



Risk Mitigation Consulting Inc.

Intelligence and Analysis Division

OPEN SOURCE UPDATE

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INTENT

This open source periodical is designed to provide an overview of relevant, publicly available information on threat and hazard events and analysis of potential impacts to the interests of the United States, both at home and abroad. This product is not intended to be a comprehensive overview of all threat and hazard news and inclusion in this product does not constitute a confirmation of credibility nor precedence by RMC.



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Threats

Police Officers' Racist, Misogynist, Islamophobic Social Media Posts Revealed by Investigative Project – *Insider Threat*

Excerpt: In Philadelphia, the police commissioner pulled 72 officers from the streets and said some would be fired. In Phoenix, the chief gave some officers “nonenforcement” duty. In St. Louis, the top prosecutor said she would no longer accept cases from 22 officers.

The reason: A catalog of bigoted social media posts by members of law enforcement that has led to upheaval at departments across the country and undermined longstanding efforts to improve interactions between police officers and the people they serve.

“They will undeniably impact police-community relations,” said Richard Ross Jr., the Philadelphia commissioner, when he announced the benching of his officers on Wednesday. “We are not naïve to that fact, nor are we dismissive of it.”

The public posts, compiled from accounts believed to belong to current or former officers in eight departments, included racist, misogynist and Islamophobic memes and comments, as well as celebrations of officers who use excessive force, including messages like “It’s a good day for a chokehold.” The compilation was released this month by the Plain View Project, a database of officers’ social media activity.

Analyst Comment: The recent release of these officers’ social media posts has likely contributed to the damaged public perception of police departments (both in the cities where the officers were employed, as well as across the nation). Additionally, law enforcement capabilities have likely been reduced in the aforementioned cities of Philadelphia, PA, Phoenix, AZ, and St. Louis, MO as officers are subjected to disciplinary action, investigations, or re-assigned to alternative duties.

While there is currently no evidence to suggest that these officers were members of known/identified extremist groups, the sentiments expressed in the social media posts that some officers likely held racist or Islamophobic views, which could facilitate radicalization and ultimately lead to violent acts to include the commission of hate crimes and/or terrorist acts. Law enforcement and military personnel are also appealing recruits to extremist organizations due to their specialized skill sets and access to weaponry.

Additionally, it should be noted that a number of U.S. military members have been discharged or arrested for various degrees of connection to extremist and racist ideologies. In March 2019, seven U.S. military personnel were identified by a news outlet as members of the white nationalist group Identity Evropa, which is associated with the 2017 “Unite the Right Rally” in Charlottesville, VA. The service members are likely to face discharge as a result. Just one month prior, Christopher Hasson (an active duty Coast Guardsman who self-identified as a white nationalist) was arrested on terrorism charges.



Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/20/us/philly-cops-plain-view-project.html>

Anti-Terrorism Police Find Missile, Weapons During Raid on Far-Right Extremists in Italy – *Terrorism*

Excerpt: Italian police have seized a large cache of combat weapons, including an air-to-air missile, in raids on far-right extremist groups.

The operation, led by a counter-terrorism police force in Turin, took place in several cities in northern Italy. Three men were arrested in the raids.

Officers found ammunition and firearms, including assault rifles and a submachine gun, as well as neo-Nazi paraphernalia, the police said in a statement.

In an airport hangar, police also found an air-to-air missile which the men were allegedly trying to sell. Italian media reported the missile had come from Qatar.

Analyst Comment: Two of the men were arrested when police found a French-made missile at an airport hangar that they apparently were seeking to sell. Police reported the missile was attempting to be sold through conversations using the WhatsApp messaging network. The missile was reported to be in working condition but lacked an explosive charge.

The third man was arrested when police found nine assault weapons, nearly 30 hunting rifles, pistols, bayonets, more than 800 bullets of various calibers, hundreds of gun parts including silencers and rifle scopes, and antique Nazi plaques featuring swastika at his home. A customs officer, this man was also linked to the far-right neo-fascist Italian political party Forza Nuova. He ran unsuccessfully as a Senate candidate for Forza Nuova in 2001.

