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Federal Bureau of Investigation
Intelligence
ASSESSMENT

(U) The Terrorist Threat to the US Homeland: An FBI Assessment

April 15, 2004

Prepared by

FBI
Counterterrorism
Division

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Derived from: Multiple Sources
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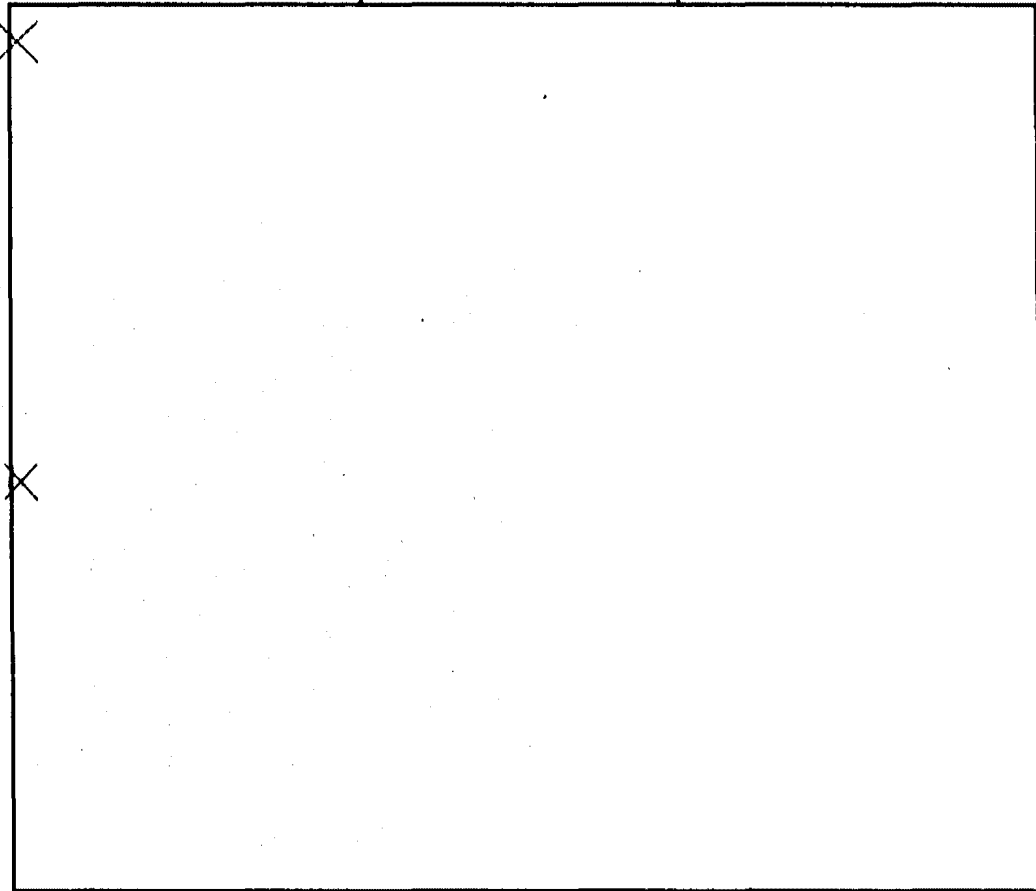
(U) ANNEX:

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~~(S)~~ 1. *Terrorist Group*



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(U) KEY JUDGMENTS

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~~(S//NF)~~ Al-Qa'ida and its affiliated groups remain the Intelligence Community's top concern and as such its counterterrorism efforts remain focused on the possibilities that these groups may inflict significant casualties in the US with little or no warning.

- We judge that al-Qa'ida and its militant Islamic cohorts will tenaciously pursue a follow-on attack against the Homeland, as evidenced by their continued attacks against US and Allied interests overseas.

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~~(S//NF)~~ Our investigations reveal extensive support for terrorist causes in the US.

