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Al Qaeda letter reveals terrorist strategies

Number 2 leader provides advice to compatriot in Iraq on battle for "hearts & minds"

By JACOB GOODWIN



A detailed, philosophical and carefully-reasoned 13-page letter written by Ayman al-Zawahiri, an Egyptian physician and Al Qaeda's second most important leader, to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the group's top operative in Iraq — which was released Oct. 11 by the office of Joseph Negroponte, the Director of National Intelligence — sheds new light on Al Qaeda's long-range goals, political concerns and future tactics in Iraq.

The letter, dated July 9, 2005, "was obtained during counterterrorism operations in Iraq," according to Negroponte's office, which posted the unedited Arabic original and an English translation on its Web site at www.dni.gov, after determining that "no ongoing intelligence or military operations would be affected by making this document public."

The letter opens with al-Zawahiri's hope that god will bless al-Zarqawi.

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GSN PERSPECTIVES

High-speed transmissions challenge encryption software

By GAIL KALINOSKI

The need for high-speed encryption for government users is constantly on the rise as the U.S. military continues to wage a global war against terrorism and federal agencies are sharing a greater volume of sensitive information with traditional and non-traditional sources than ever before.

Add in the changing dynamics of our digital world and you've got a system that is changing rapidly to keep up with the demands for information assurance (IA) in both the government and commercial sectors.

According to information security experts, there are several key issues that government users face, including the sheer amount of data — the increasing

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University of Maryland scholars tackle the whys of terrorism

By DAVID C. WALSH

University-based programs can play a unique role in the war on terrorism, according to Charles McQuarary, chief of the science and technology (S&T) directorate in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). "We can make changes, perhaps, in the safety of the country as a result of what goes on here," McQuarary said Sept. 9, as he helped dedicate the



Univ. of Maryland at College Park

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Texas sheriffs establish Operation Linebacker to back up border patrol

By LES SHAVER

In football, the linebacker provides the second line of defense, tackling any ball carriers that make it past the defensive line. In Texas, football is king. So it stands to reason that when a group of 16 Texas sheriffs got together to name their proposal to provide a second line of defense to catch illegal aliens behind the U.S. Border Patrol, they decided to dub it "Operation Linebacker."

Now comes the hard part:

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Motorola is moving its public safety software onto Microsoft's platforms

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Southwest Micro and Parlock Systems have developed "smarter" surveillance systems

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XSM introduces its patry inspection system for cargo and vehicles

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New START research center

College Park office of Maryland's National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START).

He pointed to Maryland's social-science research as "a vital, often overlooked piece of the terrorism puzzle — one that we believe deserves very close examination. The fact is, we do not fully understand the enemy we face today. The culture, lifestyle, beliefs and practices of our adversaries provide a stark contrast to our own society." [See related story about Al Qaeda's future strategies on Page 1.]

START, the sixth of seven planned DHS-funded Centers of Excellence (HS-Centers), has a \$12 million operating grant. Its special focus is the underlying cause of violent extremism — the dynamics that transform nonviolent groups into violent ones, and vice versa. START will also study how best to communicate the risks of terrorism, encourage public resilience during catastrophes, and prepare Americans for terrorist attacks. (The DHS mission includes response to both natural and man-made disasters.)

Anti-terrorism preparedness requires knowing not only what weapons a terrorist might employ, but also "who is likely to use such weapons" and who the likely targets would be, McQuary said. START can aid DHS efforts to "screen and detect and prevent terrorism through our understanding of terrorist group behavior, recruitment and motivation — why, for example, so many are willing to die to kill large numbers of people."

The S&T directorate, he acknowledged, "is dependent to a very large measure on what can be done in the academic community and private sector because...we have many questions and not enough answers," and not enough staff to pursue them.

McQuary's remarks preceded a panel discussion by his DHS colleague Mevin Berenstein, head of DHS academic programs, and START organizers/Maryland professors Gary LaFree, Jacques Gansler and Arie Kruglanski. Panelists pulled no punches, telling the audience comprised of first responders, policymakers, academic researchers and intelligence specialists, that START faces sobering challenges.

One of the first trials that START must overcome is finding a common language that can link academics, bureaucrats and first responders, and reconcile the inherently inimical interests of government-classified information with open-source

scholarship in a free society.

Panelists emphasized that meshing vastly different academic orientations, cultures, and bureaucracies with governmental ones will be an enormous task. START will be involved in "what could be called the soft sciences," said Jacques Gansler, Maryland University's vice president for research and a former senior Department of Defense procurement official. "The problem is we're looking for hard answers and that's what we have to be able to convert our soft science into" for the government.

Berenstein, the DHS official, said the academic clock operates differently — more deliberately, toward surer results — than the government's, which could be a source of conflict. But, as Gansler stressed, answers to DHS or other agency requests must be "rapid, non-theoretical, and solutions-oriented."

Gansler also pointed out that, while a multi-disciplinary approach can yield much useful data, "there are bound to be some clashes" regarding freedom of information. Working as an integrated team across institutions is "frankly countercultural to overall university or departmental behavior and structure," he noted, and the almost inevitable designation of some work as sensitive or classified is "extreme-

ly countercultural. In fact, some universities might even refuse to accept it [classified work]."

A related challenge involves government restrictions on who can engage in work on certain borderline-sensitive, "unclassified but sensitive" or possibly classified subjects. Gansler decried as "particularly bad" the post-9/11 trend toward "no foreign nationals" which can result in a diminished understanding of some terrorist groups. "It removes people who would best understand the foreign cultures of many terrorist groups," he asserted. "All such restrictions should be minimized."

Challenges aside, START director LaFree and his colleagues underscored the cost-effectiveness of the academic-center concept. "By awarding a grant to the University of Maryland and its partners, DHS has built a team of 50 senior researchers, 25 universities, a dozen major institutes, hundreds of graduate and undergraduate students. In many ways we are a center of centers."

Among START's many affiliates are the Center for Biosecurity at the University of Pittsburgh, the Center for Non-Proliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute in California, the Hazards Research Lab at the University of South Carolina, and academic affiliates abroad in Europe and Israel.

LaFree described Maryland's program as unique in its marriage of "a mission-oriented government agency and a center composed of a consortium of university professors and students working in an open research environment." Also rare, he said, is the "intensely interdisciplinary nature" of the research and the open, substantive collaboration of subject-matter experts on "real research problems." ■



Charles McQuary



Jacques Gansler

inside the framework is the anti-ram technology which enables the system to prevent vehicular penetration, maximizing the stand-off distance. At the gate entry points, guard booths are positioned with deployable bollards to prevent vehicular entry (or exit) under a heightened threat condition.

The guard booths are equipped with bullet resistant glass and a bullet resistant inner lining to protect the guard personnel from possible attack. Behind the fence line at two locations, the terrain has been altered to create an additional natural barrier that also generates visual appeal to the landscaping. All of these technologies work together to provide a perimeter that delivers a high performance barrier. Maximizing stand-off distance is critical as the next technology is considered.

Fragmentation film was used to protect the personnel inside the structure from shrapnel or other flying debris created from a detonation blast. The greater the distance from the structure that the blast occurs, the less potential for damage to the building or its occupants.

This facility looks like most other structures in the general vicinity. Under threatening circumstances, it becomes a highly sophisticated command center that can guide actions and route communications to those responsible for protecting our country's assets. The chosen systems work together in a holistic approach to meet almost any threat. Today's approach to systematic security often includes layers of protection so as each one is encountered, secondary reinforcements can be brought in to mitigate the attack. Security begins at the perimeter, not at the front door. ■

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