From: The Investigative Project
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The Update

02 April 2015

Subscriptions, comments & suggestions: Update@ctnews.org

General security, policy

1. Iran and world powers agree on parameters of Iranian nuclear deal; Oil prices volatile over Iran
2. Iranian terrorist network could use Latin American traffickers against U.S., military warns; 'Iran is placing guided warheads on Hezbollah rockets'
3. One dead, two hurt as vehicle tries to ram U.S. spy agency gates
4. Think tank tallies 64 terror plots targeting American homeland since 9/11
5. Two NY residents charged with conspiracy to construct explosive device for terror attack on US soil
6. US citizen charged with conspiring to provide material support to terrorists, to kill Americans, attack US military
7. Access denied: Reporters say federal officials, data increasingly off limits
8. Defense rests in Boston Marathon bombing trial
9. UK man Haroon Aswat pleads guilty in SDNY in plot to start al Qaeda camp in Bly, OR
10. Profile of Preet Bharara, US Attorney for the SDNY
11. CBSA wants to hide identities of undercover officers who investigated man accused of plotting Toronto attacks
12. Alleged terrorist almost killed himself with poisoned samosas six weeks before planned Canada Day attack
13. Ottawa academic Hassan Diab to appeal French court bail refusal

Cyber, transportation, health, energy & communication security

14. How to spot a terrorist, according to US airport security
15. Detroit Metro Airport TSA demanding armed agents at security checkpoints
16. Saudi man sentenced for striking TSA officer at OIA
17. FBI warns US companies of cyber terror - Israeli, Jewish interests targeted; U.S. establishes sanctions program to combat cyberattacks, cyberspying
18. Citigroup report chides law firms for silence on hackings
19. Feds investigating 2 new reports of laser-pointing incidents at Newark Airport

Financing, money laundering, fraud, civil litigation

20. US Treasury targets Syrian regime financial & weapons networks
21. Judge orders Sudan, Iran to pay $75 million to family of USS Cole victim
22. Islamic terror organization taps D.C. lobbying firm
23. Suspect in convenience store drug sting now faces food-stamp fraud allegations

Border security, immigration & customs

24. Cattle ranchers concerned about border security
25. US-Mexico border not secure, locals tell committee

International

26. Kenya university attack: At least 147 dead after al-Shabaab terrorists storm campus and separate Muslim and Christian students
27. Al Qaeda in Syria signals sharia law for captured city
28. Uganda prosecutor who led case against al Shabaab shot dead
29. Al-Qaeda frees 300 inmates from Yemeni jail
30. ISIS conquers Palestinian refugee camp in Damascus
31. Security source: 'Serious concern for life' of Israeli feared kidnapped in West Bank
32. Australian police probe link to UK terror plot
33. Bangladesh central bank governor says all banks to be investigated for militant financing
34. Secret terror trial: two men jailed over bomb-making manual

35. We know terrorists have been training in rural Wales - the stark warning from specialist police
36. 'Jihadist video' at Trojan Horse school
37. Prosecutor dies of wounds after Istanbul hostage shootout

Comment / analysis
38. Ayaan Hirsi Ali: America's Academies for Jihad
39. Gary C. Gambill: Seven Problems with John Kerry's Iranian Nuclear Clock

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THE AMERICAS

GENERAL SECURITY, POLICY

1. Iran and world powers agree on parameters of Iranian nuclear deal
By Carol Morello and William Branigin Washington Post April 2, 2015at 2:38 PM
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12323
IPT NOTE: State Dep't fact sheet is posted at http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/04/240170.htm
LAUSANNE, Switzerland — Negotiators from Iran and major world powers reached agreement Thursday on a framework for a final agreement to curb Tehran's nuclear program in exchange for relief from international sanctions, participants in the marathon talks said. They said the sides, including the United States and its key European allies, would promptly start drafting a final accord to be completed by a June 30 deadline… In a statement read to reporters, Mogherini and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif said Iran would limit the operation of uranium-enrichment centrifuges to one site — Natanz — and would convert its controversial Fordow enrichment site into a center for nuclear physics and technology research. The Fordow site, which Iran secretly built deep inside a mountain near Qom, had raised alarm because it was less vulnerable to attack if used to produce fissile material for nuclear weapons… They also said that a heavy-water nuclear reactor at Arak would be rebuilt so that it could not be used to produce any weapons-grade plutonium. "There will be no reprocessing, and the spent fuel will be exported," they said. In return, nuclear-related sanctions against Iran will be terminated by the European Union and the United States, subject to verification that Iran is meeting terms of the agreement, the statement said…

Oil tumbles anew as press event called at Iran nuclear talks
BY BARANI KRISHNAN Reuters Markets | Thu Apr 2, 2015 11:48am EDT
http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/04/02/us-markets-oil-idUSKBN0MT0AD20150402
NEW YORK (Reuters) - Oil prices fell as much as 4 percent on Thursday after global powers negotiating a nuclear deal with Iran called for a news conference after more than a week of talks in Switzerland. A nuclear pact for Tehran could remove Western sanctions on the OPEC nation's oil exports, bringing millions of additional Iranian crude barrels onto a market already brimming with supply…

Oil rallies as Iran nuclear talks drag on, overshadowing supply concerns
BY HIMANSHU OJHA Reuters Wed Apr 1, 2015 11:17am EDT
http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/04/01/us-markets-oil-idUSKBN0MS33620150401
LONDON (Reuters) - Brent crude oil futures reversed early losses to rally to $55.90 a barrel on Wednesday, as talks over Iran's nuclear programme continued, curbing expectations of an immediate deal that would allow Iranian crude on to the market...