The anti-terrorism police force searched several properties in northern Italy. The search was prompted by an investigation into Italian members of the far-right who had fought alongside Russian-backed separatist forces in Ukraine's eastern Donbass region.

There has been a history of incidents of violence committed by Italian neo-Nazis. One of the most notable recent incidents occurred in February 2018, when a member of the neo-Nazi group Lega Nord shot and injured six African migrants in central Italy. While membership of these extremist groups can be hard to quantify, some are currently represented in local and state governments.

Source: <https://www.politico.eu/article/italian-police-seizes-missile-in-raids-on-far-right/>

Activist Killed by Police in Attack on ICE Facility – *Terrorism*

Excerpt: A man armed with a rifle threw incendiary devices at an immigration jail in Washington state, then was found dead after four police officers arrived and opened fire, authorities said.



The Tacoma Police Department said the officers responded at about 4 a.m. to the privately-run Tacoma Northwest Detention Center, a U.S. Department of Homeland Security detention facility that holds migrants pending deportation proceedings. The detention center has also held immigration-seeking parents separated from their children under President Donald Trump’s “zero tolerance” policy, an effort meant to deter illegal immigration.

The shooting took place about six hours after a peaceful rally in front of the detention center, police spokesman Loretta Cool said. She said another rally was planned for later Saturday, but it would have to be held in a different area because of the investigation into the police shooting.

Police said the man caused a vehicle to catch fire and that he attempted to ignite a large propane tank and set buildings on fire. Police said that besides the rifle, he had a satchel and flares.

Analyst Comment: The suspect in the recent attack was a self-described anti-fascist or “antifa” activist who was known in the Seattle area. He also sent a manifesto to a number of friends just prior to the attack that detailed his motives, which largely involved the recent national controversy surrounding the detention and deportation of illegal immigrants. One of his friends told media that she believed the attack was intended as a suicide attempt, albeit with a politically motivated angle. Still, the attack is best classified as an act of terrorism due to the political motive and the use of violent force.

Due to the extremely high tensions surrounding immigration-related political issues in the U.S. as of recent, it is possible that similar violent attacks against may be carried out against federal law enforcement agencies involved in immigration (such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection, and the Border Patrol). Attacks may target personnel (such as prominent officials or individual officers) or may target facilities or assets such as detention centers and vehicles.

Source: <https://www.denverpost.com/2019/07/13/deportation-facility-attack-man-killed-police/>

UCLA Professor Convicted of Conspiring to Provide Sensitive Computer Chips to China – *Foreign Intelligence Entities*

Excerpt: An adjunct UCLA professor of electrical engineering faces 219 years in federal prison for conspiring to export semiconductor chips with military applications to China.

According to a statement released from the Department of Justice, Yi-Chi Shih, 64, obtained access to a U.S. company’s computer system that includes commercial and military applications for the Air Force, Navy and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. The company produces semiconductor chips known as monolithic microwave integrated circuits, or MMICs, that are used in missiles, fighter jets, electronic warfare and radar applications.

“This defendant schemed to export to China semiconductors with military and civilian uses, then he lied about it to federal authorities and failed to report income generated by the scheme on his



tax returns,” said U.S. Atty. Nicola Hanna. “My office will enforce laws that protect our nation’s intellectual property from being used to benefit foreign adversaries who may compromise our national security.”

Analyst Comment: Shih’s efforts to deliberately circumvent export control regulations were categorized by court documents as being for “unauthorized military end use in China.” The semiconductor chips are used for advanced military applications, to include radar, high speed/secure communications, and electronic warfare. If these technologies were successfully acquired by Chinese entities and passed along to the Chinese military, it could seriously erode the U.S.’s comparative military advantages.

Chinese acquisition of U.S. semiconductor chips has routinely been highlighted as a potential national security issue in recent years. In 2017, the Committee on Foreign Investment in the U.S. (the interagency government committee tasked with approving/denying foreign mergers/acquisitions of U.S. firms based on national security considerations), blocked the sale of Lattice Semiconductor to Chinese investors based on similar national security concerns to those detailed above.

