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## Blueprints For Terrorists? Sensitive Nuclear Info Ends Up On NRC Web Site

WASHINGTON -- When David Lochbaum perused a government web site one day last summer, he came across documents he thought would be of limited value to the public -- but a potential bonanza for terrorists.

Included in a Nuclear Regulatory Commission report on Waterford III Nuclear Power Station near New Orleans, Louisiana, were diagrams showing all the toxic chemicals and pipelines near Waterford III -- including the natural gas pipelines that lace through the complex.

Explicit in detail, the maps even showed gas line valves, the amount of pressure in the lines, and the proximity of gas lines to air intakes for the nuclear plant's control room.

Lochbaum, nuclear safety engineer for the Union of Concerned Scientists, a watchdog group, said he did what he always does when he finds sensitive documents on the NRC's web site: He called the NRC's nuclear safety managers and suggested they remove the diagram. They did.

Lochbaum isn't alone in finding sensitive material on the NRC web site. In a four-hour time span recently, Scott Portzline, a Pennsylvania piano tuner and civic activist, found material about four university nuclear laboratories, including floor plans and lists of the radioactive materials they use.

The four schools were Norwich University in Northfield, Vermont; Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston; Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota; and the University of Florida in Gainesville.

Portzline said the floor plans would be valuable to terrorists, allowing them to hunt for potential sources of nuclear material from the relative obscurity of their computers, without taking the riskier step of conducting surveillance.

Using the NRC web site, a terrorist "could prioritize the largest sources, more dangerous sources or the weapons grade sources" of radioactive material, Portzline said. "You'd know exactly where the sources are, having never visited the facility."

The NRC said that it is trying to balance the public's right to know with the need for security, and that information is sometimes put on the web site that, upon review, doesn't belong there.

After the Harrisburg (Pennsylvania) Patriot-News reported Portzline's find on October 3, the NRC began reviewing the material. A prompt CNN follow-up check showed the material was still on the web site, but the NRC said it has since removed the material, saying it was prudent to do so.

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*[The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect official TACDA policy nor points of view held by TACDA or any of its officers.]*

Roy Zimmerman, director of the NRC's Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response, said the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks highlighted the need to safeguard sensitive information, a process that has taken several steps. In the days immediately after the attacks, the NRC took the web site entirely off line. When it was restored weeks later, it had been purged of more than 1,000 sensitive documents, he said.

Initially, the agency decided to withhold documents if "the release would provide clear and significant benefit to a terrorist in planning an attack," Zimmerman said.

In early summer, the agency tightened the restriction, opting to exclude information "that could be useful or could reasonably be useful to a terrorist," he said. "It is currently unlikely that the information on our web site would provide significant advantage to assist a terrorist."

The information that Portzline found represents a "next tier" of information that deserves review, he said.

An NRC spokesman told CNN recently the agency is considering establishing a task force to address the web site issue.

Experts asked by CNN to review the Portzline material agreed it doesn't belong on public web sites, but said that doesn't necessarily mean the material is of value to terrorists.

One expert likened it to a bank, saying customers may know the location of the vault, but still don't have the wherewithal to empty it.

"It [the web site] may help a little, but if someone's determined to do this, it won't help them much. If someone wanted to find this out, they can," said David Albright of the Institute for Science and International Security.

"If secrecy is your only security, then you don't have it. Because everybody that has a brain knows that physics

departments use radioactive sources ... and it's not that hard to find where they are," he said.

Lochbaum, who discovered the Waterford power plant maps last summer, said so far this year, he has notified the NRC of six documents he believed should not have been posted; the agency removed four of them.

One document that was removed was an instruction manual for metal and explosive detectors used at Waterford nuclear plant entrances, he said.

"If you were trying to defeat those detectors, having that kind of information would be usable," he said.

"The problem is the NRC is in the habit of trying to close the barn door after the horse is out," said Jim Riccio, nuclear policy analyst for the environmental group Greenpeace.

"Every one of these reactors is a pre-positioned weapon of mass destruction that could be used to hurt this country," he said, adding that sensitive material should be caught before it is posted -- not afterwards.