2. Iranian terrorist network could use Latin American traffickers against U.S., military warns
Published March 31, 2015 Fox News Latino
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12301
IPT NOTE: The witness list for the cited hearing is posted at http://www.hsgac.senate.gov/hearings/securing-the-border-understanding-and-addressing-the-root-causes-of-central-american-migration-to-the-united-states. Lt Gen. Tovo's prepared statement is posted at http://www.hsgac.senate.gov/download/?id=6f7f364e-ca59-44ce-84a2-81b8d489f8be
A senior U.S. military official has once again expressed concern from Washington that Iranian-backed terrorists groups are operating throughout Latin America and working with drug trafficking groups. Speaking to the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee last week, Lieutenant General Ken Tovo – the deputy commander of U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) – told lawmakers that he was concerned about "the financial and operational overlap between criminal and terrorist networks" in Latin America… Speculation has been widespread among U.S. lawmakers and military leaders for a number of years about Islamic extremists groups operating in Latin America, but despite visits by high-ranking Iranian officials – a country known to support terrorist groups – there has been very little hard evidence that these groups are working with drug-trafficking organizations in the Western Hemisphere. There is, however, more evidence of links between the Lebanon-based Islamic militant group Hezbollah and Lebanese immigrants in Latin America…

'Iran is placing guided warheads on Hezbollah rockets'

Col. Aviram Hasson, of the Defense Ministry's missile defense administration says Hezbollah gets a lot of accurate weapons from Iran.
By YAAKOV LAPPIN Jerusalem Post 03/31/2015 15:41
http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Iran-is-placing-guided-warheads-on-Hezbollah-rockets-395679
Iran is placing guided warheads on its rockets and smuggling them to Hezbollah in Lebanon, a senior Defense Ministry official said Tuesday. Speaking at the Israel Air and Missile Defense Conference in Herzliya, Col. Aviram Hasson, who is involved in preparing IDF air defenses, said Iran was converting Zilzal unguided rockets into accurate, guided M-600 projectiles by upgrading their warheads. Hasson, who is in charge of upper-tier missile defenses at HOMA – part of the Defense Ministry's Administration for the Development of Weapons and Technological Infrastructure – described Iran as a "train engine that is not stopping for a moment. It is manufacturing new and advanced ballistic missiles and cruise missiles. It is turning unguided rockets that had an accuracy range of kilometers into weapons that are accurate to within meters." Hezbollah, he continued, "is getting a lot of accurate weapons from Iran. It is in a very different place compared to the Second Lebanon War in 2006."…

3. One dead, two hurt as vehicle tries to ram U.S. spy agency gates
BY MARK HOSENBALL Reuters Mon Mar 30, 2015 9:08pm EDT
http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/31/us-usa-maryland-fortmeade-idUSKBN0MQ1H520150331
WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Two people tried to run their vehicle through the National Security Agency's gates near Washington on Monday before guards at the spy agency fatally shot one of them, said officials, who added there was no evidence of a link to terrorism. The second occupant of the vehicle was also shot, according to one official, and a police officer was injured. Both suspects, who were dressed in women's clothes and may be transgender, tried to drive their sport utility vehicle through an entrance at the agency's Fort Meade, Maryland, headquarters, U.S. law enforcement and security officials said. The motive was not immediately known, but one official said drugs may have been involved in the incident that occurred about 20 miles (32 km) northeast of Washington. Officials told Reuters they could not confirm media reports that weapons and drugs were found in the SUV. The surviving suspect was a resident of Baltimore, a federal law enforcement official said. Local news media said the person was in intensive care…

One dead and two injured in shootout outside NSA headquarters after guard stopped two men dressed as women who tried to crash through gate in stolen SUV
US officials say incident is 'local criminal matter' and not act of terrorism
By MICHAEL ZENNIE FOR DAILY MAIL ONLINE 09:19 EST, 30 March 2015 http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12302

4. Think tank tallies 64 terror plots targeting American homeland since 9/11
By Malia Zimmerman Published April 01, 2015 FoxNews.com
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12303
The frightening plot to kill 150 National Guard members that unraveled last week when FBI agents nabbed two Chicago-area cousins was the 64th case since 9/11 of Islamist terrorists plotting to strike on American soil, according to a new report that warns the radicalizing influence of ISIS must be dealt with in the U.S. and abroad. Illinois National Guardsman Hasan Edmonds, 22, was nabbed last Wednesday at Chicago's Midway Airport, where he was trying to board a plane enroute to the Middle East to join ISIS, according to authorities. Jonas Edmonds, 29, intended to don his cousin's uniform and mount a one-man attack on the Joliet Armory, where Hasan's National Guard unit was based, authorities said. Like most of the post-9/11 terror attacks planned against Americans in their homeland, the plot was thwarted. But analysts, including experts at the Heritage Foundation, which tracks each case, say the number of attempts will continue to climb, and more plots are likely to succeed without aggressive counter-measures…

5. Two Queens, New York, Residents Charged With Conspiracy to Use a Weapon of Mass Destruction
Defendants Allegedly Plotted to Construct an Explosive Device for Use in a Terrorist Attack on U.S. Soil
Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs Thursday, April 2, 2015
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12322
IPT NOTE: Court documents posted at http://www.investigativeproject.org/case/698
… [A] criminal complaint was unsealed in federal court in the Eastern District of New York charging Noelle Velentzas and Asia Siddiqui with conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction against persons or property in the United States. The defendants' initial appearances are scheduled for this afternoon before U.S. Magistrate Judge Viktor V. Pohorelsky of the Eastern District of New York. As alleged in the complaint, the defendants have repeatedly expressed their support for violent jihad. For instance, in or about 2009, Siddiqui published a poem in a magazine published by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula that exhorted readers to wage jihad and declared that there is "[n]o excuse to sit back and wait – for the skies rain martyrdom." More recently, Velentzas, who has characterized al-Qaeda founder Usama Bin Laden as one of her heroes, declared that she and Siddiqui are "citizens of the Islamic State" – a reference to the foreign terrorist organization that is also known as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Less than two weeks ago, Velentzas, asked whether she had heard the news about the recent arrest of a former U.S. airman who had attempted to travel to Syria to wage jihad and stated that she did not understand why people were traveling overseas to engage in jihad when there were more opportunities of "pleasing Allah" in the United States…

