



---

**The Daily Intelligence Briefing** is produced by:

iJET Intelligent Risk Systems  
Editor: John Briley  
910F Bestgate Road, Annapolis, MD 21401  
Phone: 410-573-3860 Fax: 410-573-3869  
[www.ijet.com](http://www.ijet.com) Email: [feedback@ijet.com](mailto:feedback@ijet.com)

**COPYRIGHT NOTICE:** This document is copyrighted material owned by iJET International, Inc. and shall not be reproduced or redistributed in any form unless expressly permitted by iJET. All rights reserved. Please contact iJET Customer Service at 1-877-606-4538 with comments and reprint inquires.

---

## March 21, 2005




**NOTE:** iJET's latest special report, covering **security, political and working conditions in Iraq**, is now available. The 25-page document details the post-election political landscape, including valuable information on which parties and individuals are likely to lead and how that will impact the security and investment environments. The report also contains security advice for contractors working in the country. To purchase the report, contact iJET customer service ([customerservice@ijet.com](mailto:customerservice@ijet.com); 1-877-606-4538).

All activity since 12:50 GMT/UTC Friday, March 18

### LEGEND

[Sit.Rep.] = Situation Report on evolving situation or event.  
[Alert] = Travel Alert published in the past 24 hours

Level of Alert:

-  Critical Alert = Will impact travel
-  Warning Alert = May impact travel
-  Informational Alert = Monitoring Situation

### SECURITY RATINGS KEY:

1=Minimal Threat; 2=Low Threat; 3=Moderate Threat; 4=High Threat; 5=Very High Threat; NR=Not Rated

---

## FRONT LINES:

**QATAR** (Security Rating: 2), **Car Bomb Targets U.K. School Compound in Doha:** A suicide attacker detonated a car bomb near a theater attached to a U.K. school compound in Doha's Medinat Khalifa district March 19, killing one U.K. national and wounding at least 12 others in a blast that completely destroyed the theater and caused some property damage to the adjacent school. Approximately 100 people, mostly Westerners, were inside the theater at the time of the blast, which came on the eve of the two-year anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Police said the vehicle used in the attack was registered to an Egyptian national who has not been found. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack, which is one of the few terrorist attacks to occur in the normally tranquil Gulf state. A car bomb attack that killed an exiled Chechen leader in Doha in February 2004 was the first such incident in the country's history. Two Russian spies who were convicted for carrying out the attack were subsequently returned to Russia.

### iJET Analysis:

The attack came just two days after the purported head of Al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia released a statement on an Islamic militant Web site calling on supporters to carry out attacks on oil interests and Western targets in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The attack was likely meant to demonstrate the embattled group's ability to continue carrying out attacks despite a crackdown on them in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Qatar was probably chosen for several reasons: First, the country's normally tranquil environment made the attack all the more shocking and may give pause to investors who have been shifting operations to Qatar from Saudi Arabia. Second, thousands of Westerners reside in Qatar, most of whom are linked to Western oil and gas companies or governments. Finally, it may have been easier to attack in Qatar than in neighboring countries because Qatar's intelligence agencies are less aggressive and security measures are looser. Qatar allegedly hosted several high-ranking Al-Qaeda-linked Islamic militants in the mid and late 1990s and rebuffed U.S. requests to extradite them. Qatar radically reversed its policies in 2000, apparently determining that U.S. military protection and foreign investment were critical if the country hoped to develop its abundant natural gas resources. After the September 11 attacks, Qatar volunteered to host and help pay for the building of a huge U.S. military base just outside of Doha. The base hosts the U.S. Central Command Headquarters, which oversees U.S. military operations in the Middle East and South Asia.

---

### **SAUDI ARABIA** (Security Rating: 5), **Al-Oufi Tapes Pledges Support for Zarqawi and New Attacks:**

Five new audiotapes believed to be recorded by Saleh Mohammed Al-Oufi, former leader of Al-Qaeda in The Arabian Peninsula, were posted on an Islamist Web site controlled by the Saudi opposition group the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights in Saudi Arabia. The tapes' authenticity could not be immediately verified. In the tapes, the speaker hails recent operations by *Usud Al-Jazeera* (Peninsula Lions) - who planned terrorist attacks in Kuwait and pledges allegiance to Abu Mussab Al-Zarqawi - Al-Qaeda's leader in Iraq. The tapes appear to be a response to March 14 tapes issued by Al-Zarqawi calling for Saudi support. The speaker vows that Al-Qaeda in The Arabian Peninsula will send suicide bombers to Iraq, as well as attack U.S. "soldiers, military vehicles, bases, planes and oil" in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait that are used to supply and support Iraq-based forces.