The NRC's Zimmerman said, "We are appreciative of the public bringing these particular documents to our attention. Our plan, though, is to get out in front of this."

He said the NRC is training licensees to highlight sensitive material when they submit it.

Said Lochbaum, "I'm ... not blaming the NRC for the occasional document that gets out. They handle thousands of documents a year. So even if you're 99.9 percent [efficient at editing documents] an occasional document gets out. I think that's something we have to live with. "I think everybody's doing their best under the situation."

*[Source: [www.cnn.com/2004/US/10/19/terror.nrc/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2004/US/10/19/terror.nrc/index.html)]*

## **Anti-Terror Center Ready For Top-Secret Duty**

The slump-block building looks like any other business office in north Phoenix, but what goes on inside is secret.

Top secret, as in national security, because this is the home of Arizona Counter Terrorism Information Center, a new nerve core for intelligence-gathering by federal, state and local law officers.

"This is the one-stop shop . . . to provide direct and real-time support to agencies all across Arizona," Department of Public Safety Col. Norm Beasley said as he toured the \$5.3 million complex. "We have to be focused on 'let's try to prevent something from happening.' That has to be our goal."

Known as ACTIC, the new operation and its headquarters began fighting terrorism on Oct. 1, but Gov. Janet Napolitano is slated to christen it this morning.

Beasley said the 61,000-square-foot complex houses two operations: the state's Joint Terrorism Task Force that includes the FBI and 21 other agencies plus a 15-agency coalition of Arizona law-enforcement operations that work on crimes related to terrorism.

Both of those got their first test last week, leading the intelligence operation for the presidential debate in Tempe.

Beasley said Arizona is unique in melding the teams and should benefit from enhanced communications, expanded data systems and improved coordination. He said ACTIC was designed to put counterterrorism agents and detectives side by

side so they can share information. At the same time, he said, it will provide an instant resource for street cops.

Here's how that would work: An officer in Kingman might stop a trucker for a traffic violation and become suspicious of the cargo. That officer could instantly contact ACTIC, which has access to crime databases and terrorism-watch lists.

"If we are going to prevent terrorist acts in this country, it is because of the individual field officer making a stop and seeing something that doesn't look right," Beasley said.

An estimated 200 people will work at the ACTIC office once it is fully running on a round-the-clock schedule.

The Department of Homeland Security funded renovations and the lease; each law-enforcement agency involved will contribute staffing.

Although ACTIC's primary mission is to detect and prevent terrorist acts, Beasley said the center will play a vital role in other criminal investigations. In addition to the Terrorism Task Force, the building houses DPS intelligence, a weapons-of-mass-destruction unit, an FBI team that pursues serial killers, a major-incident intelligence center and a full computer forensics lab.

ACTIC also features a watch center and dispatch operation with advanced mapping and communications equipment.

Beasley said the building, a former bank-storage facility, is highly secure and has three backup generators with enough output to power north Phoenix.

*[Source: [www.azcentral.com](http://www.azcentral.com)]*

## **Reasons They Haven't Hit Us Again Answering the Big Question. By Christopher McDougall**

The official position of our government is that it is not a matter of if there will be another attack on the United States again, but when. On this, George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden seem to be in agreement. This is especially troubling to New Yorkers, who feel, with some degree of certainty, that our city remains the most inviting target for terrorists.

Everyone has methods for dealing with the anxiety. Mostly, we try to ignore it; sometimes, because of the news or a sudden loud noise outside the window, that becomes impossible. Wherever we go, we see how easy it would be for a terrorist to cause serious harm. A bomb left in a Times Square trash can; a man with a heavy backpack moving through a crowded subway car; a van stuffed with explosives entering the Midtown Tunnel-this is part of how we experience the city now. But if it seems so easy, why hasn't it happened?

That's the question that obsesses us, around which we build theories and start arguments. An attack wouldn't have to be on the scale of 9/11 to set off a major panic. A single explosion, just one of the many little bombs that rock Iraq every day, would make midtown feel little safer than the Green Zone. But nothing has happened.