6. American Citizen Charged With Conspiring to Provide Material Support to Terrorists
Defendant Allegedly Supported a Conspiracy to Kill Americans and Carry Out Attacks Against U.S. Military
Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs Thursday, April 2, 2015
http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/american-citizen-charged-conspiring-provide-material-support-terrorists
***IPT NOTE*:** Complaint posted at http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/opa/press-releases/attachments/2015/04/02/farekh_complaint.pdf
…[A] complaint and arrest warrant were unsealed today in federal court in the Eastern District of New York charging Muhanad Mahmoud Al Farekh, an American citizen, with conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists. Farekh's initial appearance is scheduled today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Viktor V. Pohorelsky of the Eastern District of New York. Farekh was deported from Pakistan to the United States and arrested pursuant to the pending warrant. As alleged in the complaint, Farekh conspired with others to provide material support to terrorists and specifically to provide personnel to be used in support of efforts to kill American citizens and members of the U.S. military abroad. In approximately 2007, Farekh, an individual named Ferid Imam and a third co-conspirator departed Canada for Pakistan with the intention of fighting against American forces. They did not inform their families of their plan before departing, but called a friend in Canada upon arrival to let him know that he should not expect to hear from them again because they intended to become martyrs. According to public testimony in previous criminal trials in the Eastern District of New York, in approximately September 2008, Ferid Imam provided weapons and other military-type training at an al-Qaeda training camp in Pakistan to three individuals – Najibullah Zazi, Zarein Ahmedzay and Adis Medunjanin – who intended to return to the United States to conduct a suicide attack on the New York City subway system. Zazi and Ahmedzay pleaded guilty pursuant to cooperation agreements and have yet to be sentenced; Medunjanin was convicted after trial and sentenced to life imprisonment. Ferid Imam has also been indicted for his role in the plot...

7. Access denied: Reporters say federal officials, data increasingly off limits
By Paul Farhi Washington Post March 30 at 5:59 PM
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12304
Stacey Singer, a health reporter for the Palm Beach Post in Florida, was perusing a medical journal in 2012 when she came across something startling: a federal epidemiologist's report about a tuberculosis outbreak in the Jacksonville area. Singer promptly began pursuing the story. But when she started seeking official comment about the little-reported outbreak, the doors began closing. County health officials referred her to the state health department. State officials referred her to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Even though the CDC's own expert had written the investigative report, the agency's press office declined to let Singer speak with him. A spokesman told her it was a local matter and sent her back to the state office in Tallahassee. Through public records requests, Singer eventually was able to piece together the story of a contagion that had caused 13 deaths and 99 illnesses — the worst the CDC had found in 20 years…. The stories aren't always as consequential or as dramatic as a TB outbreak, but Singer's experience is shared by virtually every journalist on the government beat, from the White House on down. They can recite tales with similar outlines: An agency spokesman — frequently a political appointee — rejects the reporter's request for interviews, offers partial or nonresponsive replies, or delays responding at all until after the journalist's deadline has passed…

8. Defense rests in Tsarnaev case, closing arguments Monday
By: Laurel J. Sweet Boston Herald Tuesday, March 31, 2015
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12321
A little more than 24 hours after the U.S. Attorney's Office rested its case against admitted Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, the defense rested at 2:46 p.m. today after calling just four witnesses over two days. But they ended on a high note, with testimony from FBI latent fingerprint examiner Elaina Graff, who said only six prints were identified from more than 500 pieces of evidence collected at the Boylston Street crime scene - and they all matched Dzhokhar's older brother Tamerlan. The defense does not quarrel with Dzhokhar Tsarnaev's role in the terror attack, merely that it was his brother who masterminded, planned for and dragged the former University of Massachusetts Dartmouth sophomore into the conspiracy. U.S. District Court Judge George A. O'Toole Jr. scheduled closing arguments for Monday to allow jurors time to enjoy the Easter holidays. O'Toole said the panel will receive the case Monday to begin their deliberations, as well…

Defense Rests in Boston Marathon Bombing Trial After Just 4 Witnesses
By KATHARINE Q. SEELYE New York Times April 1, 2015
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12324
BOSTON — … The scant defense was dwarfed by the prosecution's roster of 92 witnesses over 15 days. And it reflected the defense strategy of admitting at the outset that Mr. Tsarnaev had indeed participated in the 2013 bombings, which killed three people and injured more than 260 others. That admission of guilt had the predictable effect of curtailing the case that the defense could put on in this first phase of the trial. Its four witnesses spoke to a narrow range of physical evidence, like Internet searches and a lack of fingerprints, that the defense suggested showed its client was less culpable than his older brother, Tamerlan. The brother died after a shootout with the police and after Dzhokhar drove over him in a getaway car. While Mr. Tsarnaev's lawyers have admitted his guilt, he has not pleaded guilty. And so lawyers for both sides are preparing to make their closing arguments Monday to the jury, which is all but certain to convict him on most or all of the 30 charges against him…

Question in Boston Bombing Trial: For Tsarnaev to Testify or Not
By KATHARINE Q. SEELYE New York Times MARCH 30, 2015

http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12305
… Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, 21, one of the world's most notorious criminal defendants, could face the death penalty on charges that he blew up spectators at the Boston Marathon almost two years ago. But his demeanor in court here is aloof…