This is the first message from Al-Oufi in months. In early November, a posting on the popular Jihadist Web site *Sawt Al-Jihad* (Voice of the Holy War) claimed that Saud bin Hamoud Al-Otaibi replaced Al-Oufi as Al-Qaeda's Saudi leader, leading to speculation Al-Oufi was killed. There were also rumors that Al-Oufi was one of the five militants involved in a Dec. 6 attack on the U.S. Consulate General in Jeddah.

**iJET Analysis:**

The audio posting could be an indication of any of the following:

- **Al-Oufi is back heading Al-Qaeda in The Arabian Peninsula after being replaced in November. It is unclear what happened to Al-Otaibi.**
- **The publication that Al-Oufi was replaced by Al-Otaibi was simply a diversionary tactic to ease the pressure on Al-Oufi.**
- **Al-Oufi and Al-Otaibi share leadership.**
- **Al-Otaibi is still the group's leader and Al-Oufi released the tape without being the group's leader.**

Determining which scenario is true will be key in determining the nature of future attacks. Al-Oufi is believed to favor assassinations of individuals, while Al-Otaibi is believed to favor larger attacks. On the other hand, the group's willingness to support Al-Qaeda operations in Saudi Arabia is nothing new as hundreds - if not thousands - of Saudi men are believed to be directly involved in terrorist and insurgency attacks in Iraq. Many Saudis have crossed the border between the two countries with little or no difficulty. As the tape comes after two weeks of intense counter-terrorism activity in Saudi Arabia, it only adds to rising indications that Al-Qaeda in The Arabian Peninsula is preparing a new wave of attacks in the near term.

---

**KYRGYZSTAN** (Security Rating: 4), **Opposition Supporters Storm Government Office:** Hundreds of opposition supporters in Kyrgyzstan stormed another government building in the south on March 21. The protesters, angry over election results dominated by pro-presidential parties, occupied a regional government headquarters in the southern city of Osh. The takeover comes a day after at least 10,000 election protesters raided the governor's office and a police station in Dzhalsalabad demanding the resignation of President Askar Akayev. Police fired shots in the air in an attempt to stop stone-throwing protesters. As many as four policemen died in the clashes. Demonstrators continue to occupy regional government buildings in Talas. Opposition protesters also occupied the airport in Dzhalsalabad, strewing rocks on the runway to prevent special forces troops from landing. President Askar Akayev announced he would not declare a state of emergency; opposition leaders announced that they would oppose a state of emergency if authorities do impose one. Demonstrations have also occurred in Alai, Bakai-Ata, Bazar-Korgon, Kurshab, Toktogul, and Uzgen. Opposition protesters showed no signs of backing down, even after police and Interior Ministry troops broke up the tent city that was set up in the city center. Security forces also stormed regional administration buildings occupied by election protesters in Osh March 20. An unknown number of police officers and demonstrators were injured during the raid in Osh. Demonstrators continue to occupy regional government buildings in Talas, but negotiations with authorities continue.

**iJET Analysis:**

The developments on March 20 seem to have caught Kyrgyz authorities by surprise. Kyrgyzstan President Askar Akayev announced earlier in the month that he had hit upon a secret method of "inoculating" Kyrgyzstan against the possibility of a "tulip revolution." This seems to be the case in the northern, wealthier parts of Kyrgyzstan, including the capital, Bishkek, but the unrest persists in the rural, predominantly Muslim areas in the south. Religion has not been a factor and will not likely become one, though the possibility exists that if the unrest continues for any length of time this may change. Akayev's nightmare would be if radical Muslim extremists (such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan) were to take control of the opposition movement. For now, though, the opposition seems to be gaining momentum.

---

**LEBANON** (Security Rating: 5), **Bombing Targets Christian District of Beirut:** A bomb planted under a car exploded in Beirut's predominantly Christian district of Jdeide early March 19, injuring nine people and causing significant property damage amid the steadily rising tension that has plagued the country since

the Feb. 14 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. No one claimed responsibility for the blast, the target of which is unknown. Witnesses said no politicians or prominent personalities live in the residential area. In a separate development, Christian Maronite Patriarch Boutros Sfeir called on Shia Hizballah militants in Lebanon to lay down their weapons and leave defending Lebanon's borders to the country's legitimate armed forces. The call marked the first time in recent weeks that a prominent member of the Christian community has called on Hizballah to disarm. In an apparent effort to avoid dividing the anti-Syrian opposition, Christian leaders recently have avoided such calls and have focused instead on the withdrawal of Syrian forces. Other factions in the opposition, mainly the Druze, reject international calls to disarm Hizballah and insist that the matter should be settled among Lebanon's factions.