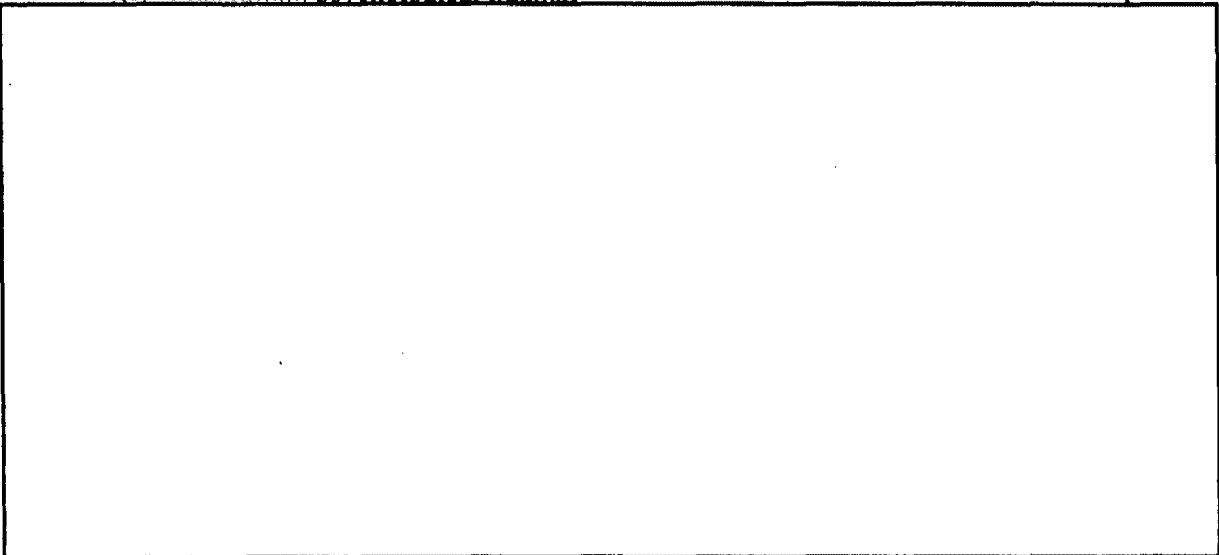
- The activities of these subjects in the US center on fundraising, recruitment, or training. We have found little evidence that these groups and individuals are actively engaged in planning or carrying out a terrorist attack. However, these supporters could possibly be used to assist operatives in the US if they are called upon.
- Recent sensitive reporting indicates that al-Qa'ida senior planners overseas may have sent or may be planning to send operatives to the US to conduct terrorist operations. The extensive network already in place inside the US used to facilitate fundraising, recruitment and training for terrorist groups may play a key role in assisting any operatives sent to the US to plan or conduct operations in CONUS.

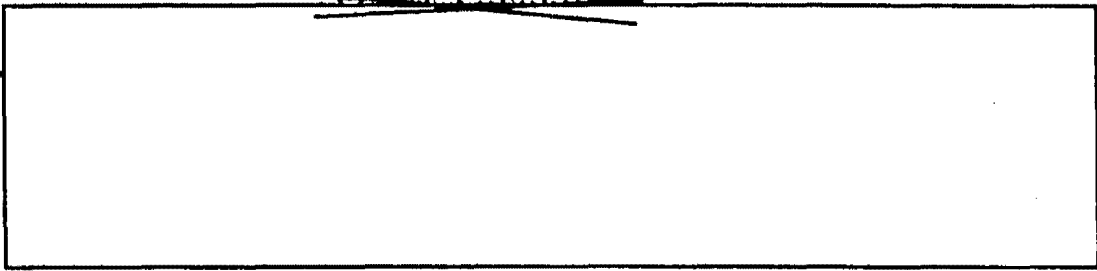
~~(S//NF)~~ Al-Qa'ida leadership will probably continue to favor spectacular Homeland attacks that meet several criteria: high symbolism, mass casualties, severe economic damage, or maximum psychological trauma

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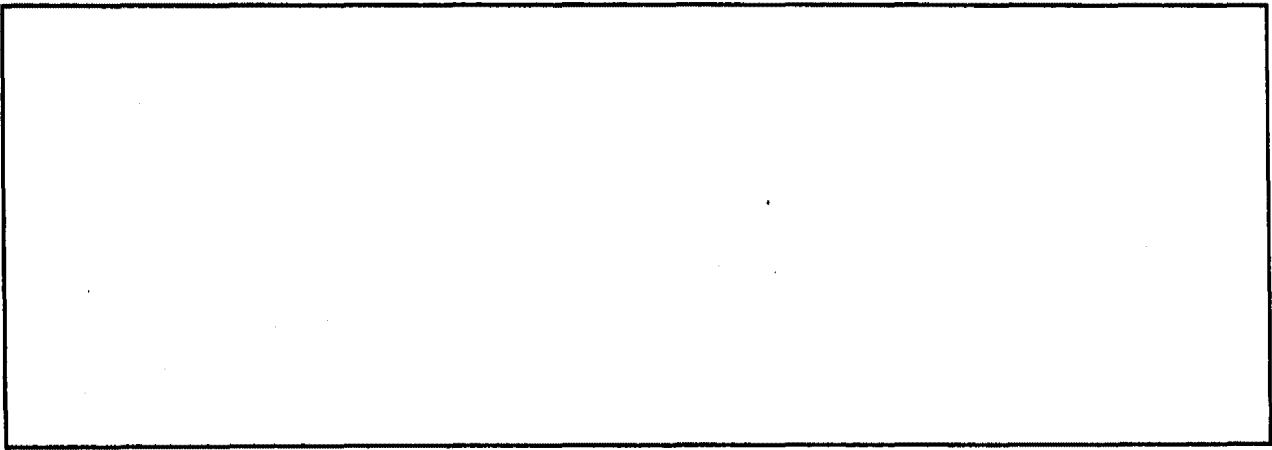


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~~(S/NF)~~ The threat of domestic terrorists launching large-scale, mass casualty attacks is low compared with that of international terrorist groups, in part due to longstanding law enforcement efforts against many of these groups.

