



Department of Homeland Security Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report for 31 December 2003

Current Nationwide Threat Level is



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www.whitehouse.gov/homeland

Daily Overview

- The Straits Times reports two weeks before its maiden voyage from Britain to Florida, American officials have confirmed that the Queen Mary 2 is mentioned as a possible target in intercepted al Qaeda communications. (See item [11](#))
- The Wall Street Journal reports federal investigators increased to 81 the number of cattle now roaming the U.S. that may have been exposed to mad cow disease. (See item [16](#))
- CNN reports with New Year's Eve celebrations on the way, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge says security efforts across the United States have been "ramped up in an unprecedented way" through the end of the week. (See item [24](#))

DHS/IAIP Update *Fast Jump*

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Energy Sector

Current Electricity Sector Threat Alert Levels: Physical: High, Cyber: Elevated

Scale: LOW, GUARDED, ELEVATED, HIGH, SEVERE [Source: ISAC for the Electricity Sector (ES-ISAC) – <http://esisac.com>]

1. *December 30, The Detroit News (MI)* — Coast Guard probes barge near power plant. In the St. Clair River near Port Huron, MI, U.S. Coast Guard officials were investigating on Tuesday, December 30, whether a barge that floated close to a power plant was a terror threat. An employee at DTE Energy's St. Clair Power Plant in East China Township called the Coast Guard around midnight after spotting the barge float "unusually close" to the plant, said DTE spokesperson John Austerberry. A resident of the area also called the Coast Guard after

seeing the barge accompanied by a smaller boat, said Lt. Greg Fondran of the Coast Guard's 9th District headquarters in Cleveland, OH. **Fondran said several 55-gallon drums, lashed together, were also seen floating near the St. Clair power plant.** He said there was a possible link between the barrels and barge. The contents of the barrels were unknown Tuesday morning.

Source: <http://www.detnews.com/2003/metro/0312/30/metro-22484.htm>

- 2. *December 30, Daily News-Miner (AK)* — Dalton security raised. The Alaska State Division of Homeland Security set up a pair of checkpoints on the Dalton Highway Monday, December 29, to search northbound vehicles for explosives and terrorists.** The two checkpoints are part of the many measures implemented around the state to protect its energy infrastructure in response to last week's heightened security alert, said Tom Burgess, the director of Alaska Division of Homeland Security. "Although we don't have any confirmed threats, we're being extremely cautious," Burgess said. "Alaska's oil field system is the largest in the nation. It's very important to our economy and very important to Alaska's people." The 24-hour checkpoints are manned by the Alaska State Defense Force. **Burgess said Department of Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge told him and Governor Frank Murkowski to "take whatever steps you deem necessary" to ensure the safety of the pipeline that carries 17 percent of the nation's domestic oil supply.**

Source: <http://www.news-miner.com/Stories/0.1413.113~7244~1860746.00.html>

- 3. *December 30, Reuters* — California storm leaves thousands without electricity. About 29,000 homes and businesses in northern California were still without electricity on Tuesday, December 30, a day after a powerful storm pounded the region with rain, snow and high winds,** said electric utility company Pacific Gas & Electric Co. Most of the remaining power outages were in the northern reaches of California and in the Sierra Mountains. The storm, which began in the Gulf of Alaska, had knocked out power to more than 248,000 customers of the utility, which is the main electricity provider for the northern half of California. Company spokesperson Jason Alderman said crews hoped "to drop the number of outages significantly through the day" but snow, fallen trees and flooding could delay the work in some areas.

Source: http://hsweb01.screamingmedia.com/PMA/pma_newsarticle1_reuters.htm?SMDOCID=reuters_pma_2003_12_30_eng-reuters_pma_CALIF-STORM-LEAVES-WITHOUT-ELECTRICITY&SMContentSet=0