9. Haroon Aswat, Abu Hamza Co-Conspirator, Pleads Guilty To Terrorism Charges In Manhattan Federal Court
US Attorney's Office, SDNY Monday, March 30, 2015
http://www.justice.gov/usao/nys/pressreleases/March15/HaroonAswatPleaPR.php
…HAROON ASWAT pled guilty today in Manhattan federal court to terrorism charges related to ASWAT's efforts to establish a terrorist training camp in the United States. ASWAT was arrested in Zambia in July 2005. In August 2005, ASWAT was deported from Zambia to the United Kingdom, where he was arrested pursuant to a provisional arrest warrant that was issued in response to a request by the U.S. Government in connection with this case. ASWAT was extradited to the United States from the United Kingdom on October 21, 2014. ASWAT pled guilty today to one count of conspiring to provide material support to al Qaeda, and one count of providing material support to al Qaeda… According to the allegations contained in the Indictment, statements made at related court proceedings including today's guilty plea, and evidence presented at prior trials: In late 1999, ASWAT, along with co-defendants Mustafa Kamel Mustafa, a/k/a "Abu Hamza" ("Abu Hamza"), Ouassama Kassir, and Earnest James Ujaama, attempted to create a terrorist training camp in the United States to support al Qaeda, which has been designated by the United States Secretary of State as a foreign terrorist organization. ASWAT conspired with Abu Hamza, Kassir, and Ujaama to establish the terrorist training camp on a rural parcel of property located in Bly, Oregon. The purpose of the Bly, Oregon camp was for Muslims to receive various types of training – including military-style jihad training – in preparation to fight jihad in Afghanistan. As used by the conspirators in this case, the term "jihad" meant defending Islam against purported enemies through violence and armed aggression, including, if necessary, by using murder to rid Muslim holy lands of non-believers in Islam…

U.K. Man Guilty in Plot to Start Al Qaeda Camp in Oregon
by Patricia Hurtado Bloomberg News 2:03 PM EDT March 30, 2015
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12306
… U.S. District Court Judge Katherine Forrest, who found Aswat to be mentally competent, accepted his guilty plea. Aswat faces as long as 20 years in prison when sentenced July 31. Under U.S. law, he could ask the court to reduce his term by the amount of time he spent in custody while fighting extradition. Hamza was convicted last year and sentenced to life in prison Jan. 9 on related terrorism charges. Kassir was convicted in 2009 and also sentenced to life in prison. Those who attended the mosque where Abu Hamza preached included Zacarias Moussaoui, who pleaded guilty to taking part in the Sept. 11 plot to fly planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

10. The brash New York prosecutor who's indicting left and right
By Sally Jenkins March 29, 2015 at 4:04 PM Washington Post
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12307
NEW YORK — Preet Bharara's office is not anyplace a guilty person wants to be, so you search your conscience and wipe your sweaty forehead before entering. The most powerful prosecutor in the country, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, occupies a four-square chamber flooded with relentless governmental ceiling light, which makes his charcoal suit all the darker and his white shirt, so stiff it could pour itself a glass of water, all the whiter… Bharara's aggressive prosecutions are earning him a reputation as a fiercely effective and limelight-loving figure in an office already legendary as the strongest arm of the Justice Department… Once, Bharara opened a speaking engagement before a roomful of financial traders by saying, "I just want to apologize in advance that I don't have enough subpoenas for all of you." As the audience broke out in laughter, he said, "I'm just kidding." Pause. "I do have enough."…

11. CBSA wants to hide identities of undercover officers who investigated man accused of plotting Toronto attacks
Stewart Bell National Post March 29, 2015 | Last Updated: Mar 29 8:27 PM ET
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12308
Federal officials are seeking to hide the identities of the undercover officers involved in the investigation that led to the arrest of a Pakistani man accused of plotting to bomb the United States consulate in Toronto. The Canada Border Services Agency intends to ask the Immigration and Refugee Board, which is hearing the case against Jahanzeb Malik, to ban media outlets from publicly identifying the officers, the suspect's lawyer Anser Farooq said Sunday… Attempts to protect undercover officers have become common in recent Canadian terrorism cases, most recently this month's convictions of Raed Jaser and Chiheb Esseghaier, who plotted to derail a Toronto-bound passenger train… Mr. Malik was arrested in Toronto on March 9 following a six-month investigation by the RCMP's Integrated National Security Enforcement Team. He has not been criminally charged but is being detained for deportation on security grounds. The 33-year-old Pakistani national, who came to Canada in 2004 to study at York University and was later sponsored by his wife to immigrate, is being held at a provincial detention centre while the CBSA continues its investigation…

12. Alleged terrorist almost killed himself with poisoned samosas six weeks before planned Canada Day attack

Ian Mulgrew, Postmedia News March 31, 2015 | Last Updated: Mar 31 8:57 AM ET
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12309
Accused terrorist John Nuttall nearly killed himself with strychnine-contaminated samosas six weeks before he planted phoney bombs at the B.C. Legislature. After accidentally ingesting the colourless, odourless crystal pesticide that he had spilled on a counter while poisoning ants — and then putting his food on it — he refused to call 9-1-1 and accept help from the "infidels."… His wife and co-accused Amanda Korody thought it was a Jinn — a supernatural spirit from the Qur'an… The bizarre incident underscored Nuttall's physical and mental frailties in the weeks leading to the alleged terrorist incident in Victoria on Canada Day 2013. Nuttall, 40, and Korody, 31, have pleaded not guilty to four charges related to a plan to detonate pressure-cooker bombs at the legislature. Alcoholic, drug-addicted graduates of the Victoria punk scene, who converted to Islam in 2011, the pair were eking out a living on the methadone maintenance program near the Surrey-Delta border beset by poverty and health issues…

13. Ottawa academic Hassan Diab to appeal French court bail refusal
CHRIS COBB, OTTAWA CITIZEN Published on: March 31, 2015
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12310
Former University of Ottawa professor Hassan Diab, extradited last November to face terrorism charges in France, will on Friday appeal a Paris court's refusal to grant him bail. The 60-year-old Diab had his first bail application rejected March 12 on three grounds: That he is a flight risk; that he might collude or contact witnesses and accomplices; that his release would be a risk to public order. Diab is a suspect in the 1980 bombing of a downtown Paris synagogue. The Paris attack, the first against French Jews since the Second World War, came at the height of terrorist activity by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — an organization to which the Lebanon-born Canadian citizen denies ever belonging…