- Loosely affiliated terrorists and lone actors continue to pose a threat to the Homeland. This threat is inherently difficult to interdict, given the anonymity of individuals that frequently act independently in support of a larger cause.

-  for domestic terrorists and criminals.

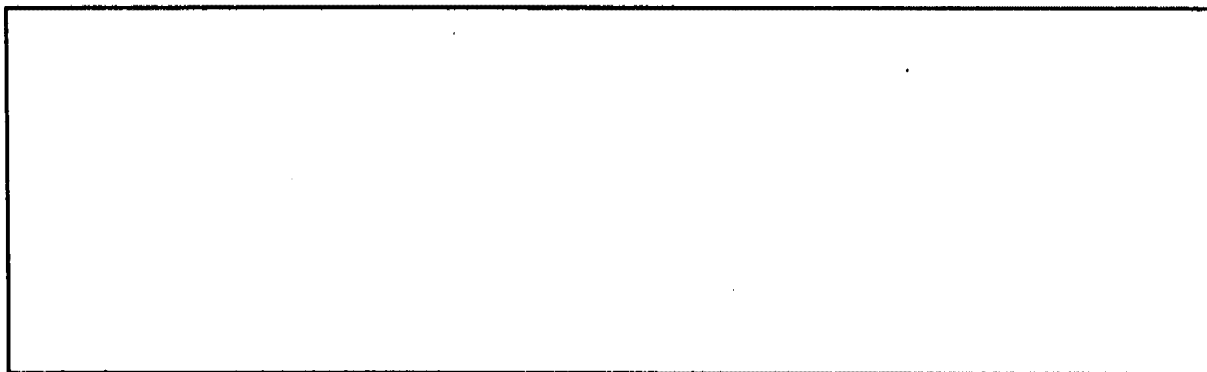


- Recent source reporting indicates that al-Qa'ida may be planning 9/11 type attack in the United States possibly to disrupt the 2004 Presidential Elections. The operatives sought for this attack are reported to be non-Arabs and may be already in the United States.

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~~(S/NF)~~ While we remain concerned about the threat from sleeper cells/operatives already present in the US, sensitive intelligence also indicates that al-Qa'ida may still be attempting to launch its attacks against the Homeland from overseas, and that using aircraft as weapons may remain a favored tactic.

- Sensitive, but uncorroborated reporting in December 2003 suggested that al-Qa'ida was interested in targeting specific international flights arriving in major US cities.
- While not directed at the Homeland, the Heathrow plot to use hijacked planes against UK targets was uncovered and halted in 2003.

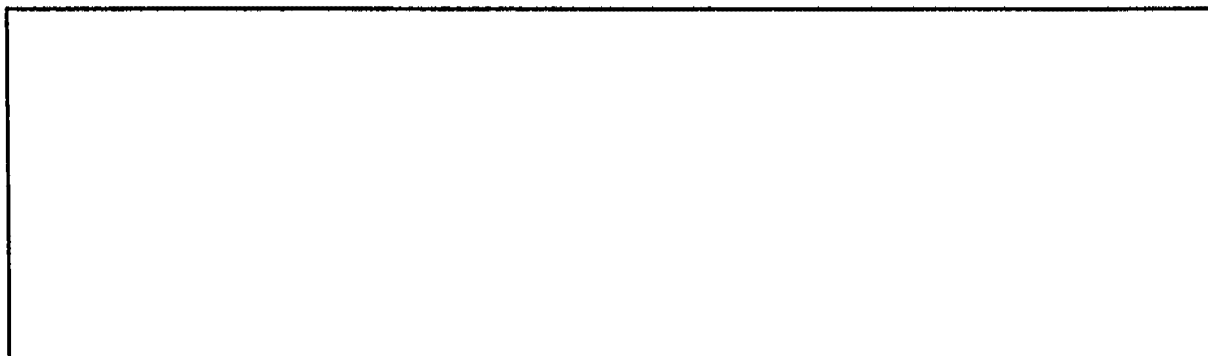


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~~(S/NF)~~ As stated above, the US and its Allies have had considerable success over the past two years in negatively impacting al-Qa'ida's command and control structure and methods of operation. Nevertheless, in addition to al-Qa'ida's demonstrated tactical adaptability, its members' motivation and commitment to lethality remains as strong as ever, and therefore we assess that the level of threat has not diminished.