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Chemical Sector

- 4. *December 30, WHSV TV (Harrisonburg, VA)* — Acid spill traps Harrisonburg residents.** A local road is finally open after an early Tuesday morning chemical spill. The accident happened around 9 a.m. on West Washington Street in Harrisonburg, VA. **A 275-gallon crate of concentrated sulphuric acid fell off a truck while unloading at the Tyson plant. About 125 gallons spilled on the street, trapping several people in the Mosaic Credit Union. Tyson employees and HAZMAT worker from the Harrisonburg Fire Department neutralized the acid with lime.** The spill is not considered a health risk, but the Department of Environmental Quality is examining the situation. "As far as the immediate public emergency

as far as health and exposure, that is minimal now," says Captain Arthur Miller of the Harrisonburg Fire Department. "We'll start to move into an environmental issue to make sure the environment is left as good as before the spill." Tyson uses this acid for waste water treatment. The people at the credit union were released early this afternoon. Univar, the company from Chester that shipped the acid, has also sent clean-up crews to the site. Source: <http://www.whsv.com/news/headlines/557982.html>

5. *December 29, Reuters* — **Magnesium ablaze at Ohio recycling plant.** A fire at a magnesium recycling plant in Ohio Monday caused no injuries, but could burn for days, a fire official said. **The blaze began in an office area and spread to magnesium ingots at the Garfield Alloys Inc. plant, a spokesman for the Garfield Heights, OH, fire department said.** The company could not be reached for comment. The plant is isolated from residential areas of Garfield Heights, a southern suburb of Cleveland, and there were no evacuations, the fire department spokesman said. **Magnesium reacts explosively with water, and rainfall was worsening the blaze, which could burn for two days or longer, he said. The air was being monitored for toxic fumes.**

Source: <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/Midwest/12/29/oh.magnesium.fire.r eut/index.html>

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Defense Industrial Base Sector

6. *December 30, PostNewsweek Tech Media* — **Defense sets rule for ID tags on supplies.** Department of Defense (DoD) contractors will be required next year to mark items delivered to DoD with unique identifiers such as bar codes or radio frequency ID tags. An interim procurement rule published today in the Federal Register lays out the new requirements. It applies to all DoD solicitations issued on or after January 1. **"The objective of the rule is to improve management of DoD assets. DoD considers this rule to be a strategic imperative, necessary to efficiently move supplies to warfighters,"** Michele Peterson, executive editor of the Defense Acquisition Regulations Council, wrote in the Federal Register. The rule requires unique identification of all single hardware articles or units formed by a grouping of parts if they cost \$5,000 or more. The contractor is required to provide the identification mark and the acquisition cost at the time of delivery. Software, manuals and other forms of information do not need to have unique identifiers, according to the interim rule. The identifiers must have machine-readable data elements such as bar codes, contact memory buttons, radio frequency identification tags or optical memory cards, the rule said.

Source: http://www.gcn.com/vol1_no1/daily-updates/24525-1.html

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Banking and Finance Sector

7. *December 30, Teletext* — **Hoax e-mail targets Bank of England. The Bank of England has rushed out an alert after discovering a hoax e-mail that asked businesses and the public to download software to help prevent credit card fraud.** The message purported to come from an administrator at the bank. Technicians are checking the e-mail from

admin@bankofengland.co.uk and its attached file antikeylog2004.exe to see if either contains a virus. More than 100,000 replies to the e-mail were blocked overnight by the Bank's internal computer system, which did not recognize the sender's address.

Source: <http://www.teletext.com/finance/financialnews.asp?lngSlotId=5>

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Transportation Sector

8. *December 30, Associated Press* — **Airspace over Las Vegas Strip to be closed New Year's Eve.** Jerry Bussell, Governor Kenny Guinn's adviser on homeland security, tells The Associated Press that the airspace over the Las Vegas Strip will be closed New Year's Eve. A spokesperson with the Department of Homeland Security says the agency has received the state's request to close the airspace and is coordinating any action with the FAA. A spokesperson with McCarran International Airport says the ban, known as a temporary flight restriction (TFR), will implemented on New Year's Eve from 9:00 PM to 3:00 AM. The TFR will involve a ten nautical mile radius from the center of McCarran Airport. The TFR will not affect commercial airliners or medical, police or military flights. Private planes and tour helicopters will not be allowed to fly in the restricted air space. **Las Vegas has been mentioned as a possible terrorist target, but officials have yet to say that was the reason behind the ban. Authorities are expecting more than 200,000 people to flock to the Strip this New Year's Eve.**

