

Department of Homeland Security

POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF AL-QAEDA SURVEILLANCE

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Al-Qaeda operations have been characterized by meticulous planning, a focus on inflicting mass casualties, and multiple, simultaneous suicide attacks. Operatives are highly trained in basic and sophisticated surveillance techniques, posing challenges for counterterrorism and security forces in identifying terrorist surveillance. Recent information and analysis point to surveillance practices that traditionally have been utilized by Al-Qaeda-affiliated operatives. While not exhaustive, the following list suggests possible indicators of terrorist surveillance.

- Unusual or prolonged interest in security measures or personnel, entry points and access controls, or perimeter barriers such as fences or walls.
- Unusual behavior such as starting or quickly looking away from personnel or vehicles entering or leaving designated facilities or parking areas.
- Observation of security reaction drills or procedures.
- Increase in anonymous telephone or e-mail threats to facilities in conjunction with suspected surveillance incidents-indicating possible surveillance of threat reaction procedures.
- Foot surveillance involving two or three individuals working together.
- Mobile surveillance using bicycles, scooters, motorcycles, cars, trucks, sport utility vehicles, boats, or small aircraft.
- Prolonged static surveillance using operatives disguised as panhandlers, demonstrators, shoe shiners, food or flower vendors, news agents, or street sweepers not previously seen in the area.
- Discreet use of still cameras, video recorders or note taking at non-tourist type locations.
- Use of multiple sets of clothing, identifications, or the use of sketching materials (paper, pencils, etc.).
- Questioning of security or facility personnel.

General information on possible terrorist planning activities proceeding an attack can be found at www.dhs.gov.

DHS encourages individuals to report information concerning such suspicious activity to their local FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) office, <http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm> DHS, or to other appropriate authorities. Individuals can reach the DHS (NIPC) WATCH AND WARNING UNIT at (202) 323-3205, toll free at 1-888-585-9078, or by email to nipc.watch@fbi.gov.