- With apparently extremely limited contact with its top leaders, Usama Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qa'ida appears to have become more decentralized, to include a diffuse network of smaller, operationally discrete organizations.

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II. (U) Sunni Extremist Presence in the United States

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~~(S/NF)~~ Within the United States, we have detected numerous individuals who may be al-Qa'ida associates and/or Sunni extremists [redacted]

[redacted]

- Few groups or individuals in the United States have direct connections to senior al-Qa'ida leadership and/or networks. Of the US residents identified who have had contact with overseas al-Qa'ida members involved in operations, the possible operational preparations uncovered were relatively disorganized and appeared to be in the nascent stages of planning.
- The vast majority of US extremist activity appears to center on support such as training, fundraising, recruitment, and propaganda. Most of these activities are overt, which increases the possibility of attracting the attention of law enforcement, and reduces the likelihood of involvement in actual attacks [redacted]

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[redacted]

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~~(S/NF)~~ The threat from sympathetic individuals, acting alone or on behalf of a jihadist group and/or cause, will remain a concern for the foreseeable future due to the unpopularity of the US military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and increasingly vitriolic rhetoric amongst Islamic extremist group leaders, rogue clerics, and other jihadists.

[redacted]

(U) SECTION 3

(U) Domestic Terrorism

(U) Domestic Terrorist (DT) groups are characterized as right wing, left wing, or single issue/special interest extremists who are based and operate solely within the US and its territories. In addition to organized groups and loosely affiliated movements, lone offenders or sympathetic individuals will continue to remain a threat for the foreseeable future.

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~~(S)~~ **I. Right-Wing Extremists:** These groups adhere to a variety of ideologies and motivations, but they commonly espouse some form of antigovernment sentiment and/or racist philosophies. Right wing terrorists pose a significant threat due to their propensity for violence. The past several years have seen decreasing violence from these groups, and this may be attributed to a combination of internal turmoil and increased law enforcement scrutiny. However, many groups have increased their rhetoric and recruitment efforts since September 11.

A. (U) White Supremacists believe in racial purity and/or the need to create an "Aryan homeland" in the US. The white supremacy movement is extremely diverse and includes groups such as the National Alliance, Aryan Nations, the World Church of the Creator, White Revolution, Hammerskin Nation, and various Ku Klux Klan (KKK) groups.

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~~(S)~~ Many white supremacists have interpreted the September 11 attacks as being directly connected to close US ties to Israel. White supremacist groups, such as the National Alliance and the World Church of the Creator, also exploit racial divisions and anti-immigration sentiment to boost recruitment.

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~~(S)~~ We assess white supremacist groups do not have the ability to plan, coordinate, and execute large-scale attacks in the Homeland; therefore, terrorist plots will likely continue to be sporadic and relatively small in scope.



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B. (U) Militias adhere, in varying degrees, to a number of extremist beliefs; however, the emphasis on the right to bear arms separates them from other right-wing groups. Militias frequently conduct or engage in paramilitary training, and many believe that citizenry must remain armed to thwart the "New World Order" (a conspiracy theory, which holds that one day the UN will lead a military coup against the nations of the world to form a socialist "One World Government").

- Our investigations indicate that the militia movement is in a state of decline. Although their capabilities cannot be discounted, we assess militias are currently unlikely to engage in acts of terrorism.

- Our intelligence indicates the continued development of formalized anarchist groups. For example, the Anarchist Black Cross Federation/Tactical Defense Caucus (ABCF/TDC) has emerged as a prominent and potentially violent anarchist group. The ABCF/TDC is a revolutionary anticapitalist group whose goals include the "abolition of prisons, the system of laws, and the Capitalist State."