Source: <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ucla-professor-military-china-20190711-story.html>

16.5 Tons of Cocaine Seized at Philadelphia Port – *Narcotics*

Excerpt: U.S. authorities seized 33,000 pounds, or 15,000 kilograms, of cocaine from a ship at Philadelphia’s port in what they described as one of the largest drug busts in American history.

They said the haul could have been worth more than \$1 billion on the street.

The U.S. attorney’s office in Philadelphia announced the massive bust on Twitter, saying that law enforcement agents found the cocaine on a ship at the Packer Marine Terminal. Two members of the crew were arrested and face federal charges.

An affidavit alleged that crew members helped load the cocaine onto the MSC Gayane while it was at sea off the west coast of South America. Citing an interview with one of the crew members, authorities said a total of 14 boats approached the vessel on two separate occasions during its voyage. Several crew members allegedly helped transfer bales of cocaine.

Analyst Comment: In the affidavit, one of the accused crew members stated he expected to be paid \$50,000 in cryptocurrency for helping load the cocaine onto the vessel. While the source of the cocaine is currently not known, Colombia is the primary supplier of cocaine to the U.S. In 2017, Colombian farmers harvested 422,550 acres of coca. It was the largest crop of coca in Colombia’s history, enough to make 1,500 tons of cocaine. The export of cocaine is supervised by transnational crime organizations that do business with foreign crime organizations, particularly Mexican cartels. In a few cases, the Colombian groups have maintained direct routes to foreign markets.



Officials said agents seized the 16.5 tons (15 metric tons) of cocaine from a large ship at the Packer Marine Terminal. The drug seizure is the latest in a series of large cocaine busts along the East Coast. In a March bust in Philadelphia, drug dogs sniffed out 1,185 pounds (538 kilograms) of cocaine worth about \$38 million — at that time the city's largest seizure of the drug in more than two decades. In February, customs agents seized 3,200 pounds (1,451 kilograms) at the Port of New York and New Jersey with a street value estimated at \$77 million. That was the largest cocaine bust at the ports since 1994. The largest seizure of cocaine in the U.S. was 43,000 pounds (19,504 kilograms) in 1989 Los Angeles.

Source: <https://www.usnews.com/news/us/articles/2019-06-18/over-16-tons-of-cocaine-intercepted-at-philadelphia-port>



Hazards

Earthquakes and Aftershocks in California – *Geological Hazards*

Excerpt: It's been more than a week since two of the largest earthquakes to hit Southern California in nearly two decades hit, and the aftershocks keep coming.

A magnitude 4.2 earthquake struck about 25 miles northwest of the 05 July magnitude 7.1 quake.

There have been more than 70 earthquakes of magnitude 4 and greater since 04 July, when a magnitude 6.4 earthquake struck on Independence Day; a day later, a much larger magnitude 7.1 earthquake hit.

The earthquake at 1:38 a.m. occurred in the northwestern section of Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake.

The closest towns nearest to the earthquake, Ridgecrest and Trona, both about 30 miles southeast of the epicenter, were calculated by the U.S. Geological Survey to have felt shaking on the Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale of between 1 and 2 — either so faint it wasn't felt, or “weak” shaking that it might have only been felt by a few people, even those sitting still.

The town of Lone Pine is about 40 miles northwest of the epicenter. The shaking at the remote epicenter, just northwest of Sugarloaf Mountain within the borders of the naval air weapons station, was moderate, or intensity level 5.

Analyst Comment: The first major earthquake occurred on July 4th and had a magnitude of 6.4. The U.S. Geological Survey pinpointed the epicenter near Ridgecrest, in a remote region about 150 miles northeast of Los Angeles between the Sequoia National Forest and the Mojave Desert. The next day a 7.1 magnitude earthquake occurred on the same fault system, about twenty miles north of the first large earthquake. Occurring at a depth of more than eight miles, the fault line was extended and is now about 30 miles long.

The area these earthquakes occurred was one known as the earthquake capital of the world. However, it has been about two decades since such a major earthquake occurred. A magnitude 5.8 quake rocked Ridgecrest, home to about 30,000 people, in 1995. A 7.1 quake struck the Hector Mine area of the Mojave Desert about 100 miles to the southeast in 1999. These two earthquakes were the most significant earthquakes California has seen in years. Since officials began measuring earthquakes in 1932, there have been 22 temblors of magnitude 6 or greater.

