### **ELF Targets**

We have also looked into past events to determine which type of targets the ELF typically attacks. Without a doubt, the ELF's most popular targets have been vehicles (most often SUVs) and private residences (particularly larger, newly-constructed homes). This target set has remained stable over the last 10 years, with SUVs figuring largely as the most frequent and consistent target. Second were private residences (usually under construction or abandoned), while third were commercial construction sites.

### **Locations Attacked by ELF**

The regions with the highest frequencies of attacks by the ELF were the West (39%) and South (20%), with California, Washington, Virginia and Pennsylvania being the states with the highest number of attacks. The regions with the fewest attacks were New England (9%), the Midwest (8%) and the Mountain West (5%).

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### **III. Animal Liberation Front (ALF)**

**Though a vast majority of future ALF attacks will not aim to cause injuries to humans, there is a growing risk of isolated violent**

## **attacks against researchers.**

On 4 August, a cell affiliated with the ALF set fire to a home and car of two animal-science researchers from the University of California Santa Cruz. One researcher's family was in the building at the time and had to escape from a second story window. Such a violent attack is rare for cells claiming to be a part of the ALF, as the ALF's policy of 'no harm' to animals explicitly includes humans and provides a significant ideological barrier to such campaigns. Moreover, there is weak (though not nil) precedent for such attempts, the most prominent being an early letter bomb campaign targeting politicians in Britain in 1982 and a single violent axe-handle attack on the director of a UK animal testing facility in 2001. Indeed, both ALF ideology and the track record of previous ALF terrorist incidents indicate a low probability of the ALF movement as a whole moving towards the sustained targeting of individuals with intentional deadly violence.

However, there is a growing philosophical challenge to the ALF policy of non-violence within a minority of the ALF's ranks that resulted in individual cells that are willing to tolerate human death as acceptable collateral damage in a campaign perceived in terms of counter-genocide. The concepts of 'new abolition' and 'extensional self defence' have been promulgated within ALF circles as an ethical justification for extra-legal targeted violence against individuals on behalf of animals deemed incapable of defending themselves. This philosophical shift is saliently displayed by the pronouncements of Jerry Vlasak, the founder and Press Officer for the North American Animal Liberation Press Office, who has publicly advocated the murder of vivisectionists as a pragmatic strategy for saving the lives of millions of animals. Though measuring support for either ideological position is difficult due to the diffuse structure of the organisation, evidence of this philosophical debate within the ALF -- as well as its practical ramifications -- can be seen in two recent attacks on the home of UCLA professor Edythe London. In October 2007, in the first of two attacks, the flooding of Professor London's home was followed with a message that stated the principle of 'do no

harm' stopped those responsible from implementing their 'first choice' of using an incendiary device. Four months later, a firebomb was placed on London's doorstep. Since the attack Professor London has stopped her animal research.

Indeed, these attacks highlight a high probability that the ALF will increasingly target individuals. First, the perceived success of this technique during the Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty campaign has created a recent and international precedent for this behaviour. Second, the internet has made it exponentially easier to disseminate propaganda as well as the specific home address information of individual scientists involved in animal testing and is already being exploited for this purpose. The majority of this risk will involve -- and indeed already has -- simple non-violent 'name and shame' campaigns and the use of threats and other low-violence harassment such as the poisoning of home lawns, vandalism, threatening letters, and masked doorstep protests. However, the August 4 attacks indicate an increased risk of deadly violence as well. There is a high likelihood that the August 4th attacks were conducted by the same group responsible for previous attacks against University of California professors in 2006 and 2007. There is also a significant risk that this cell has increased its technical proficiency since the previous attempted incendiary attacks failed and that it has moved towards embracing a more violent ideology that accepts human fatalities as 'collateral damage' in a broader moral war.

### **PETA Lists**

In June 2008, the group called People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) announced its list of the 10 worst offending institutions conducting animal testing. On the same day, they released a list of the 10 worst CEO's involved in the support of animal testing. Though PETA itself does not advocate violence, many associated with the animal rights movement, including those in the Animal Liberation Front, read PETA publications and would be more inclined to target listed entities. Accordingly, these universities and companies are at a significantly higher risk of

terrorism than those not listed.