Source: <http://www.krnv.com/Global/story.asp?S=1580562>

9. *December 30, Department of Transportation* — **DOT Awards \$1.8 Million Federal Grant for Transportation Research and Education to University of Rhode Island.** U.S. Secretary of Transportation (DOT) Norman Y. Mineta on Tuesday announced a grant of \$1.8 million to the University of Rhode Island for the University Transportation Center to support advanced research for intermodal transportation systems and advanced transportation infrastructure. **Among the activities supported by the funding will be research on promoting environmental protection within transportation systems and developing materials to enhance the lifespan and safety of transportation facilities. Funds from the grant also will be used to recruit students into transportation professions and educate them to be future leaders of the field.** The grant also will support seminars and conferences on research results for area transportation professionals. More than 75 colleges and universities throughout the United States participate in the Department of Transportation's University Transportation Center program, conducting combined programs of transportation research, education and technology transfer.

Source: <http://www.dot.gov/affairs/rspa2103.htm>

10. *December 30, Associated Press* — **Trains collide, seven cars derail in Oklahoma.** Two Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) trains collided south of Pauls Valley, OK, but no injuries or hazardous material spills were reported, railroad officials said Tuesday. A southbound train and a northbound train collided shortly before 11 p.m. Monday two miles south of Pauls Valley, or 60 miles south of Oklahoma City, BNSF spokesman Joe Faust said. He wasn't sure why they collided. **Seven cars derailed in the collision. Three of the cars overturned and four were upright. Amtrak service from Oklahoma City to Fort Worth was disrupted.**

Passengers were being bused, said Oklahoma Department of Transportation spokesperson Brenda Perry. Railroad crews were working Tuesday to remove the trains from the rails and were expected to have the rail reopened later in the day. The southbound train originated in Arkansas City, KS, and was on the way to Gainesville, TX. The northbound train was heading from Fort Worth, TX, to Oklahoma City.

Source: <http://www.kotv.com/pages/viewpage.asp?id=55853>

11. *December 30, The Straits Times (Singapore)* — **Queen Mary 2: al Qaeda's latest target?** Just two weeks before its January 12 maiden voyage from Britain to Florida, two American officials have confirmed that the US\$800 million ship is mentioned as a possible target in intercepted al Qaeda communications, the New York Daily News reported. **Queen Mary 2 owner Cunard confirmed on Sunday it had received a terrorist threat against its maiden voyage, reported an Australian newspaper, The Advertiser. But a spokesman for Cunard, which is a British subsidiary of the U.S. group Carnival Cruise Lines, insisted the French-built liner had safeguards against such attacks.** Concerns that al Qaeda had opened up a new front in its terror campaign emerged when a U.S. spy plane discovered scores of acoustic sea mines had disappeared from a high-security naval base in North Korea. **U.S. intelligence services believe the mines may be aboard an armada of 28 terror ships which Osama bin Laden's organization has assembled over the past year. The mines are fitted with homing devices, which allow them to zero in on massive targets like the 150,000-ton Queen Mary 2.** Al Qaeda bombed the destroyer USS Cole in 2000, killing 17 American servicemen, and a French oil tanker last year, killing a Bulgarian crew member. But evidence has emerged that al Qaeda, which is known to have targeted other seagoing vessels, has diverted its attention from military targets to "softer" civilian targets such as the Queen Mary 2.

Source: <http://straitstimes.asia1.com.sg/world/story/0.4386.227564.0.0.html>

12. *December 30, Associated Press* — **France, Mexico put armed guards in flight.** Members of France's elite intervention squad are already riding undercover on some trans-Atlantic flights, while a continent away, Mexican security agents also began boarding planes before a new U.S. directive to foil foreign terrorists. **Many airlines around the world have said they would cooperate with the U.S. order announced Monday to put armed law enforcement officers on certain international flights as part of a heightened terror alert. Some others say they have used armed marshals since shortly after the September 11, 2001, terror attacks.**

