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

January 3, 2025

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY & INCIDENT REPORTS

Police ID Truck Driver Charged After Bomb Threat Shut Down I-85 In Greenville Thursday

South Carolina Public Radio, 1/3/2025

[Greenville, North Carolina] The S.C. Department of Public Safety said that no explosive devices were located in a tractor-trailer after the threat shut down part of Interstate 85 on Thursday, June 2, 2025. An Illinois tractor-trailer driver has been charged after state police said he made a bomb threat Thursday afternoon, jamming up traffic for hours on Interstate 85 in Greenville County. Twenty-eight-year-old Ahmad Jamal Khamees Alhendi of Oak Lawn, Illinois, is booked in the Greenville County jail on charges of breach of peace of a high and aggravated nature, conveying false information about a bomb threat and operating/permitting an unregistered vehicle, according to booking information. At 2:45 p.m. Thursday at mile marker 44, Alhendi was stopped by State Transport Police over a missing license plate, the S.C. Department of Public Safety said in a post on X. Public Safety said that during the stop Alhendi said there was an "explosive device" inside the tractor-trailer, leading local and state police and the FBI to shut down all six lanes of I-85 to check the vehicle. <https://www.southcarolinapublicradio.org/sc-news/2025-01-03/truck-driver-charged-after-bomb-threat-shut-down-i-85-in-greenville-for-hours-thursday>

Payette Police Arrest Suspect After IED Found Near Train Car

CBS2, 1/2/2025

[Payette, Idaho] Payette police officers were dispatched to the 600 Block of North 8th Street on Wednesday around 5:54 p.m. regarding a suspicious individual trying to light something on fire near a parked railroad car. Officers found fresh footprints in the snow and tracked them to a train car. They located a suspected undetonated Improvised Explosive Device (IED). Officers followed the footprints to a camp trailer parked near a residence. The suspect, identified as 40-year-old Brent Sharrai, fled from the camp trailer on foot but surrendered after a short pursuit. Sharrai was taken into custody on outstanding Payette County warrants and later booked into the Payette County Jail with additional charges for possession of a destructive device (felony), possession of a controlled substance (felony), possession of paraphernalia (misdemeanor) and resisting and obstructing officers. <https://idahonews.com/news/local/payette-police-arrest-suspect-after-ied-found-near-train-car>

ANALYST COMMENTARY: At approximately 6:00 a.m. on 1 January 2025, law enforcement personnel in Payette, Idaho received a call from a witness claiming that a suspicious person was trying to ignite

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something in the street adjacent to a rail yard. Law enforcement responded and were able to track the suspicious person by following footprints left in the snow. During their tracking, they discovered an improvised explosive device (IED) in a rail car that was comprised of a PVC pipe filled with black powder that had been extracted from fireworks. Law enforcement alerted Union Pacific and trains in the area were halted for approximately five hours. The bomb squad was called in to safely detonate the device, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) also responded to the incident due to heightened security concerns nationwide following the vehicle ramming incident that occurred earlier that day in New Orleans. Approximately 12 hours after receiving the suspicious activity report, at 6 p.m. law enforcement arrested 40-year-old Brent Sharrai in connection with the device. Sharrai claimed he was simply trying to make fireworks, and investigators found similar devices at the camp trailer he was living in. It is unclear if Sharrai was attempting to cause damage or harm, or if he constructed the device for personal entertainment.