**Universities listed include:**

- 1) The University of Wisconsin-Madison
- 2) Emory University (Atlanta, Georgia)
- 3) The University of California at San Francisco
- 4) The University of California-Davis
- 5) Tulane University (New Orleans, Louisiana)
- 6) Harvard University (Boston, Massachusetts)
- 7) Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, Maryland)
- 8) Oregon Health & Science University (Portland, Oregon)
- 9) The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 10) Columbia University (New York, New York)

**PETA Top Ten Targeted CEOs**

1. Covance  
Joseph L. Herring, CEO  
Covance  
210 Carnegie Ctr.  
Princeton, NJ 08540
2. Charles River Laboratories  
James C. Foster, CEO  
Charles River Laboratories  
251 Ballardvale St.  
Wilmington, MA 01887-1000
3. Wyeth  
Robert Essner, CEO  
Wyeth  
5 Giralda Farms  
Madison, NJ 07940-0874
4. Merck  
Richard T. Clark, CEO  
Merck  
1 Merck Dr.  
Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889-0100
5. Huntingdon Life Sciences Inc.  
Andrew H. Baker, CEO  
Huntingdon Life Sciences Inc.  
Mettlers Road  
East Millstone, NJ 08875-2360
6. Shin Nippon Biomedical Laboratories USA, Ltd  
Ryoichi Nagata, CEO

SNBL USA, Ltd.  
6605 Merrill Creek Parkway  
Everett, WA 98203

7. Boehringer Ingelheim Corp.  
Rich Pilnik, President  
Boehringer Ingelheim Corp.  
900 Ridgebury Rd.  
Ridgefield, CT 06877

8. Novartis Corporation  
Paulo Costa, CEO  
Novartis Corporation  
608 Fifth Ave.  
New York, NY 10020

9. The Jackson Laboratory  
Richard P. Woychik, CEO  
The Jackson Laboratory  
600 Main St.  
Bar Harbor, ME 04609

10. Pfizer  
Jeffrey B. Kindler, CEO  
Pfizer  
235 E. 42nd St.  
New York, NY 10017-5755

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#### **IV. Other Trends in Political Terrorism**

**A poorly designed and executed alleged assassination attempt against Barack Obama demonstrates higher risk of political terrorism; nonetheless, a successful assassination is unlikely.**

On 25 August, police arrested four individuals over an alleged plot to assassinate Democratic Presidential candidate Barack Obama in Denver, Colorado, at the party's national convention. At least three of the individuals were affiliated with the Aryan Nations, a white supremacist group. Police report that the group planned to shoot Obama while he was giving his acceptance speech at an outdoor American football stadium. Though the group had acquired high-powered rifles, spotting scopes, walkie-talkies and ammunition, it does not appear the group had the necessary intelligence in order to succeed.

Indeed, police believe the group did not represent a credible threat to the candidate. Nonetheless, such an act does demonstrate the heightened risk of political terrorism in the 2008. Already, on 13 August, Arkansas Democratic Party Chairman Bill Gwatney was assassinated. Nonetheless, we assess that robust security measures and a historically low incidence rate indicate an overall low probability of a successful violent domestic terrorist incident targeting the candidates or major events of the 2008 US presidential campaign. Though the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy during the 1968 primaries offers a precedent for such an attack, his lack of Secret Service protection greatly contributed to the outcome. Today, both candidates have a Secret Service security detail that greatly mitigates the risk of assassination. Unlike Aryan Nations' plot, most previous assassination attempts, such as those on the lives of Ford, Reagan and George W. Bush, violent threats during this campaign season have typically come from lone individuals with psychological problems rather than politically motivated groups or individuals. In the most prominent example from this campaign, a Louisiana University student was charged with terrorising and held on \$1 million bail after threatening to kill Hillary Clinton at a scheduled talk in Baton Rouge. Campaign offices remain a soft target for those wishing to indirectly attack a candidate. Weak security at these facilities allowed one man wielding a knife and another with a fake bomb to enter into Clinton campaign offices in Iowa and New Hampshire, respectively, and there is a moderate risk that similar events or pipe bomb attacks may take place prior to the election.

There is also a low probability of either a planned or successfully executed violent terrorist attack targeting a presidential campaign event. Yet, as campaign events are usually only announced days before their occurrence, al-Qaeda would not have the luxury of its normal long-term surveillance of its intended targets. As a result, the group is less likely to stage such an attack. More likely would be an attack by an independent group or lone actor, but it is unlikely that they would have the capabilities to be able to overcome the heavy security surrounding such events. However, there is a moderate risk of

cyber-terrorism directed at the websites or the individual candidates or political parties. Other potential terrorist targets include less secure political events associated with Congressional races or local contests.

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## **V. Targeting Wal-Mart**

**Compared with its competitors, Wal-Mart disproportionately suffers from bomb threats, leading to continued business disruption risks for the retailer.**

Wal-Mart stores in the United States received 35 bomb threats over the one-year period from June 07 to June 08. These threats were geographically distributed across the country, though fewer threats were received on the East and West coasts, especially threats per capita. Explosives were not found in any case save two in 2008, one in Christi, Texas, when an individual threw a fire bomb at a Wal-Mart, and another in Boone, North Carolina when police discovered a pipe bomb. Neither case resulted in an actual explosion.