The two large earthquakes were part of a “swarm” of earthquakes, with the 7.1 magnitude earthquake being considered the main shock. In the next weeks and months, the area will experience thousands of aftershocks, some estimates put the number at about 34,000 over the next six months.



Source: <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-ridgecrest-earthquake-20190715-story.html>

Hailstorm in Guadalajara, Mexico – *Meteorological Hazards*

Excerpt: A bizarre summer hailstorm left a Mexican city buried in up to six feet of ice. The unusual weather event in Guadalajara (northwest of the capital of Mexico City) damaged homes and cars, but there were no reports of injuries.

Enrique Alfaro, the governor of Jalisco, tweeted about the government's response to the freakish hailstorm, along with photos of ice tall enough to cover vehicles' wheels. He was stunned by what he saw in Guadalajara, Jalisco's capital, and suggested climate change may be the cause of the ice storm.

Alfaro said no was hurt and vowed to have the streets cleaned up as soon as possible and through coordination with the Mexican Army and municipal authorities of Guadalajara and Tlaquepaque. The state's civil protection service said there were possible cases of hypothermia in three adults.

Guadalajara, one of Mexico's most populous cities, was experiencing temperatures around 88 degrees Fahrenheit in recent days. Alfaro said Guadalajara, which is located just north of Mexico City, received more than three feet of ice. However, in some places, there were up to two meters (or six feet) of ice, Agence France Presse reported. About 200 homes have been damaged and dozens of vehicles swept away in the city and surrounding districts, according to the AFP.

Analyst Comment: Hail forms during thunderstorms when powerful updrafts push raindrops into freezing regions of the atmosphere, where they freeze into icy balls. The hailstones can grow as cold water-droplets collide with them and freeze. Once the onion-like hailstones become too heavy to be supported by the rising air currents, they fall to the ground. Sunday's storm was notable not for the size of its hailstones but for the quantity. The actual hailstones were relatively small, less than 1cm in diameter. The storm hit very quickly, between about 01:50 and 02:10 local time, when the air temperature dropped suddenly from 71.5 F to 57 F.

Guadalajara is particularly vulnerable to these slow-moving storms due to its high elevation within a mountainous region. Additionally, hailstorms are more common in summer than at other times of year, since the atmosphere then tends to be wet and unstable enough for hail to form. While the city has experience hailstorms before, this was a uniquely heavy level of hail that accumulated. It is likely that the accumulation was caused by hail melting on contact with the hot ground and forming a layer of water upon which more hail could land and float. This combination of water and hail likely moved down slope, with obstacles such as buildings blocking the flow and allowing more ice to accumulate on top.

Source: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/mexico-hail-storm-up-to-6-feet-of-ice-dropped-guadalajara-north-mexico-city-in-summertime-freak-hail-storm-sunday/>



Train Carrying Military Munitions Derails in Nevada – *Accidental Events*

Excerpt: A train carrying military munitions has derailed in Nevada, closing a 60-mile stretch of Interstate 80 – but officials said the general public is not in any danger, according to reports.

No injuries were immediately reported when the train, which was transporting munitions to Hawthorne Army Depot, derailed near Wells, according to the Reno Gazette Journal, which cited the US Army Joint Munitions Command.

The train derailed about 10:20 a.m. local time, according to a public safety alert posted on Twitter by the Elko City and County Public Safety Department.

The depot is a strategic reserve site on the western side of Nevada that stores and demilitarizes military ordnance.

Analyst Comment: While the train was carrying military munitions, fortunately the derailed cars carried less hazardous cargo, to include aluminum oxide (a powder described in media reports as a mild skin irritant) and vegetable oil. Still, the incident highlights the indirect impacts of such mishaps, as a 60-mile portion of highway was closed for an hour as a result of the emergency response. Moreover, if the train cars carrying munitions had derailed, significant damage, injury, or death could have potentially occurred. The cause of the incident was not immediately available, although open source media reporting stated that the Federal Railway Administration was investigating.

Source: <https://nypost.com/2019/06/19/train-reportedly-carrying-grenades-and-bombs-derails-in-nevada/>