MTA Worker Stabbed At Bronx Subway Station

1010 WINS, 1/2/2025

[New York] An MTA worker was wounded in a stabbing at a subway station in the Bronx on Thursday morning, police said. The cleaner was in some sort of dispute at the Pelham Parkway 5-line station around 6:30 a.m. when he was stabbed in the arm. The victim, who is in his 40s, was transported to a hospital and is expected to survive his injuries, according to police. An investigation into the stabbing is ongoing; no arrests have been reported. The attack came a day after two men were stabbed in separate subway assaults in Manhattan on Wednesday morning. And it came two days after a straphanger was pushed into the path of a 1 train at the 18th Street station in Chelsea on Tuesday in an apparently random attack that left the victim in critical condition. <https://www.audacy.com/1010wins/news/local/mta-worker-stabbed-in-the-bronx>

TERRORISM & EXTREMISM

Cold Comfort: The Latest Attacks On America Follow A Familiar Playbook

The Hill, 1/3/2025

The tragic pickup truck ramming in New Orleans and the subsequent explosion of a Tesla Cybertruck in Las Vegas remind us that terrorist threats remain a deadly reality in the U.S. There are no indications yet that the two attacks were coordinated. More likely, they are coincidental, although that will not prevent linking them to advance political agendas or conspiracy theories. The coincidence contributes to greater public apprehension. In the coming days, we will learn more about the perpetrators — motivation, collaborators, funding. For now, it is clear that the New Orleans attack was intended to cause high casualties. It did. ... Unlike other forms of terrorist attack, most of which occur in conflict zones in the developing world, most vehicle ramming attacks occur in developed countries — Europe and the United

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States account for nearly three-quarters of the attacks and almost half of the fatalities. Roughly half of all vehicle ramming attacks have occurred in the United States alone, but these account for only nine percent of the fatalities, owing to the many ramming attacks that occurred during the Black Lives Matter protests. Fifteen deaths (including the driver) in the New Orleans attack surpass the eight killed in the 2017 Bike Path attack in New York, which was also ISIS-inspired. <https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/5063956-vehicle-ramming-attacks-terrorism/>

What Is The Islamic State Group And What Attacks Has It Inspired?

Associated Press, 1/2/2025

The FBI says it recovered the black banner of the Islamic State group from the truck that an American man from Texas smashed into New Year's partygoers in New Orleans' French Quarter, killing 15 people. The investigation is expected to look in part at any support or inspiration that driver Shamsud-Din Jabbar may have drawn from that violent Middle East-based group or from any of at least 19 affiliated groups around the world. President Joe Biden said Wednesday evening that the FBI had told him that "mere hours before the attack, (Jabbar) posted videos on social media indicating that he was inspired" by IS. ... The main group also goes by IS, ISIS, or the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. It began as a breakaway group from al-Qaida. Under leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, IS had seized stunning amounts of territory in Iraq and Syria by 2014. Within territory under its control, it killed, raped and otherwise abused members of other faiths and targeted fellow Sunni Muslims who strayed from its harsh interpretation of Islam. <https://apnews.com/article/new-orleans-crash-islamic-state-lone-wolves-4bb6446c484737f9e9dd1b9c26a899a9>

SECURITY & SAFETY AWARENESS

New Laws Go Into Effect In Oregon To Help Curtail Medicine Costs, Reduce Drug Use On Transit

Oregon Capital Chronicle, 1/2/2025

[Oregon] Oregon is kicking off 2025 with new laws to stop drug use on public transportation, reduce the cost of prescription drugs and rein in the price of electronic device repairs. On Jan. 1, dozens of laws went into effect for Oregonians, affecting health care, consumer rights and public safety. ... other laws started this month that aim to address the drug addiction crisis and other issues. Here's a look at the most significant changes: Illicit drug use on public transit: Senate Bill 1553 takes aim at public drug use on transit systems. It expands the crime of interfering with public transportation to include drug use on public transit. That makes it a drug-designated Class A misdemeanor, which allows people convicted of the offense access to state-funded treatment. The new law came in response to rising concerns about open drug use in and around public transportation. TriMet, Oregon's largest transit agency which serves the Portland area, reports a 30% drop in riders feeling safe on buses and trains. The Tillamook County Transportation District was forced to close its transit center to the public because of drug use and drug smoke exposures. <https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2025/01/02/new-laws-go-into-effect-in-oregon-to-help-curtail-medicine-costs-reduce-drug-use-on-transit/>