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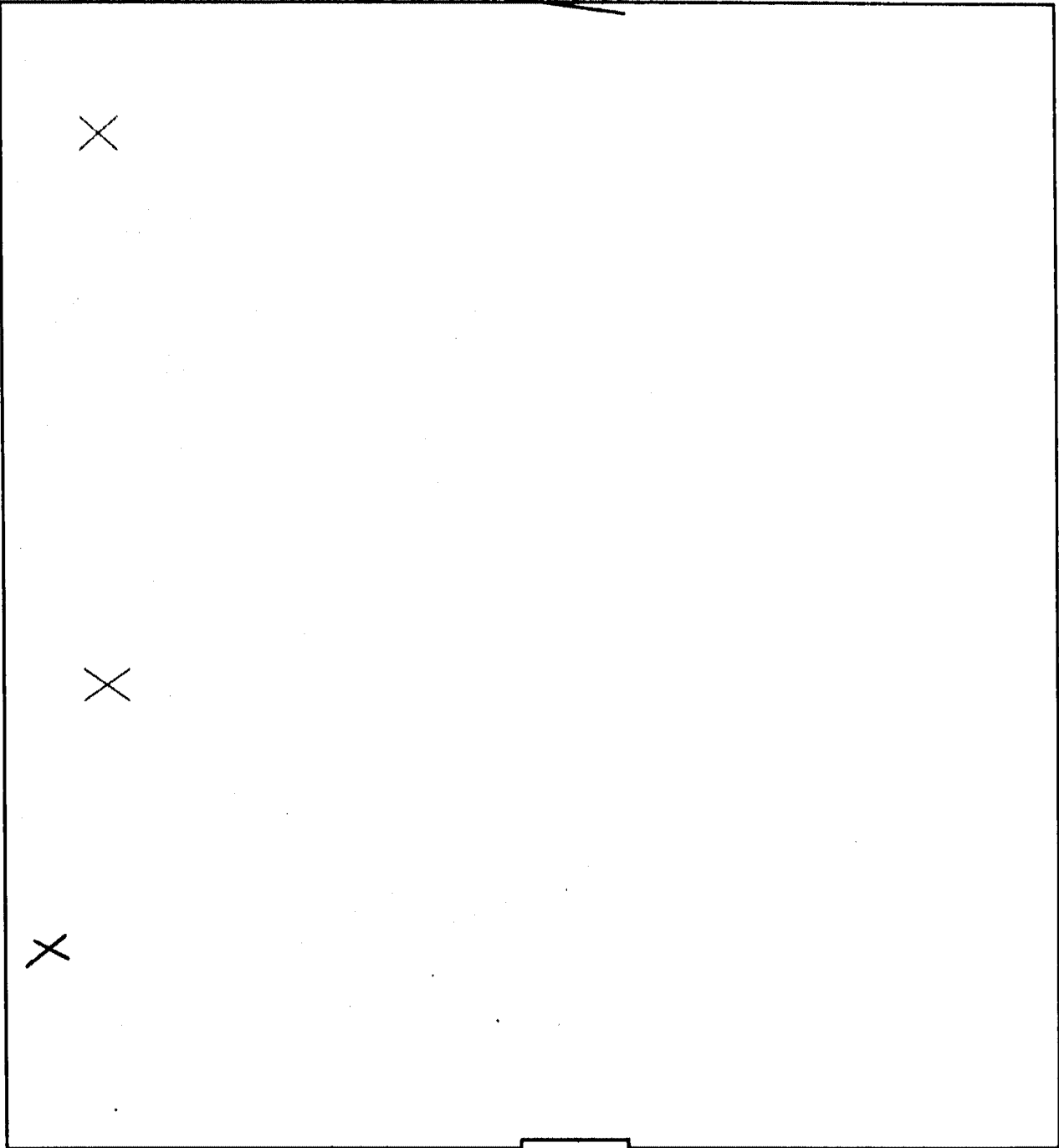
IV. ~~(C)~~ Single-Issue Groups: Adherents seek to change policies related to a specific issue rather than causing sweeping social changes. These groups are our most active domestic terrorist threat, and we assess they will continue to engage in increasingly violent activities.

A. (U) Animal Rights Groups/Eco-Terrorists conduct sabotage, vandalism, or other criminal acts in furtherance of animal "liberation" or environmental protection. We have launched hundreds of criminal investigations into incidents of arson, theft, and vandalism, which have resulted in millions of dollars in property damage, increased security costs, loss of revenue, and setbacks in laboratory research.

- Animal rights/eco-terrorists typically claim affiliation with the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), Earth Liberation Front (ELF), or other clandestine movements. Attacks are often preceded by surveillance and often use improvised devices built from instructions posted on movement websites.
- Eco-terrorists have escalated their violent rhetoric and tactics, and last August's ELF-related arson of a partially built condominium complex in California resulted in \$30 - 50 million in damages.
- Similarly, animal rights extremists have escalated their actions against Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS), a scientific research laboratory. Activists affiliated with Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) have engaged in a sustained campaign (including bombings and vandalism) targeting HLS's financial structure, including insurers, market makers, suppliers, and other business partners.

B. (U) Antiabortion Extremists represent a small minority of the overall antiabortion movement. Medical personnel who perform or assist in abortions, as well as reproductive health care facilities, will remain primary targets. Additional targets may include individuals, such as pro-choice activists, who may be viewed as opponents.

C. (U) Hacktivists are hacker groups focused on social and political change. These groups are emerging internationally and domestically. Most hacktivist groups are short-lived and are focused on propaganda rather than serious damages. However, some groups are well organized. Hacktivist groups are either issue oriented, such as the New Age Extremists and Electro Hippies who protest against globalization, or politically motivated, such as pro-Beijing Chinese nationalists, pro-Serbian groups, and hacktivists reacting to Israeli-Palestinian groups.



