Information Sharing & Analysis Center

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION & OVER THE ROAD BUS

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

February 26, 2025

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY & INCIDENT REPORTS

Texas Rancher Killed By Suspected Cartel IED On Mexican Border As Authorities Warn Of 'Growing Threat'
New York Post, 2/25/2025

[Texas] A Texas border rancher was killed near the border by a suspected cartel IED earlier this month, the Texas Department of Agriculture told The Post Tuesday — as officials issued an urgent safety warning for the Rio Grande Valley. Rancher Antonio Céspedes Saldierna, 74, who worked on both sides of the border, along with Horacio Lopez Peña, were killed in the blast in Tamaulipas, Mexico, which was just south of Brownsville, Texas. Lopez's wife, Ninfa Griselda Ortega, was hospitalized with injuries. Saldierna was driving on his ranch when he hit the explosive device, causing it to detonate, according to KRGV. Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller said the deadly explosion is part of a "growing threat posed by cartel activity along our southern border" and encourages ranchers "to exercise extreme caution" in the area. "I encourage everyone in the agricultural industry to stay vigilant, remain aware of their surroundings, and report any suspicious activity to law enforcement. Additionally, you can avoid dirt roads and remote areas, refrain from touching unfamiliar objects that could be explosive devices, limit travel to daylight hours, stay on main roads, and avoid cartel-controlled regions," said Miller.
https://nypost.com/2025/02/25/us-news/texas-rancher-killed-by-suspected-cartel-ied-on-mexican-border-as-authorities-warn-of-growing-threat/

ANALYST COMMENTARY: In early February 2025, a 74-year-old rancher was killed when the vehicle he was driving struck an improvised explosive device (IED) that had been emplaced on a dirt road on a private ranch near the town of San Fernando in Tamaulipas, Mexico, approximately 90 miles south of Brownsville, Texas. The rancher and one passenger were killed during the explosion, and a third occupant of the vehicle suffered injuries. In response to the incident, Texas officials warned "all Texas farmers, ranchers, and agricultural workers who travel to Mexico or operate near the border to exercise extreme caution." The incident has been repeatedly misreported, with many news outlets and officials suggesting and insinuating that the IED was emplaced on the U.S. side of the border, which is incorrect. Cartel-linked threat actors have employed IEDs in the Tamaulipas, Mexico area multiple times in recent months. In January 2025, an IED emplaced by cartel linked threat actors destroyed a truck belonging to Mexico's National Water Commission in the same general area, which

prompted the Tamaulipas government to warn residents and visitors that "Armed confrontations between organized crime groups have left explosive materials and substances on roads, ditches and agricultural fields that represent a risk to citizens." Following the warning from the Mexican state, the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Mexico shared their own advisory that stated, "The State of Tamaulipas has issued a warning to avoid moving or touching improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which have been found in and around the area of Reynosa, Rio Bravo, Valle Hermoso, and San Fernando along dirt and secondary roads. IEDs are being increasingly manufactured and used by criminal organizations in this region. … An IED destroyed a Government of Mexico (CONAGUA) official vehicle in Rio Bravo and injured its occupant on January 23. As a precaution, U.S. government employees have been ordered to avoid all travel in and around Reynosa and Rio Bravo outside of daylight hours and to avoid dirt roads throughout Tamaulipas." The Tamaulipas warning, which also contains pictures of IEDs used by cartels in the region, can be found at: https://www.facebook.com/GobTamaulipas/posts/1068051992034158?ref=embed_post

Person Dead After Collision With BART Train At Civic Center Station
Mercury News, 2/25/2025

[San Francisco, California] A person died early Tuesday in what BART officials said appears to be a collision with a train on the tracks at the Civic Center station. BART spokesperson Jim Allison confirmed the fatality at 10 a.m., about 75 minutes after the emergency first was reported. BART closed its station until about 10 a.m., when they allowed trains single-tracking on the tracks opposite the incident to stop. The station was closed in the immediate aftermath of the collision, and trains did not stop as they used a single-track to go through the station. The single-tracking after the collision started at Embarcadero and ran to the 24th Street station, Allison said. San Francisco Muni honored BART tickets and shuttled customers between the Embarcadero and the Civic Center stations while Civic Center station was closed. https://www.mercurynews.com/2025/02/25/barts-civic-center-station-in-san-francisco-closed-after-emergency-on-tracks/