In that first year after 9/11, mysterious attacks in other parts of the U.S. began sounding a warning "like an accelerating drumbeat," as one security expert puts it: The anthrax, the stabbing of Greyhound bus drivers, Richard Reid being wrestled to the floor of a plane with ten ounces of triacetone triperoxide in his black suede sneakers. The bizarre variety demonstrated just how unpredictable the next plot could be. "We still have no idea who was responsible for anthrax after 9/11," says Dr. Irwin Redlener, head of Columbia University's National Center for Disaster Preparedness. "How that could elude very smart people to this day is a very troubling sign of what could happen in New York."

So how come nothing has happened? "That's what everyone in our field is wondering," says Juliette Kayyem, a national-security expert from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. The answers they give make up five principal theories that attempt to explain why we've stayed safe this long-and what sort of threat remains.

### **1. We're On Al Qaeda Time.**

"Al Qaeda has always shown a tremendous amount of patience in its planning," Kayyem says. "That seems to be an Osama bin Laden trademark." Eight years elapsed between the first attack on the World Trade Center and the second; nearly a year between an aborted bombing of one U.S. warship and the successful attack on another.

Another bin Laden trait is caution, says Peter Sederberg, a global-terrorism specialist at the University of South Carolina and author of *Terrorist Myths: Illusion, Rhetoric, and Reality*. "The September 11 attacks were supposed to have hit many other targets, but bin Laden ordered them scaled back, because he didn't think a plan that ambitious could succeed. It could be he never had any intention of an immediate follow-up, and always intended a significant lag between his grand attack and whatever would follow."

In fact, there are many terrorism analysts who are convinced that bin Laden fully anticipated that the U.S. response to 9/11 would force him and his militants into hiding and that he planned from the start to go dormant and reemerge years later, when he'd have a cleaner shot at a spectacular second attack on the U.S. In this scenario, his escape through the hills of Tora Bora isn't as much of a fluke as we've been led to believe. "We're coming to terms with the idea that bin Laden may have always planned to make Al Qaeda multiheaded, more like a franchise operation than a corporation," says Sederberg. "He knew that once the United States military launched an offensive, it would have to split up and each

faction operate independently. That could be what we're seeing now-the segmented parts forming into attack units."

Does this mean a bunch of smaller, weaker, less-lethal Al Qaedas? "One school says the next attack has to be bigger, badder, bolder," says Kayyem. "But another school, one I'd say I'm a part of, believes Al Qaeda has been sufficiently dispersed, so what we'll see next are smaller attacks like we've seen in Madrid and the Middle East."

Sederberg tends to agree. "We don't pay a lot of attention to incidents that aren't on U.S. soil, but over the past few years there have been attacks in Tunisia, Turkey . . . and Spain is just across the Gibraltar straits from Morocco. You can say that's still very far from America, but cells operating in Spain that can carry out coordinated attacks could indicate that part of their capabilities are reconstituted."

Redlener, for his part, would not be surprised to see a variation of the Madrid bombings in New York. In his view, a fractured Al Qaeda must now be very interested in Penn Station. "Amtrak," he says, "is a sitting duck."

## **2. New York Has Become A Difficult Target.**

But in that case, why hasn't Amtrak already been hit? Or Grand Central, or New Jersey Transit, or the Long Island Rail Road? If trains and Americans are Al Qaeda's objectives, why go after Madrid first?

"New York City may be the safest place in the world right now," answers Loch Johnson, a U.S. intelligence specialist at the University of Georgia and author of *Bombs, Bugs, Drugs, and Thugs: Intelligence and America's Quest for Security*. "We've seen for decades that when finite targets are protected, terrorists move on to another area of vulnerability."

Michael Swetnam, CEO of the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, agrees wholeheartedly. "Al Qaeda is an extremely opportunistic organization that wants a soft spot," says Swetnam, the author of *Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda: Profile of a Terrorist Network*. "So the best way to protect yourself is to be guarded." And New York, says Swetnam, who has studied the city's defenses closely, has been surprisingly successful at turning itself into a hard target. The Department of Homeland Security has suffered chronic under funding and repeated public missteps-remember when Secretary Tom Ridge urged Americans to enjoy their summer vacation on the same day that John Ashcroft warned he had "credible intelligence from multiple sources indicating that Al Qaeda plans to attempt an attack on the United States in the next few months"? But in New York the system seems to work.