#### **iJET Analysis:**

**Leaders from Lebanon's Christian community, which has long led the anti-Syrian opposition, claim Syria probably orchestrated the latest attack to undermine stability and demonstrate the continued "need" for Syrian forces to remain in Lebanon to maintain security. Christian leaders have been warning for several weeks that attacks on Syria's opponents and Western interests are likely as the U.S. and Lebanon's opposition step up pressure on Syria to withdraw its remaining troops from Lebanon. Regardless of who carried out the attack, the latest bombing illustrates the fragile security situation that prevails in Lebanon. Claims that Lebanon is backsliding into the violence that reigned during the country's 15-year civil war (1975-1990) are overstated; there is little evidence at this time suggesting that Lebanon's rival factions are eager to do battle with each other at this time. Nonetheless, it is likely that small scale tit-for-tat bombings could ensue or that attacks on opposition demonstrations, for example, could prompt counter-attacks on pro-Syria elements. Another assassination of a prominent opposition leader (especially Druze chieftain Walid Jumblatt) would probably prompt opposition demonstrations on a scale not yet seen in Lebanon. Amid the hostility that prevails in Lebanon at present, such demonstrations would likely erupt into violence and prompt clashes with security forces or counter demonstrators.**

---

## **WORLD ROUNDUP:**

### **AFRICA**


[Sit.Rep.] **COTE d'IVOIRE** (Security Rating: 5), **South African President Calls for Emergency Meeting Amid Increasingly Unstable Conditions:** South African President Thabo Mbeki, the lead mediator in Cote d'Ivoire's 30-month long political crisis, will convene an emergency meeting in the coming days to restart negotiations between the government, the opposition and former rebels from the New Forces amid increasing social dissent. Mbeki's aides announced the meeting a day before thousands of Ivorians in the north and in the south held protests March 19 both in favor of, and in opposition to, the ongoing presence of more than 10,000 French and United Nations peacekeeping forces posted along a buffer zone separating the rebel north and government-controlled south. Meanwhile, U.N. reports on March 18 cite a noticeable troop build-up in the west on either side of the buffer zone. **iJET: Mbeki's efforts are highly significant as Ivorians in the north clamor for the retention of peacekeeping troops while southern-based pro-government supporters protest for their departure and plan to continue to stage protests until the mandate for the U.N. mission in Cote d'Ivoire expires on April 4. However, there are growing concerns that despite his efforts, Mbeki, who has made little headway over the past four months, will not succeed in brokering a peaceful settlement in the long term. In addition, even if President Laurent Gbagbo and or his representatives show up at the meeting it would not guarantee that his supporters would refrain from exercising a military option.**

[Sit.Rep.] **GABON** (Security Rating: 3), **Violent Student Protests Leads to University Closure:** Sporadic and sometimes violent student strikes prompted authorities at Omar Bongo University (UOB) in Libreville to shut its doors until further notice on March 19. University students went on strike on March 7 to protest for the reopening of the university cafeteria. Additional protests on March 11 escalated into

violence when students blocked the faculty's entrance, set fire to tires and clashed with police. UOB is located on Avenue du President Leon M'ba. **iJET: UOB has been plagued by student unrest since its opening in 1970. The university was rocked by student riots in 1990 and closed for the better half of 2002 due a staff strike. Issues of contention include withheld scholarship funds and educational cutbacks.**

[Sit.Rep.] **KENYA** (Security Rating: 3), **Security Clampdown to Contain Clashes in Mandera Region:** In an effort to contain tribal violence in the Mandera region in northern Kenya, authorities March 19 announced a three-week amnesty period, during which warring factions can surrender their firearms. Clashes between the Murule and Garre tribes stem largely from disagreements over water and grazing fields. Since the beginning of 2005, at least 60 people have been killed. Authorities suspect that a March 15 incident, in which 35 people were killed, involved militia mercenaries from neighboring Somalia. Kenyan Internal Security Minister John Michuki also said that anybody bringing in militia from neighboring Somalia to participate in the fighting would be charged with treason. Kenyan security forces significantly increased their presence in the region, giving shoot-to-kill orders to soldiers and deploying helicopter gunships to patrol the region. The security around watering points and near grazing fields was also increased. **iJET: It is unclear how successful these new measures will be, especially considering that the Internal Minister was forced to flee from a March 19 meeting that erupted in violence after representatives of the two factions accused the other side of fueling the violence. Tensions remain high and additional retaliatory attacks cannot be ruled out.**