1 Train Subway Line Partially Suspended In NYC For Smoke Condition
PIX 11, 2/25/2025

[New York] The No. 1 subway line was suspended in both directions between Manhattan and the Bronx on Tuesday, according to the MTA. There was no service between the 215th Street station in the Bronx and the 145th Street station in Manhattan. The No. 1 train was delayed in both directions. A train was pulling into the 191st Street station in Manhattan when it hit an object on the tracks, officials said. The object then hit the third rail, which filled the station with smoke. The train and station were evacuated, fire officials said. Some 16 people were sent to area hospitals with minor injuries and another two people refused medical attention, according to the FDNY. https://pix11.com/news/transit/1-train-subway-line-partially-suspended-for-subway-fire/

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TERRORISM & EXTREMISM

Neo-Nazi Group Plots Rebuild As Trump's FBI Chief Takes Helm, Audio Reveals
The Guardian, 2/24/2025

An international neo-Nazi terrorist group with origins in the US appears to be quickly rebuilding its global and stateside ranks, according to information obtained by the Guardian from its digital accounts. Founded in 2018, the Base has been the intense focus of a years-long FBI counter-terrorism investigation that has resulted in more than a dozen of its members arrested. It has plotted an assassination, mass shootings and other actions in Europe, which made it a proscribed terrorist organization in several countries. By 2022, it seemed to disappear. Yet its founder and leader, Rinaldo Nazzaro, a former US special forces contractor residing in Russia, used the safety of Russian apps before the November election to recruit and reorganize during a tense political moment. At one point, he even solicited ex-American soldiers with an offer of $1,200 a month to put members through paramilitary training somewhere in the Pacific north-west. https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/24/neo-nazi-trump-fbi-chief

Morocco Thwarts Terror Plot By Cell Linked To Islamic State In The Sahel
Euronews, 2/25/2025

Moroccan authorities have arrested a dozen people they said were planning attacks on behalf of the so-called Islamic State in the Sahel group. The discovery of the 12-member cell and what officials called an "imminent dangerous terrorist plot" underscores the expanding ambitions of extremist groups in the region. Authorities said the suspects had planned to detonate bombs remotely, but did not give details of their motives or wider plot. Images released by officials showed weapons stockpiles found during police raids, IS flags, and thousands of dollars of cash. "Morocco remains a major target in the agenda of all terrorist organisations operating in the Sahel," Habboub Cherkaoui, the head of Morocco's Central Bureau of Judicial Investigations, said on Monday. https://www.euronews.com/2025/02/25/morocco-thwarts-terror-plot-by-cell-linked-to-islamic-state-in-the-sahel

SECURITY & SAFETY AWARENESS

Terror Designation Might Prompt Cartels To Target Americans, Expert Says
Border Report, 2/25/2025

[Texas] The White House on Feb. 20 designated eight Latin American transnational criminal gangs as foreign terrorist organizations. They include Mexican drug cartels flooding American communities with fentanyl and other drugs, and Central and South American street gangs like MS-13 and Tren de Aragua linked to violent acts in the United States. The designation empowers the Treasury Department and U.S.

law enforcement to aggressively target financial resources these groups utilize to produce their product, wage war on each other and authorities, and terrorize civilians in their home countries. But it does not mean the American public will soon see the Army's 82nd Airborne Division parachuting into mountains in Mexico or the Navy SEALs knocking down doors on cartel leaders' mansions in Guadalajara, an international security expert says. "You may have some advisers physically on the ground working with Mexican law enforcement, the military, army, navy, etc. But if they're good advisers, you won't even see them or hear about them," said Michael Ballard, director of Intelligence for Global Guardian LLC. "You are not going to have (an American) up front, putting the handcuffs on 'El Mencho.' It is going to be a Mexican security or law enforcement official doing that." https://www.borderreport.com/hot-topics/terror-designation-might-prompt-cartels-to-target-americans-expert-says/

Subsea Fibre Optic Cable Deliberately Cut For The 2nd Time Between N.S. And N.L.
CBC, 2/20/2025

