

Jacques W. Andersen

From: Alerts@PoliceOne.com
Sent: Friday, October 08, 2004 3:09 PM
To: jacques@andersen-email.com
Subject: PoliceOne Alert - [Terrorism] Pictures, Layouts of U.S. Schools Found on Computer Disks in Iraq; A Threat Reminder

Pictures, Layouts of U.S. Schools Found on Computer Disks in Iraq; A Threat Reminder

Though officials say the information in the below alert points to no specific threat, it is a good reminder of (1) the ease in which criminals or terrorists can obtain photographs, building layouts and other material pertaining to schools and other public facilities, and (2) that law enforcement must be continuously aware of and plan for the potential threat(s) to schools.

It happened in Russia and it can happen here. We've also seen that planning and tactical information on these types of attacks are included in al-Qaeda training manuals.

For additional, specific information on response planning, culled from the recent terror take-over attack of the school in Russia, PoliceOne recommends you read, print and hand out, and study the following articles:

Russia Grade School Horror Serves As Painful Reminder of the Need for Detailed Response Planning

http://www.policeone.com/policeone/frontend/parser.cfm?object=News&operation=full_news&id=91955

FBI, DHS Offer Way To Protect U.S. Schools, Lessons Learned From Terror Attack in Russia

http://www.policeone.com/policeone/frontend/parser.cfm?object=News&operation=full_news&id=92610

The U.S. military in Iraq, sometime this summer, discovered two computer disks containing photographs, layouts and other material pertaining to American schools in six states, but there was no threat associated with the information, Department of Homeland Security officials said. The FBI is examining the materials.

The Department of Homeland Security official said the material was associated with a person in Iraq, but it appears that this person has no ties to terrorism. The person has a connection to civic groups doing planning for schools in Iraq, the official said.

The military retrieved the disks in Iraq within the last couple of months, and turned them over to the FBI.

"There is no threat associated with this," another government official said.

The schools are in Fort Myers, Florida; Salem, Oregon; Jones County, Georgia; New Jersey; Michigan; and California.

Officials said that they are taking the matter seriously though there has been no specific threat related to the recovered material.

The U.S. schools were notified in the last few weeks so they would be aware and could take any action they deemed necessary.

"State and local law enforcement personnel have informed us of the need to increase our school security during this election season," said Jones County School Superintendent William Mathews Jr. in a letter sent last month to parents of students in the Middle Georgia community.

"It is important to know that no threat of any type has been directed or is suspected against any Jones County school."

The FBI sent an advisory to terrorism task forces across the nation to inform them about the material, a Department of Homeland Security official said. No public notification or other action associated with a heightened state of alert was taken, the official said, because it did not seem necessary to "elevate it to that level based on the assessment of the intelligence community."

A senior government official said there is no indication anyone was on the ground casing the schools. They said the information recovered is publicly available through the Internet or other means.

One official said the retrieved information is "all of relatively recent vintage."

A senior official said analysts are going over the information and are examining all possible scenarios. As the official put it, schools have been mentioned as possible terror targets in previous intercepted conversations between alleged operatives and in interrogations of detainees, but nothing has emerged recently.

"There is no analysis by the intelligence community that the Iraqi information or Beslan information or any other information indicates there is any plot to attack a school in the United States," said Brian Roehrkasse, a Department of Homeland Security spokesman.

Source: Fox News; CNN

Priority Level (1 = Lowest, 5 = Highest)

- National Level 1

Sign up for PoliceOne Critical Alerts or manage your subscription at:
<http://www.PoliceOne.com/alerts>