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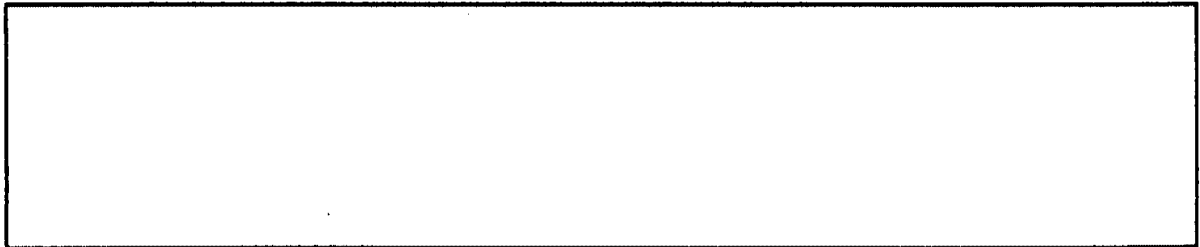
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- A member of the al-Zarqawi network fled [redacted] after his involvement in the assassination of US diplomat Laurence Foley.

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(U) SECTION 5

(U) ~~(S//NF)~~ Islamic Extremist Terrorism Trends

(S//NF) [Redacted]

(U) ~~(S//NF)~~ The Intelligence Community assesses that al-Qa'ida has a penchant for revisiting past targets and will favor spectacular attacks that meet several of the following criteria: high symbolic value, mass casualties, severe damage to the US economy, and maximum psychological trauma. [Redacted]

(S) [Redacted]

(U) I. ~~(S//NF)~~ Tactical Trends of Al-Qa'ida & Other Extremists

(U) A. ~~(S//NF)~~ Commitment to Aircraft as Weapons

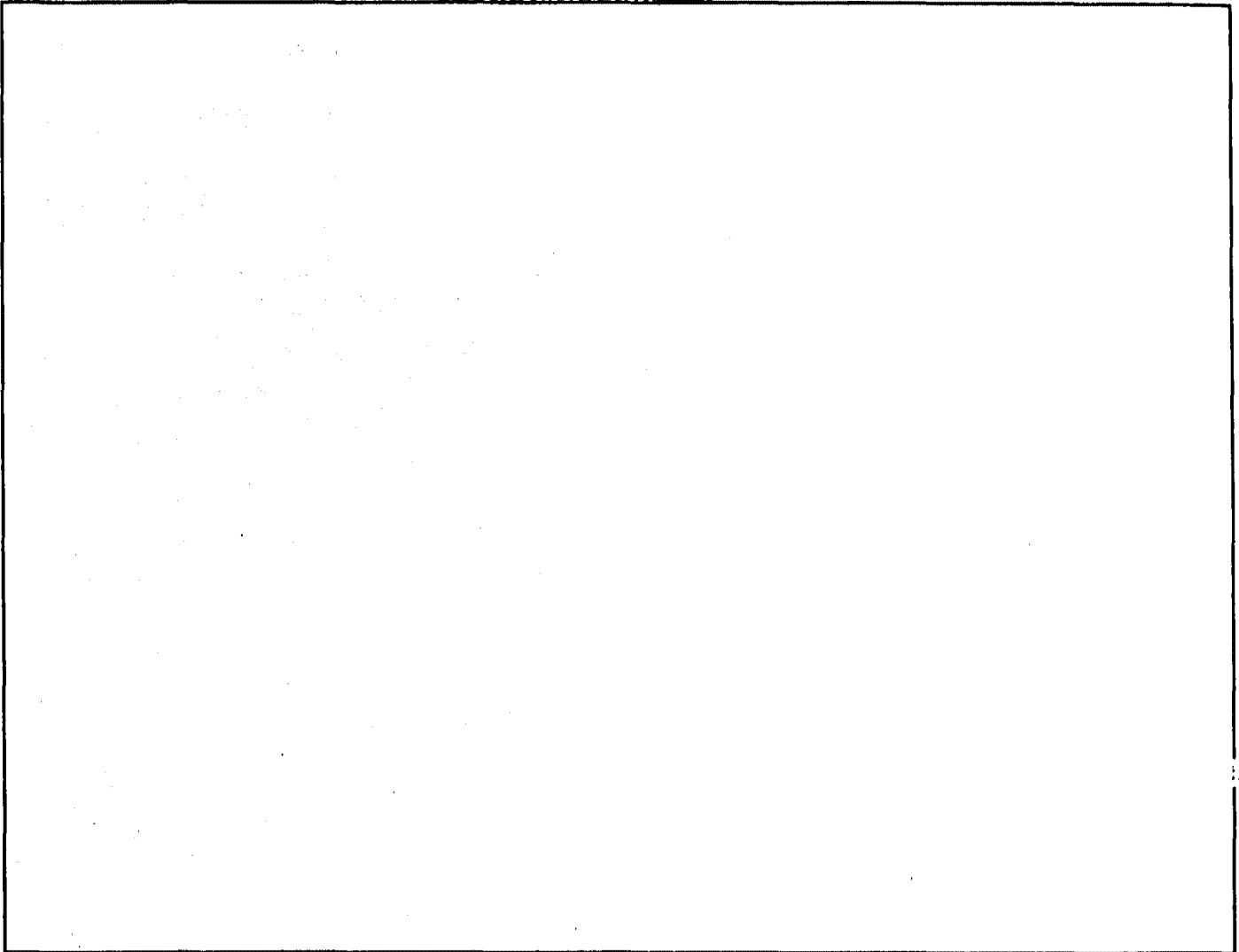
(S//NF) [Redacted]

