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OVER-THE-ROAD-BUS INTELLIGENCE AWARENESS DAILY (OTRBIAD) REPORT

December 26, 2024

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY & INCIDENT REPORTS

Aurora Shooting Suspect Crashes Into RTD Light Rail, Police Say; 4 Taken To Hospital

CBS, 12/25/2024

[Aurora, Colorado] Four people have been taken to the hospital after a shooting and crash involving a Regional Transportation District light rail train in Aurora. Aurora police say a shooting took place around 8:15 a.m. in the 18400 block of East Kepner Place near South Racine Street. Several suspects are in the hospital, in custody, or both, according to Aurora police. The suspects fled the scene in a car and, several minutes later, crashed into an RTD train near East Ellsworth Avenue and Sable Boulevard, about three-and-a-half miles to the northwest, police say. That train is now partially off the tracks as a result of the crash. Police say the shooting appears to be "family-related," there are no outstanding suspects, and no threat to the public in connection to the shooting, Aurora Police Cmdr. Matthew Brukbacher said at a news conference around 10:45 a.m. <https://www.cbsnews.com/colorado/news/aurora-shooting-suspect-crashes-rtd-light-rail-multiple-hospitalized/>

NYC Stabbing: Man Arrested In Connection To Unprovoked Attack At Grand Central On Christmas Eve

FOX News, 12/25/2024

[New York] A suspect was arrested after a random stabbing spree inside the Grand Central subway station in New York City on Christmas Eve left two victims wounded, police said. A spokesperson for the New York City Police Department (NYPD) confirmed to Fox News Digital that 28-year-old Jason Sargeant, of Brooklyn, was arrested for the assault on two random people. On Tuesday, just before 10:15 p.m., police responded to a 911 call about an assault at the 42 Street-Grand Central subway station. Police said a 26-year-old woman was slashed in the neck and a 42-year-old man was slashed in the left wrist. EMS responded and transported both victims to local hospitals. <https://www.foxnews.com/us/nyc-stabbing-man-arrested-connection-unprovoked-attack-grand-central-christmas-eve>

Woman Stabbed On METRO Bus Multiple Times During Robbery

FOX 26, 12/23/2024

[Houston, Texas] A woman is in critical condition after being stabbed during a robbery while getting off a METRO bus in Houston, according to police. Houston Police Department Lieutenant Horelica said the

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OVER THE ROAD BUS,
& SURFACE TRANSPORTATION



suspect followed the woman as she exited the bus on Shepherd and Memorial Drive and robbed her at knifepoint before stabbing her multiple times. Officers treated the victim at the scene before she was taken by the Houston Fire Department to a local hospital. Police received a description of the suspect and located him minutes later. The suspect attempted to run from officers, but was arrested in the 4600 block of Center Street with the assistance of a K9 unit and a helicopter, Lt. Horelica said. Investigators say they were able to link the suspect to an earlier robbery around 6:30 p.m. near West Main Street and Montrose Boulevard. He allegedly robbed another individual at gunpoint and stole items.

<https://www.fox26houston.com/news/metro-bus-stabbing-robbery-shepherd-memorial-drive>

TERRORISM & EXTREMISM

Hamas Concedes Military Capabilities Lost, Shifts To Alternative Tactics

JNS, 12/23/2024

[Palestine] Sources within Hamas admitted Sunday that Israel Defense Forces operations have successfully neutralized most of their military capabilities in Gaza, forcing the Palestinian terrorist organization to adopt alternative tactics. Speaking to the Saudi newspaper Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, Hamas sources revealed that fighters on the ground are now making decisions independently without receiving direct orders from senior command. While they still attempt to update higher-ranking officials about their plans, these communications can take hours or even days to reach what remains of Hamas's leadership in Gaza. According to Gazan sources, after 15 months of war, the terrorists have lost most of their capabilities, which has occurred alongside the elimination of key Hamas figures involved in weapons production and engineering. <https://www.jns.org/hamas-concedes-military-capabilities-lost-shifts-to-alternative-tactics/>