CYBER, TRANSPORTATION, HEALTH, ENERGY & COMMUNICATION SECURITY

14. How to spot a terrorist, according to US airport security
Leaked document suggests that whistling and excessive laughter could see you singled out for additional screening
By Oliver Smith The Daily Telegraph (London) 11:50AM BST 30 Mar 2015
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12311
Excessive yawning, strong body odour and arrogance are among the suspicious signs that US airport staff are trained to associate with potential terrorists, a leaked document has revealed. A confidential security checklist used by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the organisation in charge of airport screening in the US, was published by The Intercept last week. Other warning signs, according to the document, include protruding or throbbing neck arteries, whistling, excessive laughter, and "verbally expressing contempt for the screening process". Its Screening of Passengers by Observation Techniques (SPOT) guidance, used by staff to root out potential terrorists, lists a total of 17 "stress factors", each of which are worth one point, 15 "fear factors", worth two points, and six "deception factors", worth three. If a traveller scores four or more points, they should be referred for selective screening, according to the instructions…

15. Detroit Metro Airport TSA demanding armed agents at security checkpoints
By Gus Burns on April 01, 2015 at 8:15 AM, updated April 01, 2015 at 8:17 AM
http://www.mlive.com/news/detroit/index.ssf/2015/04/detroit_metro_airport_tsa_dema.html
ROMULUS, MI -- Following a bizarre attack on travelers and security employees at New Orleans International Airport two weeks ago, Transportation Security Administration agents are planning a rally at Detroit Metro Airport in Romulus Wednesday morning. The purpose is to "demand new security measures to protect passengers and employees in airport security screening areas," a statement released by the TSA union Tuesday said… Richard White, 63, of Kenner, La., on March 21 allegedly sprayed TSA agents and passengers with wasp killer before unfurling a machete from his waistband and chasing a TSA agent…

16. Saudi man sentenced for striking TSA officer at OIA
Mohammad Abdullah Alomaim: Saudi man sentenced, to be deported after striking TSA officer at OIA in January
By Tiffany Walden Orlando Sentinel April 2, 2015
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12312
A Saudi Arabian man plead guilty Wednesday to hitting a TSA officer in the face while at the Orlando International Airport in January, officials said. U.S. District Judge Gregory A. Presnell sentenced Mohammed Abdullah Alomaim, 43, to the time he's already served since January and a two-year supervised release. "As a result of his conviction, Alomaim will be deported from the United States," a news release said. While at OIA's checkpoint on Jan. 18, officials said Alomaim behaved erratically, which made others at the airport feel uncomfortable…

17. FBI Warns U.S. Companies of Cyber Terror
Israeli, Jewish interests targeted
BY: Bill Gertz Washington Free Beacon April 2, 2015 5:00 am
http://freebeacon.com/national-security/fbi-warns-of-anti-israel-cyber-attacks/
The FBI is warning U.S. companies that cyber terrorists from the Middle East and North Africa are planning to conduct cyber attacks against Israeli and Jewish interests next week. The Bureau stated in a security notice to

U.S. industry on Sunday that, as of early March, "several extremist hacking groups indicated they would participate in a forthcoming operation, #OpIsrael, which will target Israeli and Jewish Web sites." … The FBI said members of at least two extremist hacking groups it did not identify are currently working to recruit hackers for the attacks next week, which will coincide with the second anniversary of the first #OpIsrael cyber attacks. Those were launched on April 7, 2013, and timed to coincide with Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day, which begins the evening of April 15…

U.S. establishes sanctions program to combat cyberattacks, cyberspying
By Ellen Nakashima Washington Post April 2, 2015 at 9:30 AM
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12313
President Obama on Wednesday signed an executive order establishing the first sanctions program to allow the administration to impose penalties on individuals overseas who engage in destructive attacks or commercial espionage in cyberspace. In the works for two years, the order declares "significant malicious cyber-enabled activities" a "national emergency" and enables the treasury secretary to target foreign individuals and entities that take part in the illicit cyberactivity for sanctions that could include freezing their financial assets and barring commercial transactions with them. The move expands the set of legal tools available to the administration to punish and deter activities including the theft of large quantities of credit card data, espionage conducted for commercial gain and cyberattacks aimed at damaging critical computer systems...

18. Citigroup Report Chides Law Firms for Silence on Hackings
By MATTHEW GOLDSTEIN New York Times MARCH 27, 2015
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12314
Every month it seems another American company reports being a victim of a hacking that results in the theft of internal or customer information. But the legal profession almost never publicly discloses a breach. The unwillingness of most big United States law firms to discuss or even acknowledge breaches has frustrated law enforcement and corporate clients for several years. That frustration bubbled over in a recent internal report from Citigroup's cyberintelligence center that warned bank employees of the threat of attacks on the networks and websites of big law firms… The report, issued last month, said it was reasonable to expect law firms to be targets of attacks by foreign governments and hackers because they are repositories for confidential data on corporate deals and business strategies. The report said bank employees should be mindful that digital security at many law firms, despite improvements, generally remains below the standards for other industries…

19. Feds Investigating 2 New Reports Of Laser-Pointing Incidents At Newark Airport
CBSNewYork.com March 31, 2015 7:58 PM
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12315
NEWARK, N.J. (CBSNewYork/AP) – Federal officials are investigating two more reports of laser-pointing incidents at Newark Liberty International Airport over the weekend. Two flights reported lasers were shone at them around 9 p.m. Sunday night, according to the Federal Aviation Administration. Both an ExpressJet flight and a Shuttle America flight coming into the airport for landing reported the red lasers about 20 miles southwest of the airport. No injuries were reported. Lasers can temporarily blind a pilot and are considered a problem at airports across the nation. Just last year, Newark airport had 28 reported incidents, but only three have been reported this year through February. LaGuardia Airport, however, has 21 reported incidents just in the first two months of 2015. Forty-one were reported at the airport through all of 2014…

