

**National Infrastructure Protection Center**

**HOMELAND SECURITY INFORMATION UPDATE**

**POTENTIAL AL-QA'IDA OPERATIONAL PLANNING**

**Information Bulletin 03-001**

**February 7, 2003**

NIPC Information Bulletins communicate issues that pertain to the critical national infrastructure and are for informational purposes only.

Increasing intelligence indicates that the al-Qa'ida terrorist network maintains an ongoing interest in attacking soft, or lightly secured, targets in the United States and/or the Persian Gulf. The likelihood of such targeting may rise in or around the end of the Hajj (a Muslim religious period ending mid-February 2003), according to current intelligence reporting.

During the past five months, al-Qa'ida and affiliated groups attacked a nightclub in a tourist district in Bali, Indonesia, and a hotel in Mombassa, Kenya. Intelligence indicates al-Qa'ida and affiliated groups continue to view apartments and hotels, as well as other soft targets, in the United States and abroad as viable and attractive targets.

Intelligence indicates that various methods of attack could be employed. The recent attacks in Indonesia and Kenya – as well as the August 1998 bombings of two U.S. embassies in East Africa – demonstrate al-Qa'ida's proficiency and willingness to carry out large-scale vehicle bombings. Circumstances surrounding recent arrests in Europe also indicate that al-Qa'ida developed at least a rudimentary proficiency in creating biological and chemical agents. Potential attacks involving radiological weapons should also be considered.

Several U.S. economic sectors should also be considered potential targets, given their significance and past interest by al-Qa'ida:

- The energy sector, including tank farms, refinery facilities, and oil tankers.
- The financial sector.
- Key transportation links, including bridges, tunnels, railways, subways, and civil aviation.

As well, current intelligence suggests that the al-Qa'ida network maintains an ongoing interest in attacking:

- Symbolic targets, such as national monuments and recreation and amusement parks.
- U.S. symbols of power, such as the White House, the Capitol, and other federal buildings.

The national threat level has been raised from “ELEVATED” (YELLOW) to “HIGH” (ORANGE). This action is based on specific intelligence received and analyzed by the full U.S. intelligence community.

The NIPC encourages individuals to report information concerning suspicious activity to their local FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) office, <http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm>, the NIPC, or to other appropriate authorities. Individuals can reach the NIPC WATCH AND WARNING UNIT at (202) 323-3205, toll free at 1-888-585-9078, or by email to [nipc.watch@fbi.gov](mailto:nipc.watch@fbi.gov).