



CYBER AND FINANCE WEEKLY

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NYPD Counterterrorism Bureau
Terrorism Threat Analysis Group

Open Source News Roundup
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Resource Center

CYBERTERRORISM

US Court Finally Closes 'Rogue' ISP

The H Security Online, 5/21/10

Internet service provider Pricewert LLC, whose mission was to spread spam, malware and child pornography, has finally been taken off the internet. It was disconnected by its upstream providers and had its assets frozen, almost a year after the US regulator, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), obtained a preliminary injunction against the company. A statement from the Federal District Court in San Jose, said that the ISP's systems and servers had been seized and are to be sold off. The proceeds of the sale would go to the US authorities, who are entitled to \$1080,000 from the judgement. Pricewert, who also acted under the names 3FN and APS Telecom, actively recruited criminals and offered them a platform for communication. The company regularly ignored requests to remove illegal content or moved pages to other addresses to prevent further prosecution. The company's servers also hosted C&C servers used to control botnets.

Pakistan Blocks YouTube A Day After Shutdown of Facebook Over Muhammad Issue

Washington Post, 5/21/10

A simmering clash between free speech and religious sensibilities in Pakistan burst from the streets onto the Internet on Thursday, as the government blocked the video-sharing site YouTube and other pages it deemed "sacrilegious" to the nation's Muslim majority. The move followed a similar shutdown Wednesday of the social-networking site Facebook, which had drawn the ire of Islamist activists over a page inviting people to post drawings of the prophet Muhammad. At least 450 sites, including Wikipedia, were also cut off by midday Thursday, and the government said more blockages could come as its newly created "crisis cell" scoured the Web for inflammatory content. The bans, which sparked raucous debate, removed hugely popular outlets from what has become a vibrant and freewheeling media scene in recent years. In doing so, the prohibitions also underscored that debates over religion remain forbidden in a nation where Islamists exert power by regularly -- and sometimes menacingly -- condemning actions they view as blasphemous.

Alleged Terrorists Used Social Network Sites

CBS News, 5/19/10

When the name of the suspected Times Square bomber, Faisal Shahzad was revealed, one of the first things reporters did to find more information and a picture was go to Facebook. Sure enough, Faisal Shahzad had an account. Nigerian terror suspect Umar Farouq Abdulmutallab, who is charged with trying to blow up a U.S.-bound flight last December after training with al Qaeda in Yemen, also had a Facebook account. There is little information about the role social network websites might play in the radicalization and recruitment of terrorists, but the FBI is seeing an increase in the use of such websites by radical groups...In late 2008, a posting on a jihadist web forum urged members to use Facebook to spread jihadist ideas. ""We have already had great success in raiding YouTube and the next target is to invade Facebook," wrote the user according the UK's Telegraph newspaper. And although Facebook has "a strict policy against content that promotes recognized terrorist organizations," as one spokesperson explained, you can still find pages, especially in Arabic, that support terrorists and which have escaped Facebook's reviewers.

U.S. Air Force Shifts 30,000 Troops To "Cyberwar Front Lines"

Homeland Security Wire, 5/18/10

The U.S. Air Force reports that it has assigned no fewer than 30,000 digital troops to "the front lines of cyber warfare." This is close to a third of the number of U.S. troops deployed in Afghanistan. The Air Force Times reports that 27,000 enlisted airmen and women are now classified as cyberspace specialists, having previously been rated as communications and electronics people. Some 3,000 officers have been shifted out of other specialties to become elite "cyberspace officers," potentially eligible to wear the coveted cyber wings recently established by the USAF (the Air Force Specialty Code for officers is now 17D. It had been 33S. For enlisted, the 2E, 3A and 3C AFSCs — communications and electronic maintenance jobs — have been merged into the 3DX category).