FINANCING, LAUNDERING, FRAUD, IDENTITY THEFT, CIVIL LITIGATION

20. Treasury Targets Syrian Regime Financial and Weapons Networks
Action Targets a Central Bank of Syria Official and Three Cover Companies Linked to Syria's Scientific Studies and Research Center
US Department of the Treasury March 31, 2015
http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/JL10013.aspx
WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Treasury today took action to further increase pressure on the Assad regime and to inhibit its weapons programs, consistent with the United States' objective of advancing a negotiated political transition in Syria. Batoul Rida, an official of the Central Bank of Syria (CBoS), has been designated pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13582 for acting for or on behalf of, and providing support to, the Government of Syria that enable its military campaign against the Syrian people. Additionally, Treasury designated the Syria-based front company Sigma Tech Company, Lebanon-based front company Shadi for Cars Trading, and Lebanon-based front company Denise Company, all pursuant to E.O. 13382, for acting for or on behalf of the Scientific Studies and Research Center (SSRC). SSRC is a U.S.- and E.U.-sanctioned Syrian government agency responsible for developing and producing non-conventional weapons and ballistic missiles, and has had connections to the Syrian chemical weapons program. Treasury is also publishing a new name used by Adib Mayaleh, the Governor of the CBoS, who was designated by the United States and the E.U. in 2012…

21. Judge orders Sudan, Iran to pay $75 million to family of USS Cole victim
By Spencer S. Hsu Washington Post March 31, 2015 at 12:08 PM
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12316
IPT NOTE: The court opinion is posted at https://ecf.dcd.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/show_public_doc?2010cv1643-48
A federal judge in Washington on Tuesday ordered the governments of Sudan and Iran to pay $75 million in

damages to the family of one of 17 sailors killed in the October 2000 terrorist bombing of the USS Cole by al-Qaeda in Yemen. U.S. District Judge Rudolph Contreras entered the award for compensatory and triple punitive damages to four brothers and the mother of Kevin Shawn Rux, who was killed aboard the guided-missile destroyer when it was struck by a small boat carrying explosives while at harbor in the Yemeni port of Aden on Oct. 12, 2000. Iran and Sudan did not respond to the civil lawsuit, filed in 2010 by Saundra Flanagan and four of her sons. Contreras entered default judgment after an April 2014 evidentiary hearing that included past findings that both governments gave financial, logistical and other support to al-Qaeda in the 1990s…

22. Islamic terror organization taps D.C. lobbying firm
By Ronn Torossian The Hill March 30, 2015, 03:00 pm
http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/237255-islamic-terror-organization-taps-dc-lobbying-firm
In the 1930's Hitler used an American PR Agency, and in the last few years, Hamas, Hezbollah and other killers have paid PR and lobbying companies to clean their names and white-wash their violence. This trend continues. Last week, O'Dwyers PR Report, a leading trade magazine, revealed that The Raben Group, a Washington, D.C.-based lobbying and consulting firm owned by Robert Raben, former Assistant Attorney General under President Clinton, has been hired by Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW), a UK-based Muslim charity. This organization with an innocuous-sounding name is believed to be a terrorist organization by the governments of Russia, the United Arab Emirates and Israel. As The Jerusalem Post reported in 2014, Israel believes that "Islamic Relief Worldwide which markets itself as a charitable agency that solicits donations from all over the world, funnels cash to Hamas." …

23. Suspect in convenience store drug sting now faces food-stamp fraud allegations
The BA man is accused of being part of a food-stamp trafficking scheme.
Posted: Wednesday, April 1, 2015 12:00 am By GINNIE GRAHAM News Columnist Tulsa World
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12317
A Broken Arrow man with pending charges related to a drug sting last year among convenience store operators has been charged in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma with the theft of food stamps. Milton Islam, 46, was indicted by a federal grand jury in early March for stealing $282,912 from the Supplementary Nutritional Assistance Program, known as food stamps. He was charged with theft of government property. The charge comes from an investigation of suspected illegal activity at the Apache Food Mart, 2474 N. Yale Ave., from May 26, 2011, to July 31, 2014. The offices of inspectors general of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture handled the investigation…. Islam is also facing state charges for maintaining a place for keeping and selling controlled drugs…

BORDER SECURITY, IMMIGRATION & CUSTOMS

24. Cattle Ranchers Concerned about Border Security
A cattle association said a lack of border security could devastate the industry
POSTED: 07:49 PM CDT Mar 31, 2015 UPDATED: 08:19 PM CDT Mar 31, 2015
http://www.krgv.com/news/local-news/Cattle-Ranchers-Concerned-about-Border-Security/32118716
PHARR - Texas cattle ranchers are worried about border security. They believe a lack of protection raises the chances of disease and parasites in cattle. CHANNEL 5 NEWS visited a hidden USDA facility. The Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association is speaking up. They said a lack of border security could devastate the already struggling cattle industry. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has only a handful of places in the country where cattle are inspected once they cross the border. One of those locations is near the Pharr International Bridge…

25. US-Mexico border not secure, locals tell committee
Bill Theobald, Republic Washington Bureau 3:52 p.m. MST March 17, 2015 Arizona Republic
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12318
WASHINGTON – People living and working in Arizona and other border states told Senate lawmakers Tuesday the U.S.-Mexico boundary isn't secure. Witnesses at the hearing before the the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee said that must change before Congress considers immigration reform. Mark Daniels, the sheriff in Cochise County, Ariz., told committee members violence along the border continues to escalate. "The rural parts of the border are not secure," he said. He said previous federal efforts have focused on populated areas, pushing more of the illegal activity -- border crossings and drug-smuggling -- to rural areas like his county…

MIDDLE EAST

26. Kenya Garissa University attack: At least 147 dead after al-Shabaab terrorists storm campus and separate Muslim and Christian students
Police fear gunmen may have taken hostages
HEATHER SAUL The Independent (UK) THURSDAY 02 APRIL 2015
Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12325
At least 147 people have been killed and 79 wounded after al-Shabaab gunmen stormed a university in Kenya this morning, opened fire on dormitories, released Muslim students, and took Christians hostage. As night fell, Kenya's National Disaster Operation Centre tweeted that the siege at Garissa University College had ended and that dozens of hostages had been freed. Interior Minister Joseph Nkaisser said that security officers had killed four

suspected al-Shabaab attackers that they had cornered in a dormitory. As the siege neared its end earlier, Nkaisser said around 300 students remain unaccounted for, and told reporters that officials knew the whereabouts of approximately 500 out of 815 students. The disaster centre said plans are underway to evacuate those still in the building…