Telecommunications giant Bell is exploring surveillance options in the Gulf of St. Lawrence after one of its subsea fibre optic cables between Cape Breton Island and Newfoundland's west coast was recently severed for the second time. David Joice, the company's director of networks, said it's suspected that an anchor or a piece of gear, such as a trawling net, snagged the cable last Dec. 24. He said the cable was then brought to the surface along with the gear, and deliberately cut by someone. "The telltale sign that we have is that there's almost like a cut, or like an angle grinder cut, through the cable," Joice said in a recent interview with CBC Radio's Information Morning Cape Breton. "That's a pretty tough thing to do because ... it's just not like a fibre optic cable that you'd see on the poles or going to your home, but it's actually wrapped in steel. So it takes a lot of effort to actually cut." The 140-kilometre cable, which runs from Dingwall, N.S., to Codroy, N.L., was also sliced in a similar way in December 2023. Who cut the cable and why remains a mystery in both cases. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/bell-subsea-fibre-optic-cable-newfoundland-1.7461963

ANALYST COMMENTARY: Canada's largest telecommunications company, Bell Canada, recently claimed that their undersea fiber-optic cables that connect western Newfoundland to Nova Scotia had been intentionally severed two times during 2024 – once in January 2024, and once in December 2024. The severed cables are the "primary source" of television, internet, and long-distance communication between the two regions. At this time, it is unclear who severed the cables and what their motive may have been. A spokesman for the company said that it is possible that the cables became entangled in the anchor line of a passing ship and the affected sailors may have cut the lines to disentangle themselves, though both acts were definitely deliberate because the cuts were very clean and made with specialized cutting tools. Undersea telecommunications cables have been around for well over 100 years, and historically, warring nations have damaged and exploited their adversaries' undersea cables to further geo-political and military goals. Since October 2023, at least 11 submarine cables in the Baltic Sea have also been severely damaged, including two in November 2024

that prompted security concerns and a sabotage investigation. Following the November 2024 severances, the Finnish State Security Service Suojelupoliisi (Supo) claimed that there are about 200 faults and breaks detected in undersea cable infrastructure each year, most of which are accidentally caused by maritime vessels dragging their anchors. Supo also claimed that despite the commonality of global instances, the frequency of issues in the Baltic led them to suspect foul play and deliberate sabotage, and they linked the damages to Russian-aligned vessels in the region. It remains unclear if the damages in the Baltic were caused deliberately or accidentally; however, European nations have increased security and surveillance of these critical infrastructure nodes to protect against future damages. In Canada, Bell is also increasing their surveillance of the telecommunications cables in affected areas and hardening their infrastructure by burying it deeper than it was before.

SEPTA Is Launching Its First Buses With Armored Compartments For Operators
Philadelphia Inquirer, 2/25/2025

[Philadelphia, Pennsylvania] SEPTA plans this spring to begin road testing safety compartments with bullet-resistant glass for bus operators — protection demanded for several years by members of Transport Workers Union Local 234 amid a surge in assaults on drivers. A police SWAT Team is scheduled to fire on a prototype Tuesday afternoon at a law-enforcement training ground in Upper Bucks County during a demonstration by the manufacturer building the enclosures, Custom Glass Solutions. Transport Workers Union of America asked for the display to boost its push for the same level of protection on other transit systems. Bus operators and union officials from Houston, New York and other cities are attending the demonstration. … SEPTA would be the first public transportation agency in the U.S. to run transit buses with cockpits for operators that include armored glass, according to agency and union officials and Custom Glass Solutions. For SEPTA and its frontline workers, the search for greater safety gained urgency in late October 2023 when bus operator Bernard N. Gribbin was shot to death while driving his morning route in Philadelphia's Germantown section.
https://www.inquirer.com/transportation/septa-bullet-resistant-bus-operator-cockpits-assaults-20250225.html

Jersey City Man Sentenced To 18 Years For Deadly Light Rail Stabbing
Shore News Network, 2/25/2025