Threats against Wal-Mart proportionately outweigh those against similar discount retailers such as Target and Kmart, which each received three bomb threats over the same period. Wal-Mart has approximately 3,500 stores in the United States, while Target and Kmart have 1,600 and 1,400 stores, respectively; the ratio of attacks to stores is much higher for Wal-Mart (1/100) than for Target (1/530) or Kmart (1/460). As such, though as America's largest private employer one would expect Wal-Mart to be a more frequent target of bomb threats, it also receives proportionately more threats than other stores.

### **Causes**

Wal-Mart has received public criticism for several issues in the past few years, including employee healthcare and labour standards, its non-unionised status, gender and immigrant issues, etc., as well as a protracted campaign by anti-globalisation groups and local residents attempting to block development. There are also

several anti-Wal-Mart websites, including Against the Wal and Wal-Mart Watch. However, unlike protest groups for other issues (such as the animal rights and environmental movements), these organisations do not take credit for the threats, nor do they make particular mention of them on their websites. There does not appear to be any organised, violent group targeting Wal-Mart stores, as the pattern might suggest.

Indeed, it is often difficult to discern the motivation behind the threats, which is not usually known or reported. Causes could include disgruntled current or former employees (protesting about any number of grievances, including those listed above), employees wishing to avoid work by closing the store, juvenile pranks, etc. In August 2007, the FBI uncovered a scam in which more than 25 stores in 17 states received a string of bomb threats demanding that money be wired to an overseas account; these included several Wal-Mart stores, one of which (Newport, RI) was one of the only stores to comply with the monetary demands. Though no subsequent bomb threats have been used as an instrument of monetary extortion, the cases from August 2007 suggest that there are risks of losses from similar kinds of plots in the future.

## **Risks**

Regardless of the cause, these bomb threats represent a serious and tangible risk to business disruption for Wal-Mart stores, one that appears widespread if not systematic. They pose several potential risks, the most extreme of which is that the threat is credible and viable explosives are found. If they are detonated, resultant damages could include property damage, loss of life and potential lawsuits. Even if explosives are found and disarmed, consumer confidence will be shaken and the incident would likely bring to the forefront the extensive history of bomb threats against Wal-Mart stores. The damages any one particular store would pale in comparison to the ensuing loss of customers and revenue nationwide.

Even in cases where no explosives are found, in almost all cases the store is evacuated and shut down, sometimes for several hours, while law

enforcement officials search the premises. Each Wal-Mart store makes an average of \$200,000/day; any disruption to the course of business, therefore, can cost Wal-Mart significant operating revenue, especially given the number of threats that occur each year. There is also an increased potential for theft during evacuations, as well as the possibility that nearby businesses will be affected by the threat.

Finally, the company exposes itself to litigation risks in those instances where the store is not fully evacuated, such as at a store in Canada which allegedly forced employees to help search for suspicious packages, or in cases where customers are not evacuated but the threat turns out to be credible.

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## **VI. Counter-terrorism Activities**

### **Recently noted problems with port security initiatives are unlikely to improve.**

Improvement in the security of American ports has continued to lag, as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) does not have the data to measure the effectiveness of its own initiatives nor the workforce to fully implement them. These challenges facing DHS port security efforts were highlighted, among others, in a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report from May that surveyed the Secure Freight Initiative, the cornerstone of the DHS security strategy. This initiative aims to pre-screen US-bound cargo through radiation detection and inspection of high-risk cargo at foreign ports, and it includes the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) in which members of the international trade community submit security plans to US Customs and Border Protection that must meet its minimum standards. In exchange for submitting these plans, the almost 8,000 participating companies are allowed reduced scrutiny of their cargo. Because these programmes suffer from a lack of knowledge of other countries' cargo inspection programmes and the absence of thorough review of C-TPAT participants' security plans due to a lack of trained inspectors, the real impact of these

programmes on increasing port security is unclear. In addition, the radiation detection programme has faced technological complications, including mechanical failures and a lack of adequate infrastructure at multiple foreign ports. Further complicating the realisation of heightened port security are disagreements over cargo screening, which have pitted Congress against DHS. In the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, Congress mandated 100% scanning of US-bound containers by 1 July 2012. DHS, however, claims that this goal is unfeasible and prefers to focus its efforts on 'high-risk trade corridors'. In response, House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Thompson earlier this month requested that DHS Secretary Chertoff report on the steps DHS is taking to meet the 2012 deadline. Nevertheless, this current debate and other setbacks will hinder the ability to improve upon the Secure Freight Initiative in the near term.

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