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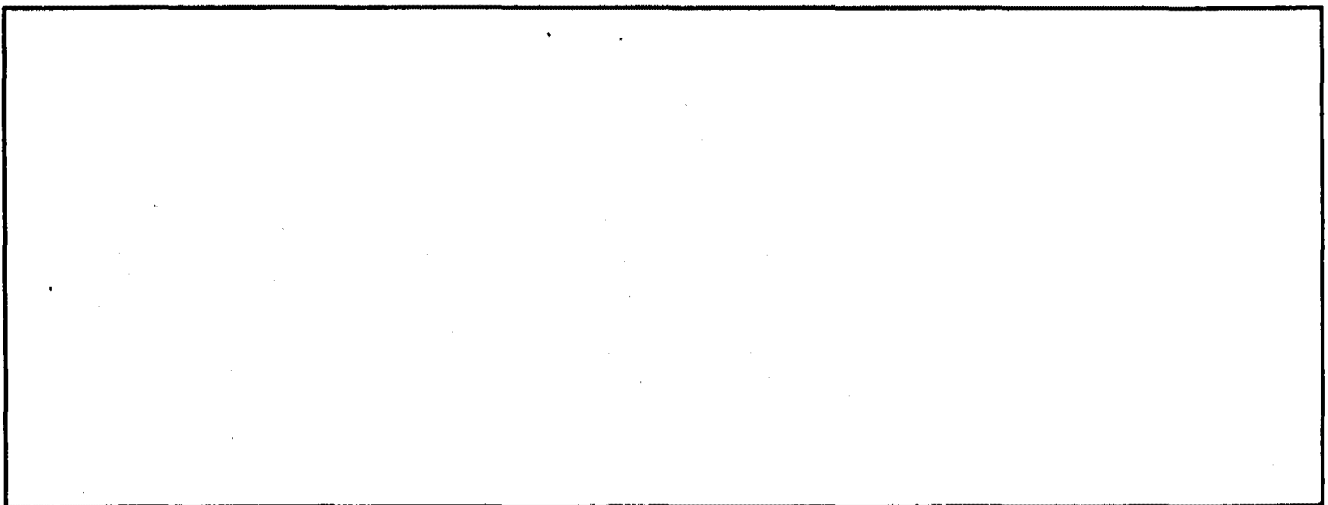
(S) • We assess the group has incorporated lessons learned from fellow operative Richard Reid's failed "shoe bomb" attempt [Redacted]

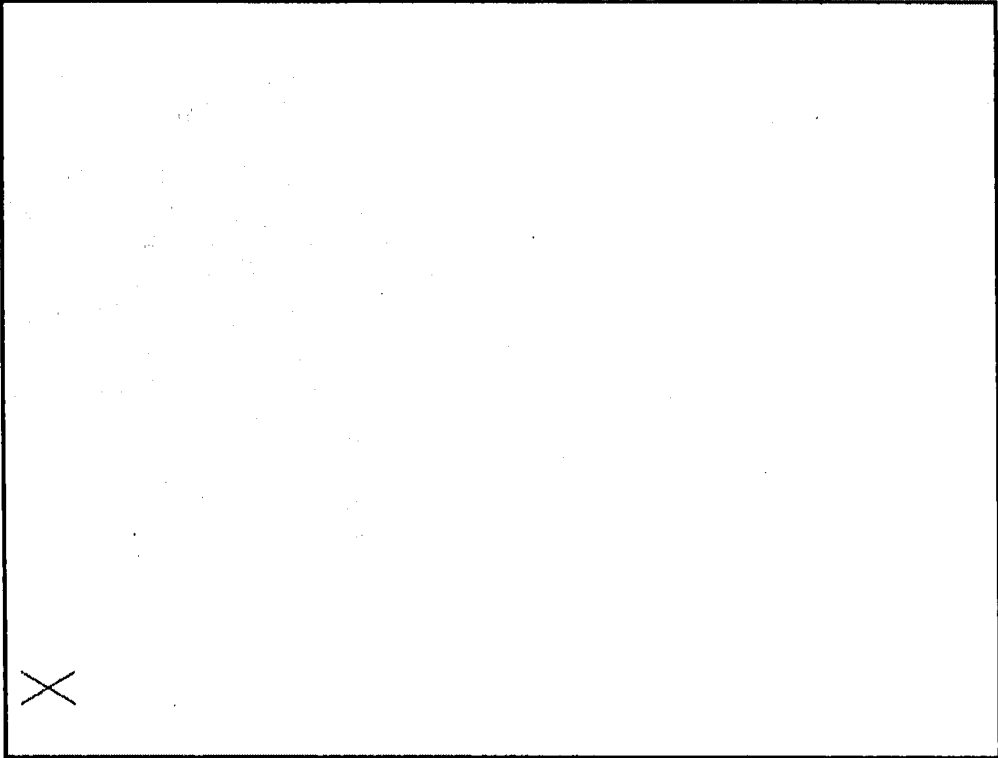
(S) • Now incarcerated terrorist operative Ramzi Yousef conducted a bombing of a Philippine Airways flight (December 1994) as part of his thwarted [Redacted]