ANALYST COMMENTARY: Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya (HAMAS) is the most capable militant group in the Palestinian territories. An offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Iranian-backed organization primarily operates in the Gaza Strip but maintains a presence in the West Bank, Lebanon, Egypt, Qatar, and Turkey as well. Following the devastating Hamas attack on Israel on 7 October 2023, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) began a systematic program to dismantle the Hamas infrastructure and leadership structure. Of particular concern is the approximate 400-mile network of tunnels that facilitates Hamas smuggling and clandestine movement throughout the region. By January 2024, The Times of Israel reported that the IDF had documented 5,700 shafts that connected the surface to the tunnel system. Hamas uses its tunnels to store materiel for attacks on Israel and deploy its military troops. According to its 1988 charter, Hamas refuses to recognize Israel and is committed to violence and the creation of an Islamic Palestinian state in the entirety of the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. This quest for territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, which Israel occupies, gave rise to the campaign slogan, "from the river to the sea," which is chanted by adherents as a goal or mission statement. The Counter Extremism Project reports that

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“ Hamas does not recognize Israel’s right to exist and has dedicated itself to violently seeking Israel’s destruction.” The IDF is committed to reducing Hamas’ operational abilities and combat effectiveness by dismantling the ability of the terror network to wage war, or plan and carry out attacks.

SECURITY & SAFETY AWARENESS

Operations To Decrease At Troubled Columbus Greyhound Bus Terminal *WCMH, 12/23/2024*

[Columbus, Ohio] The Greyhound bus terminal on Wilson Road near I-70 will soon cut services in accordance with an agreement with the city of Columbus. The bus terminal operated by Baron’s Buses was deemed a nuisance property by City Attorney Zach Klein. They came to an agreement to decrease the services offered, increase security, and ensure working bathroom facilities on the site. The site was deemed a nuisance after the number of calls for service from police jumped in the months following the bus terminal’s opening. A man was shot and killed there, along with multiple calls for fighting and other violence, including a security guard having their ear bitten off. <https://www.nbc4i.com/news/local-news/columbus/operations-to-decrease-at-troubled-columbus-greyhound-bus-terminal/>

ANALYST COMMENTARY: In 2021, German transit conglomerate FlixBus (now FlixBus) purchased the Greyhound Lines bus operations but not the Greyhound Lines bus terminals. In 2022, a subsidiary of the Alden Global Capital hedge fund purchased numerous Greyhound stations and has since been selling them off as the existing leases between the bus operations and properties end. Greyhound bus stations around the country face uncertain futures as they fall victim to disrepair and urban blight. Large cities across the U.S. are experiencing a shift in over-the-road bus and motor coach services with the closure of major passenger terminals in cities like Chicago, Philadelphia, Columbus, and Tampa. These changes are driven by declining revenue due to decreasing ridership and the increasing cost and challenges associated with maintaining safe and clean environments for passengers in urban areas. On 14 March 2023, Minneapolis, Minnesota closed an indoor passenger waiting area in the Uptown Transit Station due to violence and intrusion of a homeless population seeking shelter. On 29 August 2023, the Greyhound bus terminal in Columbus, Ohio was declared a public nuisance due to “the amount of crime and violence” taking place in it. According to the Wall Street Journal, some motor coach companies are liquidating passenger terminals for a profit so the commercial space can be repurposed by developers. The Wall Street Journal also reports that “Intercity bus travel is not federally regulated and attracts less attention and public funding than passenger rail or air travel, even though a 2016 DePaul University study put the number of bus riders at around 62 million a year, roughly twice that of Amtrak.” Outside of urban areas, buses typically stop at common areas such as parks or shopping areas where there is no designated passenger terminal, and riders are offered minimal services at these stops. This is advantageous to the motor coach operators economically, but in an urban area, it creates new public safety problems. Without a sheltered or controlled place to

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OVER THE ROAD BUS,
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wait, passengers are left waiting on public streets with their luggage, making them attractive targets for crime, and many individuals traveling by bus lack the resources to use alternative forms of public transportation. If these passengers are unable to make transfers between buses safely, it will impact their ability to travel. Many municipalities want carriers to pay the cost for intermodal transportation hubs; however, some carriers need more of a cost-sharing approach to stay afloat.