[Sit.Rep.] **MALAWI** (Security Rating: 4), **Plans to Impeach President:** On March 19, Opposition leader John Tembo, president of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), confirmed that discussions between his party and the ruling United Democratic Front (UDF) are underway to ascertain the feasibility of impeaching Malawian President Bingu Wa Mutharika. The opposition leader said that if Mutharika is found to be in violation of the constitution, impeachment actions would be launched when parliament resumes on March 30. Earlier on March 19, a group of 56 non-governmental organizations, known as the Malawi Human Rights Consultative Committee, indicated that it would support any move to impeach the president, provided that constitutional violations prove to be serious. UDF spokesman Sam Mpasu earlier indicated that his party had collected evidence of at least 10 such violations during the last 11 months. **iJET: Mutharika's declared war on corruption led to a public fallout between him and former president Bakili Muluzi, who remains the leader of the UDF. This dispute led to Mutharika's decision to resign from the UDF and attempt to launch his own political party - the Democratic Progressive Party. It is too early to predict whether this impeachment effort will actually materialize but it is certain that political rhetoric on this issue will increase ahead of the parliamentary opening.**

[Alert NIGER (Security Rating: 4), **Government Bans March 22 Anti-Vat Protests in Niamey and Zinder:** Niger's government issued a ban on anti-Value Added Tax (VAT) protests planned on March 22 in the capital of Niamey and in the country's second largest city of Zinder. The "Coalition against Costly Living" had indicated that it will organize nationwide weekly protests against the 19 percent VAT tax beginning on March 22. **iJET: It is uncertain whether or not regional protests will go ahead as scheduled or be postponed for a later date. On March 15, the coalition succeeded in mobilizing at least 15,000 people in Niamey for the country's largest demonstration ever. Protesters gathered at Toumo Plaza and marched to the National Assembly where organizers delivered a memorandum. After the demonstration ended dozens of people began looting stores, breaking traffic and street lights and burning tires in the street. The police have arrested nearly 50 people, charging them with acts of looting and vandalism. The government introduced the tax, affecting essential basic staples, including water and electricity, in January as part of the 2005 budget and in compliance with criteria recommended by the West African Economic Community. Clashes with police will likely ensue if protest organizers decide to hold the protests despite the ban.**

[Sit.Rep.] **SOMALIA** (Security Rating: NR), **Protest Against Composition of Peacekeeping Force:** A controversy surrounding the deployment of peacekeeping troops from bordering states sparked protests in Baalad, 30 km (approximately 19 miles) from the capital of Mogadishu on March 19. The protests drew hundreds of Somalis and came two days after the East African regional body, the Intergovernmental

Authority on Development (IGAD), approved plans to deploy 10,000 peacekeeping troops to bring an end to a 14-year conflict and to assist with the installation of the new Somali government - formed in exile in Kenya in 2004 - by the end of April. Similar demonstrations took place in Mogadishu March 15-16. Meanwhile, Somali warlords and Islamic militants say they would attack troops from neighboring states, especially from traditional rival Ethiopia, if they were included in the peacekeeping force. IGAD member states include Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. In a related development, more than 200 members of parliament came to blows at the Grand Regency hotel in Nairobi March 15 during a vote on whether IGAD troops from Djibouti, Kenya and Ethiopia should be included among the peacekeepers. **iJET: Prime Minister Mohammed Ali Gedi and his supporters favor the inclusion of these countries but face stiff opposition from the majority of parliament. Those supporting Parliamentary Speaker Sheikh Shariff Aden are especially opposed to Ethiopia's participation due to its past association with transitional President Yusuf Abdullahi Ahmed, a member of the Darod clan and Aden's chief rival. Additional protests are likely to occur throughout Somalia in the coming days.**

[Sit.Rep.] **TOGO** (Security Rating: 4), **Exiled Opposition Leader Returns; Opposition Unity Questionable:** On March 19, some 300,000 people gathered in Lome to greet Gilchrist Olympio, the exiled leader of the Union of Forces for Change (UFC). Olympio fled Togo following an assassination attempt two years ago and has been living in France. He has returned to Togo to lend his support UFC candidate Bob Ekitani's bid for the presidency in April 24 elections. The coalition of six opposition parties would have normally fielded Olympio as its candidate but the UFC leader has not lived in Togo for 12 consecutive months and is subsequently barred from contesting the elections. Meanwhile, in a development that threatens to fracture the opposition, Olympio's 44-year-old nephew and the leader of the Rally for the Support of Democracy and Development (RSDD), Harry Olympio, announced on March 19 that he would stand for president. He claims that 75-year Ekitani is too old to run against the ruling party's candidate Faure Gnassingbe, who is 39, and that youthful leadership is paramount for real change. **iJET: The RSDD's move to field its own candidate is not surprising given that Togo's opposition has been historically been fractured. Moreover, it almost assures that Gnassingbe, already favored to win, will likely win with relative ease. By the same token, political infighting among opposition parties could lead to increased political tensions between young militants from all sides. The RSDD demonstrated its ability to mount large-scale protests during the political crisis in February and on March 17 militant youths voiced their opposition to Ekitani's candidacy and demanded that Leopold Gnininvi of the African Peoples Democratic Convention be put forth as the consensus presidential candidate. Complicating matters even further is yet another youth group that threatened to "take matters into its own" hands if the opposition did not field a single candidate. Combined, these factors elevate the risk for incidents of political violence in the lead-up to the elections.**