Survey: Gov't Agencies Use Unsafe Methods To Transfer Files

Computer World, 5/17/10

Employees at many U.S. government agencies are using unsecure methods, including personal e-mail accounts, to transfer large files, often in violation of agency policy, according to a survey. Fifty-two percent of the respondents to the survey, of 200 federal IT and information security professionals, said employees at their agencies used personal e-mail to transfer files within their agencies or to other agencies. About two-thirds of those responding to the survey said employees used physical media, including USB drives and DVDs, to transfer files, and 60% of employees use FTP (File Transfer Protocol), according to the survey, completed by MeriTalk, a government IT social-networking site, and Axway, an IT security vendor.

TERRORIST FINANCING

Kansas City Man Sent Money to Al-Qaida

AOL News, 5/20/10

An American citizen swore an oath of allegiance to al-Qaida and then funneled \$23,500 to the terrorist group between 2007 and 2008. Khalid Ouazzani, a 32-year-old Kansas City, Mo., man, pleaded guilty Wednesday to bank fraud, money laundering and conspiracy. Ouazzani was born in Morocco and became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 2006... Khalid Ouazzani, 32, pleaded guilty to several offenses related to providing aid to al-Qaida...Prosecutors say Ouazzani took out a loan for his Kansas City auto business, Truman Used Auto Parts, but used the money to fund al-Qaida instead. Ouazzani set up a bank account in the United Arab Emirates and then worked with an unnamed co-conspirator to transfer funds from the account to the terrorist group, according to documents...Ouazzani also used false information about several businesses to apply for bank loans, the documents say. And when he sold his auto parts business in 2007, Ouazzani sent some of those proceeds, about \$6,500, to al-Qaida as well...Ouazzani's wife, Fadoua Elouerrassi, was also born in Morocco. In 2006, she pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit marriage fraud, The Kansas City Star reports...Ouazzani has used addresses in a number of American cities, including St. Louis; Cherry Hill, N.J.; Brooklyn, N.Y.; and the Forest Hills section of Queens, The Associated Press reports.

The Terrorists' New Ways Of Making Money

The Daily Times, 5/17/10

Senior Punjab government officials have received death threats from terrorists, as target killings, kidnappings and extortion are being termed the "new ways" that terrorists have adopted to cater for their funds. SSP Special Investigative Unit (SIU) Karachi Raja Umar Khitab disclosed that terrorist groups, before focusing on Punjab, had "rattled" Karachi with their activities, as the provincial metropolis acted as a gateway for them, especially for foreign and local militants. He said that over a period of two decades, a large number of Mehsud tribes, with their bases in the tribal areas, had settled in Karachi. He said that a group of terrorists robbed nine banks in 2007 and two in 2008 in an attempt to gather funds for their cause against the US. However, the chapter closed when they were put to the task by the law enforcement agencies. He said that now these militants tended to adopt different ways and made several precedents through target killing and extortion. He also disclosed that they collected funds for their activities from the Mehsud tribesmen in Karachi, threatening them for the lives of their family in their native area.

Possible Ties To Murky Finance System Examined

Boston Globe, 5/15/10

An informal money-exchange network known as “hawala” — a centuries-old system that operates outside conventional banking networks — is at the center of the investigation into three Pakistanis arrested Thursday in Massachusetts and Maine with alleged ties to the suspect in the failed Times Square bomb plot, law enforcement officials said yesterday. The men, who were detained on immigration charges after several raids across the Northeast, were described by government officials as having funneled money to Pakistani-born Faisal Shahzad, who is in federal custody for trying to set off a car bomb earlier this month. The three men are being investigated for possibly using the hawala system to provide money that Shahzad used to finance the plot, the officials said yesterday. But finding out where any such funds originated could prove exceedingly difficult, according to government officials and specialists in terrorist financing, who say that by its very nature hawala leaves few clues. The source of the transfer is often anonymous...Federal agents on Thursday searched a Brookline gas station where one of the three men was employed and an apartment in Watertown where two of them lived. They also conducted raids in New York and New Jersey.

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