Nearly 600 held hostage, 21 dead in Kenya university attack
The terror group Al-Shabaab is claiming responsibility for an early morning attack on Garissa University College in Kenya. At least 15 are feared dead. This same group carried out the 2013 attack at the Westgate mall in Nairobi. VPC
Tonny Onyulo, Special for USA TODAY 11:02 a.m. EDT April 2, 2015
http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2015/04/02/kenya-university-attack/70815094/
NAIROBI — Gunmen stormed a university in northern Kenya on Thursday, taking nearly 600 students and staff members hostage. At least 21 people were killed and 65 others seriously wounded, officials said…. The Somali-based al-Shabab terrorist group claimed responsibility for the attack…

27. Al Qaeda in Syria signals sharia law for captured city
Reuters Wed Apr 1, 2015 9:56am EDT
http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/04/01/us-mideast-crisis-syria-nusra-idUSKBN0MS4GR20150401
BEIRUT - (Reuters) - The al Qaeda-linked Nusra Front indicated on Wednesday that a Syrian city captured from the government in recent days would be ruled according to Islamic sharia law but the group would not seek to monopolize power there. Nusra Front's leader, Abu Mohamad al-Golani, also said residents of the northwestern city of Idlib would be treated well by his fighters and other Islamist factions that captured it on Saturday. "We salute the people of Idlib and their stand with their sons, the Mujahideen, ... and God willing they will enjoy the justice of sharia, which will preserve their religion and their blood," Golani said in an audio recording posted on Nusra Front-affiliated online media…

28. Ugandan Terror Trial Prosecutor Shot Dead
Joan Kagezi had been leading the prosecution case against 13 people suspected of involvement in al Shabaab bombings in 2010.
Uganda Prosecutor Shot Dead - Joan Kagezi was shot in her car in a suburb of Kampala
Sky News Tuesday 31 March 2015 13:40, UK,
http://news.sky.com/story/1456119/ugandan-terror-trial-prosecutor-shot-dead
A major terrorism trial in Uganda has been suspended after one of the senior prosecutors in the case was shot dead in what police say could be a targeted killing. Joan Kagezi was one of the lead members of the prosecution team in the trial of 13 people suspected of involvement in twin bombings by the Somali Islamist group al Shabaab in Kampala in 2010. Ms Kagezi was fatally wounded at around 8pm on Monday in Kiwatule, a suburb of the Ugandan capital, after stopping to buy fruit at the side of the road. A police spokesman said it appeared she was shot through her car window by two men who had followed her on a motorbike…

29. Al-Qaeda frees 300 inmates from Yemeni jail
Ahmed Al-Haj, Associated Press 10:47 a.m. EDT April 2, 2015
http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2015/04/02/al-qaeda-frees-inmates/70816916/
SANAA, Yemen (AP) — Al-Qaeda militants in Yemen stormed the center of the coastal city of al-Mukalla early Thursday, freeing about 300 inmates, including scores of militants, as Iranian-backed Shiite rebels fought their way into the heart of the country's second city Aden to the west, Yemeni security officials said. They said al-Qaeda militants were also deployed across major roads leading into al-Mukalla, capital of the vast eastern province of Hadramawt, in an apparent attempt to prevent anyone from retaking it. The province is still mostly in the hands of forces loyal to embattled President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, who fled the country last month. Al-Qaeda was able to capture al-Mukalla because of the turmoil gripping Yemen, where a Saudi-led air campaign is targeting Iranian-backed Shiite rebels, known as Houthis, and rival groups are fighting it out across much of the country…

30. ISIS Conquers Palestinian Refugee Camp in Damascus
by IPT News • Apr 1, 2015 at 2:17 pm For The Record - The IPT Blog
http://www.investigativeproject.org/4810/isis-conquers-palestinian-refugee-camp-in-damascus
Islamic State terrorists conquered large areas of the Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp in the Syrian capital Wednesday and are battling Palestinian faction Aknaf Beit al-Maqdis for control, media reports indicate. "Fighters from ISIS launched an assault this morning on Yarmouk and they took over the majority of the camp," said Anwar Abdel Hadi, Damascus-based director of political affairs for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). This latest incursion represents ISIS' most significant territorial gain into Syria's capital. Meanwhile, a senior Hamas leader Yehia Hourani, was killed in the camp on Monday, according to a Hamas statement which referred to Hourani's death as an assassination.

31. Security source: 'Serious concern for life' of Israeli feared kidnapped in West Bank
By JPOST.COM STAFF 04/02/2015 19:54
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12326
Hours after an Israeli man was reported missing and feared kidnapped Thursday afternoon in the West Bank near Hebron, a security source said "as more time passes, the serious concern for his life rises." The official asserted that the West Bank village is very hostile and considered as a Hamas stronghold. Large numbers of security

forces were sweeping the area, including the Palestinian village of Beit Anun where they were conducting house searches. At around 4:15 p.m. on Thursday, Judea and Samaria police received an emergency 100 call from a youth who said that he and a friend had got stuck with a flat tire in the West Bank between Kiryat Arba and the Palestinian village of Beit Anun, and his friend who went to bring tools for the flat did not return to the vehicle…

ASIA / PACIFIC

32. Police probe link to UK terror plot
MARK SCHLIEBS THE AUSTRALIAN MARCH 31, 2015 12:00AM
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12319
Australian men in two cities have been questioned over their ties to a British man suspected of plotting a terrorist attack, after British counter-terrorism investigators travelled to Melbourne and Perth as part of an investigation. It is understood the British officers last week visited the homes of those connected to the man at the centre of the investigation. It is further evidence of the reach that extremists can have via social networks, where relationships can be formed despite geographic distances and without the need to meet in person. The Metropolitan Police has confirmed that its investigation had expanded to Australia… It is understood the British man is in custody and is suspected of planning an attack with a large knife…