Subway Crimes In Brooklyn And Queens Raise Safety Concerns Despite Increased Patrols

QNS, 12/23/2024

[Brooklyn, New York] At least two high-profile subway crimes rocked the outer boroughs just days after Gov. Kathy Hochul added hundreds more National Guard members to the train system — leaving New Yorkers skeptical of their safety both above and below ground. After the horrific arson homicide in Brooklyn on Dec. 22, Hochul doubled down on her decision to add 250 more National Guard members to the subway system and cameras in every subway car on Dec. 18. “A suspect is now in custody for the horrific incident on the F train,” she said in a statement on Sunday. “Our brand-new security cameras helped law enforcement find the suspect and arrest him.” <https://qns.com/2024/12/subway-crimes-in-brooklyn-and-queens-raise-safety-concerns/>

Sound Transit Extends Goodmaps App To Five Additional 1 Line Stations

Mass Transit, 12/23/2024

[Seattle, Washington] Sound Transit has extended the use of the GoodMaps app to five additional 1 Line stations. The GoodMaps app, which uses light detection and ranging mapping technology to create highly accurate 3D maps of large public spaces’ interiors, has been added to the Northgate, University of Washington, Capitol Hill, Columbia City and SeaTac/Airport stations. Sound Transit notes the app has been available at the Westlake and International District/Chinatown stations since February 2024. With its real-time, turn-by-turn directions via a smartphone app, Sound Transit notes GoodMaps provides accessible wayfinding for all passengers, including those who have visual or hearing impairments, are neurodivergent or have limited mobility, as well as anyone who feels anxious or uncomfortable in new or complex environments or just wants to find their way more efficiently.

<https://www.masstransitmag.com/technology/passenger-info/mobile-applications/press-release/55251449/sound-transit-sound-transit-extends-goodmaps-app-to-five-additional-1-line-stations>

RFP: Automatic Passenger Counter And Transportation Technology

Mass Transit, 12/23/2024

The City of Fresno Department of Transportation is seeking information on the various manufacturers and types of Automatic Passenger Counter (APC) systems and transit technology for transit vehicles. The City of Fresno’s Department of Transportation/Fresno Area Express (FAX) operates scheduled fixed-route services throughout the Fresno-Clovis Metropolitan Area (FCMA). FAX provides over 9.6 million fixed-route passenger trips a year and has a fleet of over 120 buses. Fresno Area Express is a recipient of

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OVER THE ROAD BUS,
& SURFACE TRANSPORTATION



federal funding and submits automatic passenger counter numbers to the National Transit Database. APCs provide crucial data in the process of calculating ridership on public transportation, allowing our transit agency to accurately plan routes, optimize schedules, allocate resources efficiently, report accurate passenger counts to stakeholders, and ultimately improve service quality based on estimated passenger flow information. <https://www.masstransitmag.com/transit-bids-rfp/article/55251703/fresno-area-express-fax-rfp-automatic-passenger-counter-and-transportation-technology>

Law Expands Crime Of Interfering With Public Transit To Include Drug Use

KOBI 5, 12/23/2024

[Portland, Oregon] Senate Bill 1553, which expands the crime of interfering with public transportation to include drug use, begins January 1. The law aims to address safety concerns and disruptions caused by drug use on public transit, while also opening access to state-funded treatment for those convicted. The bill was introduced after TriMet, the Portland-area transit agency, reported a 30% drop in the number of commuters who felt safe on public transportation and the closure of TriMet's transit center due to drug use and fentanyl smoke exposure incidents. Senate Bill 1553, which expands the crime of interfering with public transportation to include drug use, begins January 1. The law aims to address safety concerns and disruptions caused by drug use on public transit, while also opening access to state-funded treatment for those convicted. The bill was introduced after TriMet, the Portland-area transit agency, reported a 30% drop in the number of commuters who felt safe on public transportation and the closure of TriMet's transit center due to drug use and fentanyl smoke exposure incidents. <https://kobi5.com/news/law-expands-crime-of-interfering-with-public-transit-to-include-drug-use-260762/>

Obrist Touts Benefits Of 'Liquid Solar Energy'