"The New York Police Department has one of the most sophisticated terrorist centers I've ever seen," says Swetnam. "[Police Commissioner] Ray Kelly is having great success getting what he needs from Washington and cutting through bureaucratic obstacles that are holding up other departments."

Understanding that New York could not rely entirely on the federal government, Kelly beefed up the city's own intelligence operations from the command level-where he has counterterrorism inspectors working twelve-hour shifts for

24/7 surveillance-down to the street level, where he gets regular updates from garage owners about vehicles in every lot in Manhattan. The NYPD has built up a sophisticated network of informants (see "Anatomy of a Foiled Plot"), and has its own specialists in languages such as Arabic, Pashto, and Urdu monitoring transmissions and broadcasts. Where it once had twenty officers on the terrorism beat, the NYPD now has 4,000. The department has also intensified its efforts at basic police work, like sending officers around to businesses that might be useful to terrorists, such as marinas, army/navy shops, and hunting suppliers, and educating them on what to look out for. Heavily armed Hercules Teams are deployed every day in unpredictable patterns designed to make it hard for an enemy to advance planning.

What might be most important of all is that New York cops have unequalled access to FBI updates. "Basically, NYPD bullied its way into constant online access to FBI intelligence," says Swetnam. "The big gripe from most municipalities is they don't have access to updated information, that the FBI and CIA know about threats in their areas and local police don't." New York City precincts, however, are tied into a statewide Counter-Terrorism Network with hot links to real-time state and federal intelligence.

"Remember when those disks were discovered with floor plans to New Jersey schools?" Swetnam asks, referring to the capture in July of a Baath Party operative in Iraq who was carrying a cd-rom with photos and safety policies for several schools in New Jersey and elsewhere. Though this information was later thought to be for educational use, not terrorism, the discovery raised serious concerns at the time. "I bet there wasn't a police department in the entire state of New Jersey which knew about that disk till they heard it on the news. And I bet there wasn't a police precinct in New York that didn't know about it within hours of the discovery."

## **3. The French Have Saved Us.**

"Don't think because nothing hit New York, nothing was tried," says Swetnam, who used to be a CIA officer and a special consultant to the first President Bush's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. "Plenty was tried, but everything was thwarted. And this might surprise you, but French intelligence was key."

There have been at least four attempts uncovered in the past two years to strike the U.S., he says, including specific attacks on New York, but the plans were intercepted and the operations preempted. "The last one was a big attempt to strike our financial centers. A year before that, they were putting together a ricin attack. Both attacks were planned and staged from Great Britain," says Swetnam. Also, adds Redlener, "attacks on American and international schools overseas have been detected in advance and prevented."

How is that possible, when the CIA's intelligence-gathering is supposedly in a shambles? Because of good friends in shadowy places "The French intelligence services have been just phenomenal," says Swetnam. "We wouldn't have captured those cells in Great Britain if it wasn't for the French, as well as the British and Germans." Even the ISI-Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, which once used drug money to help

finance the Taliban in Afghanistan-has become a crucial U.S. partner in the spy game. "They're really a bad intelligence service, in terms of morals, but really effective," says Swetnam.

For a while, it looked like the CIA was hopelessly unprepared to infiltrate Al Qaeda. The agency had spent decades developing satellite and radio-intercept technology, because that was how secrets were transmitted during the Cold War. "It was right to do that at the time," says Johnson. "But we didn't transition quickly enough when the nerve center of the enemy changed from the halls of the Kremlin to mountain caves in Afghanistan. All of a sudden, we have to figure out how to intercept messages transmitted from mouth to ear."

That requires a formidable Arabic-speaking spy force, which would take years to build from scratch. But the French already have one, retained from their days as colonial masters of Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco, not to mention their mandates over Syria and Lebanon. French intelligence knows how to root out Arabic-speaking insurgents. And while Jacques Chirac may not lend us any French soldiers, he's apparently been generous with the French spy network.