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ANALYST COMMENTARY: Drug use in public transit systems is an issue that has impacted both passengers and transit authorities for years, and concerns have long been raised regarding the safety and health risks the drug use poses. Not only are the drug users putting their own health at risk, the secondhand smoke and residual residue of certain drugs can expose others in the confined environment to toxins that have been definitively linked to health problems. Mass Transit Magazine reported that “TriMet had 61 workers’ compensation claims between February 2021 and June 2023 in which employees immediately sought medical treatment after concerns of exposure to secondhand drug smoke.” In addition, drug users may engage in unpredictable or unsafe behavior, leading to disturbances or even violent incidents. This can create an uncomfortable and unsafe environment for other passengers and transit personnel, especially vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, and those with disabilities. Drug use on public transit also contributes to the perception of transit systems being unsafe, which can lead to decreased ridership which, in turn, can lead to higher levels of crime further exacerbating the public safety problem. In September 2023, the University of Washington’s Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Department released a report titled “Assessing Fentanyl and Methamphetamine in the Air and on Surfaces of Transit Vehicles.” The study included buses and trains operated by Sound Transit, King County Metro, Community Transit, Everett Transit, and TriMet, all of which are in the Pacific Northwest. In summary, the report found that surfaces and in the air filtration systems of the transit vehicles tested had more drug residue than the environmental exposure outside the vehicles. According to the study, “Of the 78 air samples, 25 percent had a detectable level of fentanyl and 100 percent had detectable methamphetamine. Of the 102 surface samples, 46 percent had detectable fentanyl and 98 percent had detectable methamphetamine. Researchers found cocaine in 45 percent of tested samples.” One of the recommendations made by the researchers is for transit operators to develop enhanced cleaning protocols to mitigate the potentially harmful effects of the drug residue. This involves targeted deep cleaning of certain areas and regular cleaning of all areas. The University of Washington Study can be viewed at: https://deohs.washington.edu/sites/default/files/2023-09/UW%20exposure%20assessment%20final%20report%20Sept%202023_authors.pdf

What We Know About the Cybertruck Explosion in Las Vegas

New York Times, 1/2/2025

The man who was driving a Tesla Cybertruck that exploded outside the Trump International Hotel in Las Vegas on Wednesday morning shot himself in the head immediately before the vehicle was engulfed by fire, the authorities said on Thursday. Earlier on Thursday, military officials identified the driver as an Army master sergeant who had been on leave from active duty. The authorities are still working to determine exactly what happened, and what the motivation was for the incident, which injured seven people. ... According to the F.B.I., no connection has been found between the explosion in Las Vegas and the New Orleans attack that left 14 people dead. But Christopher Raia, a deputy assistant director with the F.B.I., said on Thursday that federal and local law enforcement agencies were still investigating and

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had not ruled anything out. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/02/us/tesla-cybertruck-explosion-las-vegas.html>

RTD Ramps Up Safety Measures For People Planning To Attend Denver Broncos Game Sunday In Response To New Orleans Attack

CBS News, 1/2/2025

[Denver, Colorado] The Regional Transportation District is sharing its plans to help keep riders protected if they plan on attending the Denver Broncos game at Empower Field at Mile High. The Broncos are scheduled to play against the Kansas City Chiefs at 2:25 p.m. Sunday and that game will help determine if they make the playoffs. This comes after police say a man intentionally drove a pickup truck into a crowd of revelers on Bourbon Street in New Orleans' French Quarter in a deadly rampage early on New Year's Day. At least 14 people were killed before the attacker was killed in a shootout with police. RTD says it has always had a plan in place to keep riders safe. RTD's Transit Police has four K-9s it says are trained and ready for any terrorism-related issues. FEMA funds the program to help RTD and other local agencies look for threats. <https://www.cbsnews.com/colorado/news/rtd-safety-measures-denver-broncos-response-new-orleans-attack/>

