



For Immediate Release

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Phoenix Group Announcement

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**U.S. Department of Office of Intelligence
Transportation and Security (OIS)
Transportation Security Information Report
Subject: Threat Advisory
Number 02-12 Issued: October 10, 2002
Expiration: None**

TSIR 02-12 (Threat Advisory):

This TSIR provides the latest advisory from U.S. law enforcement and intelligence agencies addressing the current threat. This advisory is based upon publicly released information and may be shared within the transportation community.

Information:

Recent statements, apparently by Al Qaeda leaders, threaten attacks against US economic interests. An audio message from Osama Bin Laden (taped on an undetermined date), broadcast by Al Jazeera on Sunday (6 October), refers to Al Qaeda targeting key sectors of the US economy.

Another senior leader (Bin Laden's senior deputy, Ayman Al Zawahir) reiterated the threat in the closing line of an audio taped interview released Tuesday (9 October). This information strengthens previous assessments that Al Qaeda continues to plan major attacks against U.S. interests. The focus upon economic targets is consistent with Al-Qaeda's stated ideological goals and longstanding strategy, to undermine what they see as the backbone of US power, the economy. Striking a prominent U.S. target for economic and symbolic reasons would have immediate worldwide impact.

The coordinated release of these statements, coupled with our knowledge of ongoing plotting by Al Qaeda members and threat information described by detainees, strengthens previous assessments that Al Qaeda continues to plan major attacks against US interests. The statements suggest that an attack may have been approved, while the specific timing is left to operatives in the field. Our concerns are heightened by comments from Al Qaeda detainees who are independently interpreting these taped remarks as a sign of attack.

In 1998, Al Qaeda issued a Fatwa (religious ruling) calling for attacks against Americans worldwide, apparently presaging the August 7, 1998 East Africa Embassy bombings. The content of the statements and the context surrounding these threats reinforces our view that they may signal an attack. One senior detainee maintains that Al Qaeda would only release such a statement after approving a specific plan for an attack. At this time, we have no information on a specific time, date or location of an attack.

Other aspects of the statements reflect what we know of Bin Laden and Al Qaeda strategy. In addition, other recent appeals in extremist circles, some purporting to be from Bin Laden, urge Muslim youth to strike US forces in Kuwait, Jordan, Qatar, and Bahrain. The Al Qaeda organization, which has lost its safe haven in Afghanistan and many of its leaders, is attempting to manipulate the broader Islamic extremist community to attack the United States at home and abroad.

The focus on economic targets is consistent with Al Qaeda's stated ideological goals and longstanding strategy. The September 11 attacks and commentary on these attacks by Bin Laden and others indicate how central economic targets are to this strategy: the group's leaders have said that they aim to undermine what they see as the backbone of US power, the economy. Our adversary is trying to portray American influence as based on economic might and therefore seeks to strike an economic target prominent enough for economic and symbolic reasons that it would have immediate resonance around the world.

Recommended Action:

Recipients should review and implement additional prudent steps to detect, disrupt, deter, and defend against potential attacks against our nation's critical transportation infrastructure and installations at home and abroad.

Due to the lack of specificity of method, target, and timing, the Homeland Security Advisory System Threat Level will remain at Yellow-Elevated, at this time.

U.S. DOT reminds the transportation industry to report information concerning suspicious activity to their local FBI office through the FBI website <http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm> or to the National Infrastructure Protection Center (NIPC) at its website <http://www.nipc.gov/incident/cirr.htm> .

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Phoenix Group consists of several companies, most prominently Operations Support Services, Professional K-9 Services, Phoenix Airport Services, and Phoenix Vessel Services.

Collectively Phoenix Group provides a wide assortment of services necessary in today's difficult security environment. Visit the Phoenix Group Website on www.phoenixgrouppanama.com .