[Jersey City, New Jersey] A man has been sentenced to 18 years in state prison for fatally stabbing another man at a Light Rail station in 2022, Hudson County Prosecutor Esther Suarez announced. Anthony Bell, 40, was sentenced on February 21 by Judge Nesle Rodriguez after pleading guilty to aggravated manslaughter in September 2024. Under the No Early Release Act, he must serve 85% of his sentence before becoming eligible for parole. The stabbing occurred on January 28, 2022, at approximately 11:37 p.m. at the Danforth Avenue Light Rail Station. Police responding to reports of an injured person found Kenneth Brown, 49, suffering from a stab wound to his upper body. He was transported to Jersey City Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead shortly after midnight on

January 29. https://www.shorenewsnetwork.com/2025/02/25/jersey-city-man-sentenced-to-18-years-for-deadly-light-rail-stabbing/

Houston Transit Authority Unveils 'METRONow' Initiative Focused On Cleanliness, Safety And Ridership
Houston Public Media, 2/25/2025

[Houston, Texas] The leaders of the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) are doubling down on reliability, cleanliness, safety and accessibility under the umbrella of "METRONow." "We have adopted the mindset that everything we do will align with increasing ridership and improving your experience," METRO Chair Elizabeth Brock said at an announcement event on Monday. METRONow includes a $7 million investment in safety initiatives, like hiring more police officers, increasing patrols on buses and trains and installing new lights and fences. The plan also sets aside $2.4 million for cleaning efforts this year. The reliability initiative calls for 350 new buses, the replacement of 100 vehicles serving riders with disabilities and the addition of Uber-like microtransit options, while the accessibility initiative calls for increasing the ability of people in wheelchairs to access bus stops. https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/transportation/2025/02/25/514702/houston-transit-authority-unveils-metronow-initiative-focused-on-cleanliness-safety-and-ridership/

CYBERSECURITY

Malware-As-A-Service Accounts For 57 Percent Of All Threats
Beta News, 2/19/2025

A new report from Darktrace reveals that Malware-as-a-Service (MaaS) is now responsible for 57 percent of all cyber threats to organizations, a 17 percent increase from the first half of 2024. The use of remote access trojans (RATs) has also seen a significant increase in the latter half of last year, representing 46 percent of campaign activity identified, compared to only 12 percent in the first half. Phishing remains attackers' preferred technique, with over 30.4 million phishing emails detected across Darktrace's customer base between December 2023 and December 2024. The techniques observed highlight how threat actors continue to curate more targeted and sophisticated emails to improve the success of their campaigns. Of all the phishing emails detected in 2024 38 percent were spear-phishing attempts, tailored attacks on high value individuals, while 32 percent used novel social engineering techniques like QR codes and AI generated text. What's also concerning is that 70 percent of phishing emails successfully passed the widely used DMARC authentication approach and 55 percent passed through all existing security layers before Darktrace detection. https://betanews.com/2025/02/19/malware-as-a-service-accounts-for-57-percent-of-all-threats/

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ANALYST COMMENTARY: Malware-as-a-Service (MaaS) currently accounts for 57% of attacks, a 17% increase from early 2024, according to the recent Darktrace research. This increase in MaaS emphasizes how cybercrime has become a commodity, with even low-skilled threat actors having easy access to sophisticated assault tools. MaaS gives people with little technical knowledge the ability to launch powerful assaults. This substantial increase in the use of MaaS illustrates the importance of developing and utilizing dynamic analysis and behavioral detection because traditional cybersecurity defenses frequently fail to keep up with these quickly changing and adaptive threats. Remote Access Trojans (RATs) have been shown to have also increased significantly, accounting for 46% of campaign activity in late 2024 compared to 12% in the beginning of the year. Attackers' strategy change towards persistent network penetration, which allows them to gain sustained unauthorized access to sensitive systems, is indicated by this growth. Approximately 30.4 million phishing emails were also reported between December 2023 and December 2024, meaning phishing is still a common attack vector. Of note, approximately 55% of reported phishing emails broke through all security levels before being discovered by Darktrace, and 70% of them avoided the commonly used DMARC authentication. The limitations of conventional email security solutions against more complex phishing attempts are highlighted by this data.

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Timely reporting to the **TSA Transportation Security Operations Center** is essential. Reports are made by telephone at **866-615- 5150** and by e-mail at **TSOC.ST@tsa.dhs.gov.**

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