Bulk Transporter, 12/23/2024

[Germany] Frank Obrist, founder and CEO of the German-Austrian Obrist Group, says renewable energy derived from air and sunlight that is transportable and storable with the same ease as fossil fuels no longer is a utopian vision but a fully developed technical concept ready for large-scale industrial implementation. "Green methanol is a renewable energy source that can replace all fossil fuels worldwide," Obrist claims. "As hard to imagine today as the iPhone was before its launch in 2007, green methanol will be as commonplace in 15 years as smartphones are today." Obrist anticipates this pivotal shift toward "liquid solar energy" to take off in 2025. In simple terms, the process involves extracting water from the air and using solar energy to convert it into hydrogen, which is then transformed into methanol, the Obrist Group explained. <https://www.bulktransporter.com/green-trends/article/55251444/obrist-group-touts-benefits-of-liquid-solar-energy>

ANALYST COMMENTARY: Methanol is a simple alcohol or solvent that is derived from organic material like wood or the mixture of hydrogen and carbon monoxide derived from biomass, according to Britannica. A German research firm, Orbist, has discovered and patented a way to produce methanol

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by extracting water vapor from the air and using the heat energy produced by solar collectors to make hydrogen, which is then converted to methanol. The International Energy Agency (IEA) reports that methanol is a "multipurpose fuel that can be used on its own, blended with other fuels or for producing fuel additives, which improve engine performance. It can also be used in fuel cells, which convert energy to electricity." Combustion engines already use methanol blends and the IEA states that "methanol can be produced from natural resources and waste streams, or by combining renewable hydrogen and recycled CO₂, yielding less greenhouse gases than producing methanol from fossil fuels. Renewable methanol can be produced on an industrial scale at a cost similar to that of established renewable fuels, if suitable resources are used." The solar system developed by Orbist does not require burning fossil fuels to produce methanol and according to its engineers, pulls more CO₂ from the air than is produced by its eventual combustion. Orbist believes that by removing CO₂ from the air, the process can provide unlimited fuel in a way that is positive for the climate.

CYBERSECURITY

New Android NoviSpy Spyware Linked To Qualcomm Zero-Day Bugs

Bleeping Computer, 12/16/2024

[Serbia] The Serbian government exploited Qualcomm zero-days to unlock and infect Android devices with a new spyware named 'NoviSpy,' used to spy on activists, journalists, and protestors. One of the Qualcomm flaws linked to the attacks is CVE-2024-43047, which was marked as an actively exploited zero-day vulnerability by Google Project Zero in October 2024 and received a fix on Android in November. The spyware, which appears to have been deployed by Serbian authorities, based on its communications, was discovered by Amnesty International's Security Lab on a journalist's phone after police returned it. "In February 2024, Slaviša Milanov, an independent journalist from Dimitrovgrad in Serbia who covers local interest news stories, was brought into a police station after a seemingly routine traffic stop," reads a report by Amnesty International.

<https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/new-android-novispy-spyware-linked-to-qualcomm-zero-day-bugs/>

ANALYST COMMENTARY: The NoviSpy spyware campaign reflects the alarming intersection of state-level surveillance, exploitation of advanced vulnerabilities, and targeted harassment of dissidents. The abuse of Qualcomm zero-days, including CVE-2024-43047, shows a persistent challenge: the lag between vulnerability discovery and remediation, particularly when OEMs or third-party vendors delay deploying patches. This gap creates windows of opportunity for sophisticated actors like Serbia's Security Information Agency to weaponize unpatched flaws against civil society. What sets this case apart is the apparent use of Cellebrite tools to bypass device security in conjunction with zero-day exploits, suggesting a coordinated effort to neutralize Android's defenses from multiple angles. Such techniques underscore the need for heightened scrutiny of forensic tools and their deployment in regions with questionable human rights records. The involvement of zero-click exploits leveraging

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OVER THE ROAD BUS,
& SURFACE TRANSPORTATION



Android's RCS features adds another layer of complexity. These attacks exploit services designed for user convenience, effectively turning them into conduits for spyware delivery without user interaction. This raises urgent questions about the security posture of telecom protocols and highlights the need for stronger safeguards against misuse. For mitigation, users should prioritize timely OS updates, disable unnecessary calling features like VoLTE and VoWiFi, and employ mobile threat detection solutions. Device makers must also accelerate patch rollouts and collaborate with security researchers to close exploit windows more effectively. Meanwhile, increased global pressure to regulate the sale and misuse of surveillance tools like Cellebrite is essential to curb abuses like these.

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