Source: http://abcnews.go.com/wire/World/ap20031230_1780.html

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Postal and Shipping Sector

13. *December 30, Reuters* — **Italy anarchists suspected in EU letter bombs. Investigators said on Tuesday four letter bombs delivered in four days to top European Union (EU) officials and EU bodies involved in crime-fighting came from Bologna in Italy.** Police were investigating links between the letter bombs and Italian anarchists. EU headquarters said it had tightened some security measures but was taking the threats in its stride. **An explosive parcel was sent to EU Commission President Romano Prodi on Saturday and was followed two days later by one to European Central Bank chief Jean-Claude Trichet in Frankfurt, Germany. A third package was intercepted at the EU police agency, Europol, in The**

Hague on Monday and a fourth was sent on Tuesday to another EU institution called Eurojust. It did not explode. German public prosecutors investigating the Frankfurt package said they were looking into links to an Italian anarchist group. An Italian judicial source from Bologna said the Eurojust letter bomb also came from the northern Italian city. The letter bomb sent to Prodi exploded in his hands but he was unhurt. The letter to Trichet was intercepted. The head of Europol, Juergen Storbeck, was the target of the third letter bomb.

Source: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L30660332.htm>

14. *December 30, Reuters* — **FedEx to buy Kinko's.** FedEx Corp., on Tuesday said it agreed to buy copy center operator Kinko's for \$2.4 billion in cash. **The purchase will allow FedEx, the world's largest overnight package deliverer, to offer shipping services in all 1,200 Kinko's stores.** FedEx's competitors include United Parcel Service Inc. and Deutsche Post AG's DHL. FedEx, which has been Kinko's shipping provider since 1988, now operates counters in 134 Kinko's stores. It said Kinko's plans to significantly expand its international presence, where it has about 110 locations. FedEx said the purchase is expected to close in the first quarter of 2004. The companies said Kinko's management is expected to remain in place, and that the company's headquarters will remain in Dallas.

Source: <http://www.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=businessNews&storyID=4057351>

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Agriculture Sector

15. *December 30, USAgNet* — **Infected cow was born before ban on protein. The dairy cow identified in the U.S. as suffering from mad cow disease was born before the U.S. and Canada banned the use of animal protein in cattle feed, the primary source of the ailment's transmission, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) said on Monday.** Ron DeHaven, the USDA's chief veterinarian, said the finding was "evidence the feed ban both in the U.S. and Canada has been effective". On Saturday the USDA said the infected Holstein cow was likely to have been one of a herd of 74 dairy cows imported to Idaho from Alberta, Canada, in 2001. But Canadian authorities say only a DNA test can confirm the origin of the animal. **DeHaven said the owner of the animal had told him that "an extensive search of his records" had shown the cow in question "was indeed an older animal when he purchased her in 2001."** Those records are consistent with the Canadian records indicating that this animal was born in 1997. The U.S. and Canada banned the use of animal remains in cattle feed in 1997. **"The age of the animal is especially important, as it is a likely explanation of how this animal was infected. She was born before feed bans were implemented in North America," DeHaven said.**

Source: <http://www.usagnet.com/story-national.cfm?Id=1395&yr=2003>

16. *December 30, Wall Street Journal* — **U.S. estimates BSE exposure at 81. Federal investigators increased to 81 the number of cattle now roaming the U.S. that may have been exposed to mad cow disease.** Yet even the 81 figure isn't complete. Many of these cattle presumably have given birth since entering the U.S., at least some of which came in a group thought to include the Washington state Holstein that was found last week to have been infected with bovine spongiform encephalopathy, otherwise known as BSE, or mad cow disease. Previously, federal investigators said 73 dairy cattle had come into the U.S. in August 2001

from the same herd in Canada's Alberta province that is thought to have been the original home of the infected Holstein. Investigators hope to find and screen those cattle for BSE. **The lack of hard information is hurting the U.S.'s ability to persuade about two dozen trade partners to lift the bans on U.S. beef that they imposed after the mad cow finding.** A U.S. trade delegation sent to Tokyo to reopen beef sales was immediately rebuffed Monday by Japanese officials, who said the U.S. government doesn't yet have the facts Japan needs to decide whether it is safe to drop the ban on U.S. beef imports. Trade experts believe that many of the nations that have banned U.S. beef imports because of the mad cow discovery won't make a move until they see what is done by Japan.