U.S. Weighs Ban on Chinese Drones, Citing National Security Concerns

New York Times, 1/2/2025

The Biden administration said on Thursday that it was considering a new rule that could restrict or ban Chinese drones in the United States out of national security concerns. In a notice, the Commerce Department said the involvement of foreign adversaries — notably China and Russia — in the design, development, manufacture and supply of drones could pose “undue or unacceptable risk to U.S. national security.” The notice requested private companies to comment on the scope and implications of the rule by March 4. The decision of what restrictions to impose, if any, on Chinese and Russian drones will fall to the Trump administration. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/02/us/politics/drone-ban-china-security.html>

CYBERSECURITY

Experts Unsure Of Risk Appetite As EU Beefs Up Cyber Rules For Critical Infrastructure

Compliance Week, 1/2/2025

New rules on cyber risk management across the European Union put executives firmly in the crosshairs for noncompliance and are likely to apply to a wider range of organizations than many business leaders may initially think. However, there are also concerns that the rules may become muddled as different countries interpret them and enforce them in different ways. The EU's Network and Information Security Directive (NIS2) requires operators of critical infrastructure and essential services—including

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those in energy and water, transport, banking and financial market infrastructures, healthcare, and digital infrastructure—to implement appropriate cybersecurity measures and report any incidents to the relevant authorities. The directive is not just about organizations ensuring their own security and resilience are adequate—but also those of suppliers. <https://www.complianceweek.com/regulatory-policy/experts-unsure-of-risk-appetite-as-eu-beefs-up-cyber-rules-for-critical-infrastructure/35760.article>

'Bad Likert Judge' Jailbreak Bypasses Guardrails of OpenAI, Other Top LLMs

Dark Reading, 1/2/2025

A new jailbreak technique for OpenAI and other large language models (LLMs) increases the chance that attackers can circumvent cybersecurity guardrails and abuse the system to deliver malicious content. Discovered by researchers at Palo Alto Networks' Unit 42, the so-called Bad Likert Judge attack asks the LLM to act as a judge scoring the harmfulness of a given response using the Likert scale. The psychometric scale, named after its inventor and commonly used in questionnaires, is a rating scale measuring a respondent's agreement or disagreement with a statement. The jailbreak then asks the LLM to generate responses that contain examples that align with the scales, with the ultimate result being that "the example that has the highest Likert scale can potentially contain the harmful content," Unit 42's Yongzhe Huang, Yang Ji, Wenjun Hu, Jay Chen, Akshata Rao, and Danny Tsechansky wrote in a post describing their findings. <https://www.darkreading.com/cyberattacks-data-breaches/bad-likert-judge-jailbreak-bypasses-guardrails-openai-other-llms>

ANALYST COMMENTARY: The "Bad Likert Judge" attack emphasizes the evolving sophistication of techniques used to bypass LLM guardrails. By exploiting the model's interpretative reasoning through psychometric scales, attackers can effectively coax harmful outputs. This approach differs from previous jailbreaks by leveraging the model's reasoning capabilities as a weapon, rather than directly attempting to manipulate behavior through simple prompts. The success of this method—achieving a 60% increase in attack success rates—demonstrates the adaptability of attackers as defensive measures improve. Mitigation strategies like content-filtering systems, while promising with an average 89% reduction in attack success rates, are not failproof. Content filters face challenges such as identifying nuanced harmful intent and avoiding false positives that could degrade legitimate user experience. Additionally, sophisticated multi-step attacks may still bypass these filters, especially as adversaries iterate on successful techniques. This underlines the importance of multi-layered defenses, including real-time monitoring, adversarial testing, and model retraining focused on edge cases. For developers and organizations deploying LLMs, proactive collaboration with cybersecurity teams is essential. Regular audits, adversarial simulation exercises, and cross-referencing outputs with known attack patterns can enhance resilience. Educating end-users about responsible LLM usage and incorporating robust user-reporting mechanisms can mitigate unintended harm caused by such jailbreak techniques. As jailbreaks evolve, the focus must remain on adaptive defenses that keep pace with emerging threats.

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