33. Bangladesh central bank governor says banks to be investigated for militant financing
BY SERAJUL QUADIR Reuters Sat Mar 28, 2015 9:43am EDT
http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/28/us-bangladesh-banks-militants-idUSKBN0MO0L020150328
DHAKA (Reuters) - The Bangladesh central bank governor said on Saturday all commercial banks would be investigated for links to Islamist militants and warned lenders would be shut down if found to be involved in funding such organizations. Bangladesh Bank's Atiur Rahman said the emergence of Islamic State (IS), the militant group active in Iraq and Syria that has spread to other countries in the region, had also increased the threat of violence and militancy in Bangladesh… Islamic State has already made its mark in Bangladesh. Last week, police arrested a regional commander of banned Islamist outfit Jama'tul Mujahideen Bangladesh. According to police, the group's aim was to establish an Islamic state, helped by IS…

EUROPE

34. Secret terror trial: two men jailed over bomb-making manual
Sentencing of Erol Incedal and Mounir Rarmoul-Bouhadjar concludes one of the most secretive trials held in the UK
Ian Cobain The Guardian Wednesday 1 April 2015 10.44 EDT Modified 1 April 2015 19.07 EDT
http://www.investigativeproject.org/ext/12320
One of the most secretive trials held in Britain since the second world war has ended with two men being jailed for possession of bomb-making manuals. Erol Incedal was jailed for 42 months for possession of a document likely to be useful to a person preparing an act of terrorism, while Mounir Rarmoul-Bouhadjar, who had pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing, was sentenced to three years. Incedal had also been accused of plotting a terrorist attack on the streets of London, but was acquitted last weekat a retrial. Both his first trial last year – which ended with the jury failing to reach a verdict on the charge of plotting an attack, and his retrial, when he was cleared on a majority verdict – were shrouded in such secrecy that the matters at the heart of the case cannot be reported. Before sentencing the two men at the Old Bailey in London on Wednesday, Mr Justice Nicol rejected an application from 11 media organisations for the reporting restrictions to be lifted…

35. We know terrorists have been training in rural Wales - the stark warning from specialist police
The Wales Extremism and Counter Terrorism Unit said locations in Ceredigion, Powys and Pembrokeshire have been used for training purposes
By Rachael Misstear Walesonline 13:18, 1 April 2015
http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/terrorist-training-warning-wales-rural-8962296
Terrorists have been training in rural parts of Wales, according to intelligence gathered by police.
The Wales Extremism and Counter Terrorism Unit says it is aware that locations in Ceredigion, Powys and Pembrokeshire have been used for training purposes. At a meeting with Ceredigion councillors, Detective Constable Gareth Jones, a counter-terrorism officer with the unit, said training and radicalisation is not confined to large cities. DC Jones said the county had been used for training and radicalisation of people, insisting that issues surrounding terrorism do affect rural parts of Wales. He said it was vital that Ceredigion residents informed authorities of any intelligence and information regarding terrorist activities, saying that fighting terrorism was not just down to the police…

36. 'Jihadist video' at Trojan Horse school
Sian Griffiths and Richard Kerbaj The Sunday Times (London) Published: 29 March 2015
http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/uk_news/Education/article1537438.ece
AN AL-QAEDA-style video featuring masked gunmen was copied in a classroom at a school at the centre of the so-called Trojan Horse affair, according to evidence seen by The Sunday Times. Students were also allegedly punished by being made to kneel on tiles in "stress positions" at Park View Academy, according to submissions from members of staff to an investigation into the conduct of half a dozen teachers in some of the Birmingham schools alleged to have been taken over by Muslim hardliners. If the claims are upheld by the National College for

Teaching and Leadership (NCTL), the teachers could be barred from the profession. This weekend, Peter Clarke, Scotland Yard's former head of counterterrorism who conducted an inquiry into the Trojan Horse affair, said the allegations were "very concerning" and provided "further evidence of extremism"…

37. Prosecutor dies of wounds after Istanbul hostage shootout
BY OSMAN ORSAL AND HUMEYRA PAMUK Reuters Tue Mar 31, 2015 4:30pm EDT
http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/31/us-turkey-hostage-idUSKBN0MR19T20150331
ISTANBUL (Reuters) - An Istanbul prosecutor died from his wounds after security forces stormed the office where members of a far-left Turkish group took him hostage on Tuesday, killing his two captors. The Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C) had published a picture of the prosecutor with a gun to his head and said it would kill him unless its demands were met. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said Mehmet Selim Kiraz had been shot three times in the head and twice in the body. He died despite being rushed to hospital for emergency surgery. Six hours after the standoff in a courthouse in central Istanbul began, explosions and gunfire could be heard coming from the building and smoke billowed from a window, a Reuters witness said…

COMMENT / ANALYSIS

38. America's Academies for Jihad
A radical imam threatened me with death—and was later hired to preach in U.S. prisons. I was surprised, but I shouldn't have been.
By AYAAN HIRSI ALI Wall Street Journal March 31, 2015 7:13 p.m. ET
http://www.wsj.com/articles/ayaan-hirsi-ali-americas-academies-for-jihad-1427843597
*Ms. Hirsi Ali, a fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School and the American Enterprise Institute, is the author of "*Heretic: The Case for a Muslim Reformation,*" just out from HarperCollins.*

39. Seven Problems with John Kerry's Iranian Nuclear Clock
by Gary C. Gambill Foreign Policy Research Institute February 2015
http://www.meforum.org/5043/iran-nuclear-clock
Gary C. Gambill is a frequent contributor to The National Post, FPRI E-Notes, The Jerusalem Post, Foreign Policy, and The National Interest. He is a Shillman-Ginsburg fellow at the Middle East Forum and was formerly editor of Middle East Intelligence Bulletin and Mideast Monitor.

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