Source: http://www.quicken.com/investments/news_center/article/printer.dcg?story=NewsStory/dowJones/20031230/ON20031230033000032_0.var

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Food Sector

17. *December 30, Associated Press* — **U.S. announces new beef restrictions. Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman on Tuesday announced a list of new restrictions to further enhance the safety of the American beef supply, including a meatpacking ban on the use of sick downer cattle like the one discovered last week with mad cow disease.** She also announced bans against the use of small intestines and head and spinal tissue from older cattle in the U.S. food chain, as well as changes in slaughterhouse techniques with the aim of preventing accidental contamination of meat with cow nerve tissue. Mad cow disease is spread through such brain and spinal cord tissue.

Source: <http://www.fredericksburg.com/News/apmethods/apstory?urlfeed=D7VOU0U01.xml>

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Water Sector

18. *December 30, Associated Press* — **Snowstorm helps fight drought.** California water watchers shuffled through knee-deep snow Monday to conduct the winter's first Sierra Nevada snow survey, a promising one after a series of early heavy storms. The monthly surveys help gauge how much water will be available for California farms, cities, and hydroelectricity next summer. "There's a lot of snow. We're off to a good start," said Fred Gehrke of the state Department of Water Resources. "Every region of the state is now above average. The thing that's really encouraging is the southern Sierra has really bumped up." **With Monday's heavy snowfall, California's statewide snow pack is approaching 125 percent of average. It was 135 percent of normal in the northern Sierra, from Mount Shasta to the Feather River; 115 percent in the central Sierra, from the Yuba River and Lake Tahoe Basin to the Merced River; and 120 percent in the southern Sierra, from the San Joaquin River south.** The snow pack matched last year's 130 percent of average at Echo Summit off Highway 50, 90 miles east of Sacramento near Lake Tahoe, when Gehrke skied in to take his measurement at an elevation of about 7,000 feet.

Source: <http://www.contracostatimes.com/mld/cctimes/news/7597219.htm>

Public Health Sector

19. *December 30, New York Times* — **New tests ordered for man in China tied to possible SARS. Perplexed medical experts from China's Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO) have ordered new rounds of tests for a man suspected of having Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), because previous results have been so contradictory that they cannot reach a diagnosis.** "We can't confirm that the patient is a SARS patient or that he is not," said Julie Hall, the SARS team leader in the WHO's office in Beijing. She said his test results have "really been a mixed bag of negatives and positives." Tuesday, Hall said the health ministry agreed to allow WHO laboratories outside China to conduct additional tests on blood and other samples from the patient. New tests are also planned at the provincial health department in the southern city of Guangzhou, where the sick man is hospitalized, and at two laboratories in Beijing affiliated with the Chinese Center for Disease Control. The decision to conduct more tests came after a long meeting today in Beijing between Chinese and WHO experts, and followed a confusing day in which a provincial health official in Guangzhou told a news agency that test results had caused the case to be upgraded from suspected to confirmed.

Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/30/international/asia/30CND-SARS.html>

20. *December 30, Associated Press* — **Lab tests rule out Ebola in Zimbabwe. Laboratory tests have ruled out the possibility that an Angolan trader died of the Ebola virus in neighboring Zimbabwe, the World Health Organization (WHO) said Tuesday.** The South African National Institute for Communicable Diseases tested samples sent by Zimbabwe on Tuesday, WHO spokesman Welile Shashas said. "This was not Ebola" or a similar hemorrhagic fever, he said. Zimbabwe health authorities announced over the weekend that an Angolan national who died in the resort town of Victoria Falls on Christmas day had exhibited symptoms consistent with Ebola. The announcement touched off fears the highly contagious disease could have spread from the continent's equatorial regions to southern Africa for the first time. The actual cause of death remains to be determined. But confirmation that it was not Ebola has allowed emergency health teams gathered at Victoria Falls to lift quarantine restrictions imposed on staff who tended to the patient, Shashas said.