#### **4. Suicide Bombings Don't Work Here.**

Even a fractured Al Qaeda could still carry out suicide bombings, right? In a not-so-bad month in Baghdad, there's a suicide bomb attack every day. It's the ultimate low-tech attack, dependent on nothing more than one dedicated person and a backpack full of explosives.

The fact that not a single suicide bomber has turned up in New York can't be due to immigration screening; not when visa extensions were issued for Mohamed Atta and Marwan Al-Shehhi six months after they'd flown planes into the World Trade Center. And bombers could have been planted here before September 11.

"We've often considered the prospect of sleeper cells," says Johnson. "Some people like to believe that once an extremist arrives here, he'll be so impressed by American freedoms and opportunity that he won't want to kill himself, but quite likely, the opposite is true. Islamic fundamentalists can be appalled and disgusted by what they see as the hedonism of American life."

But if exposure to American life won't prevent suicide bombings, exposure to Americans might. "The more a person develops normal relations, the more comfortable he is in an environment, the less likely he is to commit an act of violence," Johnson says. "The social literature on this goes back more than a hundred years, whether it be a crime, gang violence, or political violence." The September 11 hijackers, in a way, were the exceptions that prove the rule: Because they were able to move freely about the country without attracting suspicion, they could isolate themselves.

So if a sleeper cell had been planted here for years, it would have had to integrate into American life and would probably be less inclined to extreme acts of violence. For terrorists who've managed to slip in since 9/11, it will be hard for them to remain a self-insulating unit without attracting suspicion. And if a potential bomber arrives on his own, he'll have daily

social contacts that will lower the chance of his carrying out a suicide mission.

Complete isolation and a radically short time lapse between the moment a bomber is tapped and when he carries out the attack are essential to successful suicide attacks. "Studies of Hamas suicide bombers indicate there's only a 24-hour window between finding the candidate and carrying out the mission," says Swetnam. "It sounds incredible, but Hamas does the entire process within one day." Hamas recruiters don't select suicide bombers from within their own cadres; instead, they pull in a dogmatic and disillusioned young male outside their operation. It takes a deep pool of disaffected males to find the one willing to carry out a suicide mission.

Throughout the night, they'll keep the candidate in a closed room and bombard him with dogma about his mission as a soldier of Allah and "rev him up about being a hero," as Swetnam puts it. "They tell him, 'Allah only asks once, and he's asking you now.' "Only in extremely rare cases has a suicide bomber been known to back out of a mission, Swetnam says; one of the few that is known about occurred when his isolation buffer broke down." He is said to have run into his brother on the way to his assignment, and that was enough to cause second thoughts."

That's why Peter Sederberg argues that one of the greatest tasks of homeland security is making sure that Muslims consider themselves full partners in the United States. "Our most important ally in the war on terror is the Islamic community," he says. "Even if an extremist comes here who's angry and isolated, we have to make sure the Islamic community is too well integrated to provide any kind of reinforcement or protective cover."

#### **5. Bin Laden Isn't A Terrorist, He's A Killer.**

The principal reason we've been expecting attacks that haven't come may be that we've had bin Laden wrong all along. "Al Qaeda isn't interested in scaring people-it's interested in killing people," explains Sederberg. It was the United States that declared September 11 an act of terror; bin Laden has always called it an act of war, and as in any war, he's out to inflict maximum casualties and disable his enemy's war machine.

"You could argue that Al Qaeda has always gone after military targets," Sederberg says. "When it attacked the USS Cole, it was hitting a warship on what it considered a wartime mission-on its way to blockade Iraq in the Persian Gulf." By targeting the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and, apparently, the White House, bin Laden wasn't trying to terrorize the United States into granting concessions; he was striking at our ability to lead and finance an army. The jihadists see themselves as holy warriors confronting us at the heart of the fight. And right now, the fight is in Iraq.

