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Bulgaria bus bombing underscores vulnerability of public transport, says Mineta Transportation Institute.

MTI terrorism expert Brian Michael Jenkins' research validates this scenario.

San Jose, Calif., July 18, 2012 – Research reports published by the [Mineta Transportation Institute](#) (MTI) have underscored the fact that public transportation is still a seriously vulnerable target for terrorism. This was validated by today's bombing of a Bulgarian bus filled with Israeli tourists who had just arrived at the airport.

“Tourists move through airports safely because of all the strict measures in place,” said Brian Michael Jenkins, international terrorism expert and director of MTI’s National Transportation Security Center of Excellence. “But this attack took place on a bus chartered for a hotel. Although most attacks are directed against regularly scheduled bus lines, attacks on these chartered tour buses enable terrorists to target specific foreign nationalities – in this case, Israelis.”

Earlier this month, in testimony before the U.S. Senate, Mr. Jenkins noted that, while terrorists apparently consider airliners to be their gold medal target, public service transportation offers easier access and a concentration of people in confined environments.

In the same testimony, he pointed to the resurgence of Iranian-sponsored attacks. This particular attack has not yet been officially tied to any nation, but some speculation points to Iran as the origin. “We have seen similar plots uncovered in Azerbaijan, Georgia, India, Kenya, Cyprus, and Thailand,” Mr. Jenkins said.

One of the MTI research reports, published earlier this year, presents 16 case studies of attacks against Israeli bus targets between 2000 and 2005, along with detailed statistical data. [Security Awareness for Public Bus Security: Case Studies of Suicide Attacks Against the Israeli Public Bus System](#) could help increase understanding of what can happen and of what can deter, prevent, and/or mitigate terrorist attacks against bus transit. Principal investigators were Bruce Robert Butterworth, Shalom Dolev, and Mr. Jenkins. The 104-page report is available for free download from transweb.sjsu.edu/project/2978.html

The second report, [Terrorist Attacks on Public Bus Transportation: A Preliminary Empirical Analysis](#), covers attacks on buses, bus stations, and bus stops. It includes data about how often buses are attacked relative to other surface transportation targets, first with all weapons and then with only explosive and incendiary devices; the relative lethality of bus attacks; and the distribution of those attacks. This report was written by Mr. Jenkins and Mr. Butterworth. It can be downloaded from <http://bit.ly/NPk2Um>

MTI’s proprietary Database on Terrorist and Serious Criminal Attacks Against Public Surface Transportation records 3,159 attacks against public surface transportation between January 1970 and January 2012, in which 7,997 people were killed and 30,046 were injured. Of these attacks, 47.4 percent were against buses, bus stations, and bus stops; they accounted for 55 percent of the fatalities and 41 percent of the injuries resulting from terrorist attacks during this period.

Between January and July 2012, approximately 85 additional attacks have occurred against surface transportation systems, which have created approximately 1,319 casualties, 419 fatalities, and 900

injuries. In this period, there has been a high volume of bus attacks, accounting for upwards of 53 percent of the attacks. MTI continuously documents and updates emergent activity for assessment.

This unique database is developed from existing lists and media accounts, augmented by local sources, providing detailed information on targets, attack methods, and the ways in which bombs and incendiaries are placed to kill passengers on public trains and buses and to destroy transportation infrastructure. It helps government policy makers and transportation managers develop more secure systems by understanding not only what and how terrorists most often attack, but more important, which of their attacks are most deadly, and where their “return on investment” is greatest.

“The United States, like many other developed countries, has not experienced successful terrorist attacks against public bus transportation,” said Mr. Jenkins. “It may be that terrorists in the U.S. are not as capable or determined as those in other countries, their plots may have been interrupted by police and intelligence officials, they may not have chosen bus targets for lethal attacks, or they may not have focused extensively on public surface transportation.”

He said that Israel faces, and has faced, a host of determined, constantly improving terrorist foes who have benefited from a relatively fast tempo of operations and a restive populace apparently willing to provide bombers and material support.

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ABOUT THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

Bruce Butterworth has had a distinguished government career, working at congressional, senior policy, and operational levels. With Brian Michael Jenkins and Karl Shrum, he co-authored *Terrorist Attacks On Public Bus Transportation: A Preliminary Empirical Analysis* for the Mineta Transportation Institute in March 2010. He also co-authored other studies, including *Keeping Bombs Off Planes: Securing Air Cargo, Aviations Soft Underbelly* with P.J. Crowley, senior fellow and director of Homeland Security at the Center for American Progress. Mr. Butterworth was awarded an MS from the London School of Economics in 1974.

Shalom Dolev is an expert in security methodologies and in developing security strategies, with special emphasis on countering improvised explosive device (IED) threats. Lt. Col. Dolev has more than 25 years of experience in the field. He has worked for several governmental agencies and has served as a security consultant on issues including aviation, seaports, maritime activities, mass-transit transportation, border crossings, and high-risk institutions. He has a degree in electronics engineering from Tel Aviv University and is a graduate of Tel Aviv University Law School. He retired recently from reserve military service (25 years) and full service (7 years) in the Israeli Defense Forces combat-engineering special forces.

Brian Michael Jenkins is an international authority on terrorism and sophisticated crime. He directs MTI’s National Transportation Security Center of Excellence, which focuses on research into protecting surface transportation against terrorist attacks. He is also a senior advisor to the president of RAND. From 1989-98, Mr. Jenkins was deputy chairman of Kroll Associates, an international investigative and consulting firm. Before that, he was chairman of RAND’s Political Science Department, where he also

directed research on political violence. He has authored several books, chapters, and articles on counter-terrorism, including *International Terrorism: A New Mode of Conflict* and *Will Terrorists Go Nuclear?*

ABOUT THE MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE

The Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) conducts research, education, and information and technology transfer, focusing on multimodal surface transportation policy and management issues, especially as they relate to transit. MTI was established by Congress in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and was reauthorized under TEA-21 and again under SAFETEA-LU. The Institute has been funded by Congress through the US Department of Transportation's (DOT) Research and Innovative Technology Administration, by the California Legislature through the Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and by other public and private grants and donations, including grants from the US Department of Homeland Security. DOT selected MTI as a National Center of Excellence following competitions in 2002 and 2006. The internationally respected members of the MTI Board of Trustees represent all major surface transportation modes. MTI's focus on policy and management resulted from the Board's assessment of the transportation industry's unmet needs. That led directly to choosing the San José State University College of Business as the Institute's home. Visit transweb.sjsu.edu