Source: http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=534&ncid=534&e=6&u=/ap/20031230/ap_on_he_me/south_africa_zimbabwe_ebol

21. *December 29, Associated Press* — **Passengers on cruise ship infected with stomach illness.** Nearly 65 passengers and crew members on a cruise ship suffered from a gastrointestinal illness over the last week, federal officials said Monday. **Fifty-three passengers and 11 crew members on Holland America Line Inc.'s Volendam came down with probable cases of norovirus, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) spokesman Tom Skinner said.** The cruise line obtained specimens from some of them to verify whether they had the common illness, he said. **The ship carried about 1,400 passengers and about 600 crew members, so about 3.2 percent of people onboard were sick. The CDC threshold for an outbreak is 3 percent.** The ship returned to Port Everglades in Fort Lauderdale, FL, on Sunday after completing a seven-day cruise in the Gulf of Mexico and the Bahamas. Skinner said the Volendam followed standard precautions, such as cleaning public areas and rooms with

disinfectants. "We observed their cleaning and disinfection methods and we determined they had done and were doing everything they could to address the situation," he said. The ship left on another cruise Sunday.

Source: http://www.heraldtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/2003_1229/APN/312290898

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Government Sector

22. *December 30, Government Computer News* — **Ridge: Merged terrorist watch list due next year.** Department of Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge said the government will combine about a dozen terrorist watch lists into one next year. **Ridge said that the interagency Terrorist Screening Center, run by the FBI, now is carrying out the watch list function. Officials from several agencies at the center check numerous databases to determine if an individual appears on a terrorist watch list.** "We will have it all integrated in the months ahead," he said on Monday. Law enforcement, intelligence, and homeland security agencies maintain at least 12 separate watch lists for various purposes, according to the General Accounting Office and other sources. Congress months ago directed the Homeland Security Department to create a single terrorist watch list. Officials from the FBI, Justice Department, intelligence community and DHS announced in the fall that the screening center would serve as a clearinghouse for terrorist watch-list information. Ridge said the center already has helped state and local officials seeking to identify suspicious individuals.

Source: http://www.gcn.com/vol1_no1/homeland-security/24523-1.html

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Emergency Services Sector

23. *December 30, New York Times* — **Scanners set for revelers in Times Square.** With New York City at a heightened state of alert, unprecedented security measures will be in place on New Year's Eve in Times Square, officials said Monday, December 29. About 240 metal detectors will be used to screen revelers. **Police will patrol the city with Black Hawk helicopters and Citation jets. The aircraft are not armed, but in the event of a terrorist threat, the pilots will work closely with the military to identify, track and target potential attackers.** Low-flying planes and helicopters will be banned from the area, manhole covers will be welded shut, and garbage cans, newspaper vending machines and mailboxes will be removed from street corners. Snipers will be posted on rooftops, heavily armed groups of officers known as Hercules Teams will patrol the area along with thousands of uniformed officers, and hundreds of plainclothes officers will mix with the crowd. **The police will draw a tight perimeter around the city, with increased truck checkpoints and stepped-up Harbor Unit patrols on waterways. The Police Department's eight helicopters will be in the air. A National Guard civil support team, trained to respond to attacks by chemical, biological and radiological weapons, will be in the area.**

Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/30/nyregion/30SECU.html>

24.

December 30, CNN — **Ridge: U.S. tightens security for New Year's. With New Year's Eve celebrations on the way, security efforts across the United States have been "ramped up in an unprecedented way" through the end of the week, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge said Tuesday.** The U.S. government will keep the terror threat alert level at orange — the second-highest on the five-tiered, color-coded scale — for the rest of the week as officials remain concerned about airline security, Ridge said. On Monday, the Department of Homeland Security announced it was ordering non-U.S. air carriers to place armed government officers on some flights to, from and over the country. **Some major cities such as New York; Washington; Chicago, Illinois; and Las Vegas, Nevada, plan to close parts or all of their airspace on New Year's Eve, when huge crowds traditionally gather to celebrate in public.** Ridge said people who go to New York's Times Square on New Year's Eve will be safe. "I don't think there's a city that has done more and sustained a higher level of security and protection than New York City," he said. The Department of Homeland Security is working with New York officials and providing additional assistance at their request, he added. The Secretary's remarks are available at <http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?content=2729>
Source: <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/12/30/airline.security/>

25. *December 30, U.S. Coast Guard* — **Coast Guard Group Philadelphia evacuated. The U.S. Coast Guard evacuated its main building at Group Philadelphia early Tuesday morning after Coast Guard personnel discovered a suspicious package near the entrance and witnessed a person leaving the parking lot about 2 a.m.** The Philadelphia Police, FBI and Coast Guard Investigative Service were notified and are investigating. The incident was determined to be a hoax and Coast Guard personnel were allowed to return to the building about 5:30 a.m. after the Philadelphia Police bomb squad inspected the package. Thousands of federal, state and local law enforcement personnel nationwide are working diligently to ensure the safety of Americans during this time of heightened security, and incidents like these take valuable time and energy away from those efforts.