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(U) C. ~~(S//NF)~~ Shifting to Softer Targets

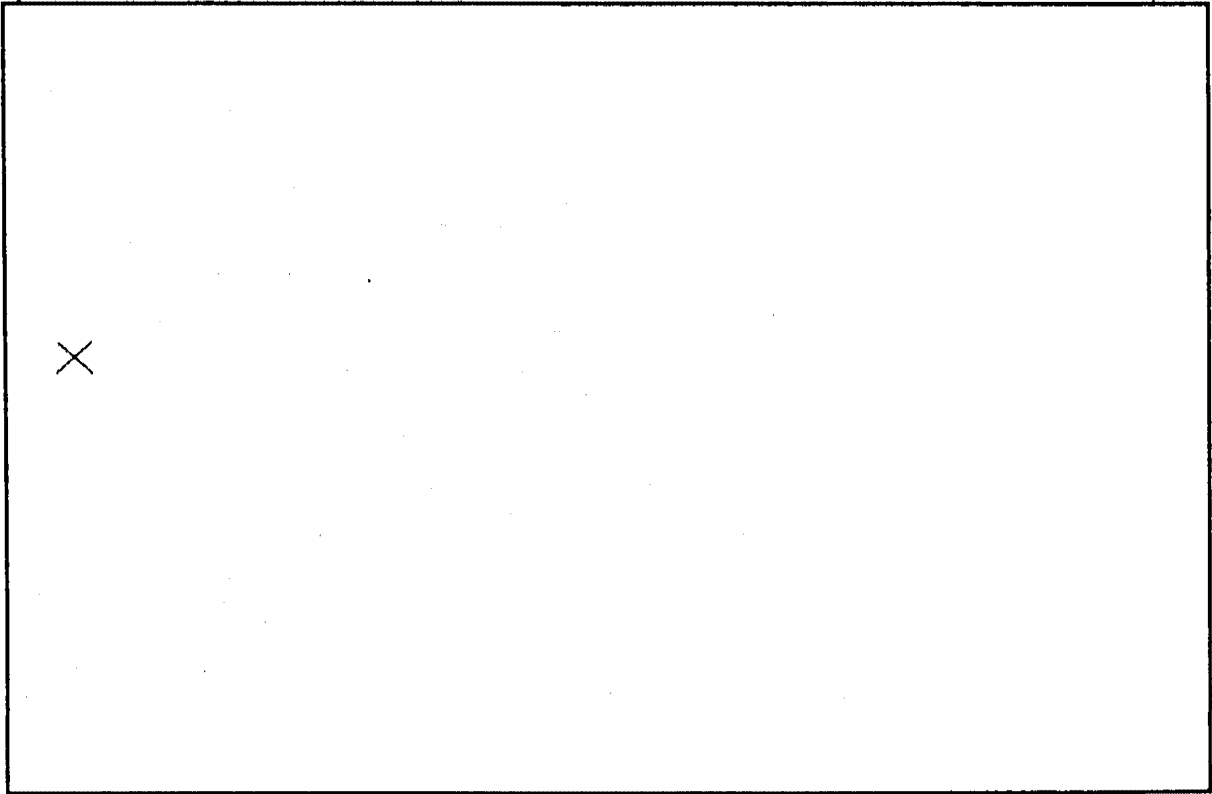




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(U) 2002: Djerba Synagogue Attack in Tunisia

(U) On April 11, 2002, a truck exploded near the historic El Ghriba synagogue on the island of Djerba, a major tourist location in Tunisia. The attack killed 21 and injured approximately 30, most of them German tourists.



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Comments

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The U.S. Intelligence Community after 9/11

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