"Nothing would better prove Islamic-extremist might than driving off the Great Satan's mightiest assembly of armed forces," says Swetnam. "It worked in Afghanistan-defeating the Russians brought the Taliban government to power-and it's easy to imagine that Al Qaeda has a similar intent. The jihadists probably see this as a golden opportunity." The mujaheddin didn't just defeat the Soviet Army-they helped bring down the entire Soviet Union. The war in

Afghanistan sapped the Soviet economy and radicalized anti-Kremlin dissenters in the Red Army, who were no longer willing to risk being burned to death in a tank by an Afghan firebomb. With the Afghanistan example to follow, bin Laden may realize he doesn't need to stage yearlong covert operations in the United States—apparently, he's concluded that the best way to wound the United States is to lock its military in an unpopular foreign war. He essentially confirmed this in his preelection videotape message.

It shouldn't be surprising that all available foot soldiers are being deployed on the main battlefield and not being squandered in a low-percentage attempt to board heavily screened planes or otherwise penetrate heightened U.S. homeland security. This theory might just lend credence to President Bush's claim that "the best way to defeat the terrorists is to stay on the offense." By taking the fight to Iraq, we've concentrated terrorism far from home; anti-American forces don't need to travel 6,000 miles to attack New York when there are Americans right there in Baghdad.

This isn't necessarily a reason for Americans to feel safe, though. "Each successful strike is empowering extremist elements and training them," says Sederberg. "It's showing them what works, and diverting billions of dollars that could be spent on homeland defense. It's also winning over new converts to the cause." Instead of engaging Iraqi militants on their turf, he suggests, we could be investing those billions of dollars to make sure terrorists never enters ours.

According to terrorism experts, New York remains a magnet for terrorists. "One thing I take seriously is the manifesto

found on a very senior Al Qaeda lieutenant which says retribution means killing 4 million Americans, including 2 million children," says Redlener. "That's the ultimate horror, and it doesn't require logistics of any great moment—all they need is a nuclear suitcase bomb."

The logical place to detonate a biological or radiological weapon, of course, would be the point where population density meets ease of access, a place not far from a coast or a shaky border—a place like New York. "Eighty percent of all heroin and cocaine arrives right through our borders, so if you can get a bundle of cocaine here, you can get a nuclear weapon," says Loch Johnson, who points out that from either the Canadian or Mexican frontier, Manhattan is only an overnight drive away.

Or a nuclear device could arrive by sea. "Our ports are woefully unprotected, which is doubly dangerous since they tend to be near metropolitan areas," says Swetnam. Ports and borders—in military terms, those are our flanks and harbors, and no wartime commander would ever dream of leaving them exposed for very long.

*Editor's note: Parts 6, 7 and 8 of this report can be found at [www.newyorkmetro.com/nymetro/news/features/10560/](http://www.newyorkmetro.com/nymetro/news/features/10560/)*

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## Letter From The Editor

*Dear Reader,*

*On behalf of TACDA and the Journal of Civil Defense, I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank you for the support that you have shown to the organization over the past year. It is through your support that we are able to continue our mission of teaching and promoting civil defense concepts and strategies in America, and your support is what will keep us going. While financial support via membership dues and direct contributions are essential, we also rely heavily upon your suggestions and feedback (a different type of support). Because we are here to serve you, our members, we are always excited to hear from you with your personal thoughts and ideas on how to improve TACDA and enable the organization to better serve you.*

*We are planning a lot of changes for 2005 and beyond, including the content found in the Journal of Civil Defense. If you have any suggestions for content—things that you would like to see as part of the JCD—then we want to hear about it. Also, if you would like to*

*write an article to be considered for publication in the JCD, feel free to submit a manuscript via email [jcd@tacda.org](mailto:jcd@tacda.org) for our editors to review.*

*We are 100% opened to your suggestions, as members, and are striving to make TACDA a more effective and efficient tool and resource for our members and supporters. So, if you have any ideas, comments or suggestions that you feel would be beneficial to TACDA and its constituents, please, do not hesitate to let us know. We are here to serve you, and want to do the best job possible for you.*

*We are looking forward to hearing from each and every one of you very soon. Until then, we all wish you and yours a very happy and safe holiday season.*

*Most Sincerely,*  
**Alex Coleman**  
*JCD Editor*

*[The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect official TACDA policy nor points of view held by TACDA or any of its officers.]*