Source: <https://www.piersystem.com/external/index.cfm?cid=651&fuseaction=EXTERNAL.docview&pressid=27585>

26. *December 30, Washington Post* — **Anthrax fears disrupt Maryland courthouse.** Authorities ordered more than 100 people to evacuate the Montgomery County Circuit Courthouse in Rockville, MD, Monday afternoon after a court employee opened an envelope containing a threatening letter and white powder. **Initial field tests conducted by hazardous materials experts from the Montgomery County fire department concluded that the powder was harmless and was not anthrax, but the contents were forwarded to a federal laboratory for more sophisticated testing,** said Pete A. Piring, a fire department spokesman. Fifteen court employees and a Montgomery County sheriff's deputy were exposed to the powder and were quarantined in a court office for two and one half hours before being released. The letter arrived in the mailroom in a business envelope, addressed to the court's criminal division, not to a specific employee, said Chief Sheriff's Deputy Darren Popkin. It was scanned for explosives, as are all arriving letters and parcels. Popkin would not describe the letter in detail but said it contained a "threatening message" and white powder "in a quantity that certainly got her attention."

Source: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A40040-2003Dec 29.html>

27.

December 29, CNN — **Anthrax drill shows weaknesses, officials say.** A drill testing U.S. agencies' ability to distribute and administer antibiotics in the event of an anthrax attack found the federal government unable to respond quickly enough to prevent large numbers of deaths, officials said Sunday, December 28. The simulation — held in mid–November and dubbed Scarlet Cloud — demonstrated that perhaps thousands of fatalities might have occurred had such a widespread attack been real, according to a Department of Homeland Security official. **Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta and John Gordon, the head of the White House's Homeland Security Council, oversaw the exercise, the official said.** Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson also was to participate but was involved in interviews regarding the flu outbreaks. **The Department of Homeland Security will take measures to make the antibiotic supply chain more efficient and improve the coordination of national disaster medical teams as a result of the drill,** the department official said.

Source: <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/12/28/anthrax.drill/index.html>

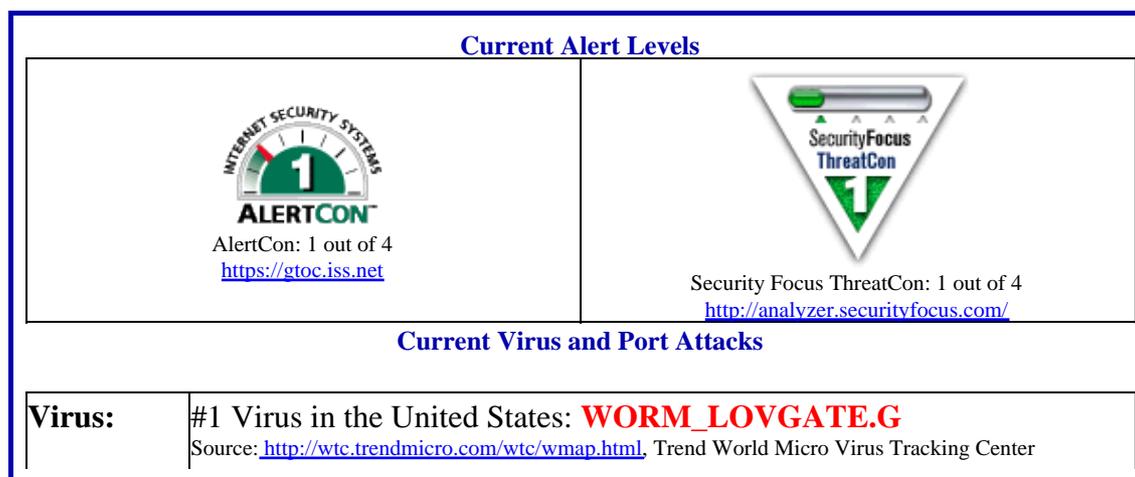
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Information and Telecommunications Sector

28. *December 30, Reuters* — **UK police issue warning on Internet blackmail scam.** Cyber blackmailers in the UK are reported to be focusing on office workers, threatening to delete computer files, or install pornographic images on their work PCs unless they pay a ransom. **Police and security experts in Britain say the extortion scam indiscriminately targets anyone on the corporate ladder with a personal computer connected to the Internet.** Experts say it usually starts with a threatening email in which the author claims to have the power to take over a worker's computer through a loophole in the corporate network. The email usually contains a demand that unless a small fee is paid, the blackmailers will attack the PC with a file–wiping program or download images of child pornography on to the terminal. Police, however, warn **if a person pays the small amount, the blackmailers may simply demand more.**

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/s1017847.htm>

Internet Alert Dashboard



	[Infected Computers, North America, Past 24 hours, #1 in United States]
Top 10 Target Ports	135 (epmap), 6129 (dameware), 1434 (ms-sql-m), 137 (netbios-ns), 17300 (Kuang2TheVirus), 445 (microsoft-ds), 4899 (radmin), 80 (www), 23 (telnet), 53 (domain)
	Source: http://isc.incidents.org/top10.html ; Internet Storm Center

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General Sector

29. *December 30, Associated Press* — U.S. tips Germany to possible hospital attack. Authorities closed off streets around a Germany military hospital Tuesday, December 30, saying they had received a tip from the United States that al Qaeda-linked extremists planned car bomb attacks against the facility. **An American intelligence agency passed on the information, which pointed to Ansar al-Islam, a group based in northern Iraq that is suspected of recruiting holy warriors in Europe for homicide missions in Iraq,** Hamburg's top security official, Dirk Nockemann, said. "Those potentially involved are believed to be from an Islamic terrorist background," the police said in a statement. **The northern German city of Hamburg was home to an al Qaeda cell that included three of the September 11, 2001 hijackers.** The police statement said state officials evaluated the threat as "very serious," immediately ordering enhanced security at the hospital.

Source: http://abcnews.go.com/wire/World/ap20031230_1116.html

30. *December 29, U.S. Department of State* — Nigeria Travel Warning. Conditions in Nigeria pose considerable risks to travelers. **Violent crime committed by ordinary criminals, as well as by persons in police and military uniforms, can occur throughout the country.** Kidnapping for ransom of persons associated with the petroleum sector, including U.S. citizens, remains common in the Niger Delta area. Religious tension between some Muslim and Christian communities results in occasional acts of isolated communal violence that could erupt quickly and without warning. Use of public transportation throughout Nigeria can be dangerous and should be avoided. Taxis pose risks because of the possibility of fraudulent or criminal operators, old and unsafe vehicles, and poorly maintained roads. **Most Nigerian airlines have aging fleets, and maintenance and operational procedures may be inadequate to ensure passenger safety. Nigerian-based business and individuals conduct advance fee fraud and other scams that target foreigners worldwide.** An invitation to enter Nigeria without a visa is normally indicative of illegal activity.

Source: http://travel.state.gov/nigeria_warning.html

31. *December 29, Associated Press* — Snowstorm closes Interstate 5 in California, Oregon. A snowstorm closed nearly 150 miles of Interstate 5 in Northern California and part of southern Oregon on Monday, stranding hundreds of motorists, some for as long as 14 hours, the California Highway Patrol said. The freeway was shut down from Medford, OR, to an area near Redding, CA, and there was no estimate when crews would be able to get to the stranded drivers, said Jennifer Bryan, a dispatcher in the patrol's Yreka dispatch center. Bryan could give no estimate when the major route between California and Oregon would be reopened. Officials from the Jackson County Sheriff's Department and Oregon State Police spent Monday morning using snowmobiles to shuttle food and water to stranded motorists.

There have been no major accidents on the freeway because of the snow, said Bryan. Snow crews trying to clear the interstate of snow were confounded by strong winds that blew snow back onto the freeway. In some areas snowdrifts were as high as five feet.

Source: http://www.mercurynews.com/mld/mercurynews/news/local/states/california/northern_california/7591863.htm

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