[Sit.Rep.] **UGANDA** (Security Rating: 4), **Cargo Aircraft Crashes into Lake Victoria:** An Ethiopian Airlines B-707, carrying cargo from Addis Ababa to Togo, crashed into Lake Victoria March 19. The aircraft apparently went down on its second attempt to land at Entebbe Airport (EBB). Ugandan Minister of Works, Housing and Communication John Nasasira said that the incident could have been a result of poor visibility. The crew of five only sustained minor injuries. **iJET: The airport's main runway ends on the banks of Lake Victoria. According to contractors involved in aircraft salvage operations in Uganda, there is an average of one aircraft crashing into the lake per year. But this is by far the most serious incident in recent years in the immediate vicinity of the airport. On Jan. 8, a Russian-made AN-12 aircraft crashed approximately 30 km (18 miles) northwest of the airport after reporting engine trouble shortly after take-off.**

[Sit.Rep.] **ZIMBABWE** (Security Rating: 5), **Opposition Party Accused of Fueling Election Violence:** The ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) has accused the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and some non-governmental organizations of training "thugs and hooligans," according to reports in the Sunday Mail newspaper, March 20. The report alleges that these "thugs and hooligans" are being trained to violently disrupt the March 31 election. Meanwhile, police have arrested 34 alleged Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) officials for staging a demonstration at a routine leadership meeting of the ZCTU in Harare on March 19. Although the purpose

of the demonstration is unclear, the state-owned Herald newspaper alleges that the members are dissatisfied with a ZCTU invitation to the Congress of South African Trade Unions to monitor the March 31 election. In another development, the Supreme Court March 17 ruled against allowing citizens living abroad to vote in the upcoming election. The ruling is in response to a case filed by British-based Zimbabweans. **iJET: The MDC is using youths in its political campaign. But whether they are responsible for political violence is questionable. The allegation may be a ZANU-PF tactic to lure attention away from accusations against ZANU-PF elements responsible for violence. Zimbabwe's last two elections, in 2000 and 2002, were characterized by widespread violence. The Supreme Court decision to bar foreign citizens from voting is seen by regional analysts as a political decision because the majority of foreigners who fled the country during the last five years are MDC supporters.**

---

## ASIA

[Sit.Rep.] **AFGHANISTAN** (Security Rating: 5), **Afghan Man Arrested for Kandahar Blasts**: On March 19, Interior Ministry officials announced that police have arrested an Afghan national in connection with two bomb blasts that killed five people in Kandahar while U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice visited Afghanistan. The man was arrested while fleeing the scene of one of the March 17 explosions in the city, 440 km (275 miles) south of the capital Kabul. **iJET: On March 17, a Taliban spokesperson denied any involvement in a roadside bomb that detonated in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar. The blasts reportedly targeted development agencies in the region. The first remote-controlled parcel bomb detonated as two World Food Program vehicles passed by. The second blast also targeted an international development agency. Taliban representatives claim that they only attack military and security personnel and would never attack civilian entities.**

[Alert **I**] **AFGHANISTAN** (Security Rating: 5), **Severe Flooding**: On March 18, severe flooding hit Afghanistan's south-central province of Uzuzgan, Farah and Ghor provinces in the west and Jawzjan in the north. At least 88 people have been killed and thousands more left homeless. **iJET: Heavy rains coupled with the melting of thick snow are likely to exacerbate to situation. Landslides are possible. Power supplies and telecommunications will be affected; expect outages.**

[Sit.Rep.] **CAMBODIA** (Security Rating: 3), **Military Police Shoot Dead Protesters in Land Dispute**: On March 21, military police shot dead four villagers who were protesting their removal from disputed land in Banteay Meanchey province of northwest Cambodia. Three others were injured, provincial security officials reported. A court had reportedly given the military police permission to clear an area that has been claimed by the village chief. According to the military police, when they went to ask the villagers who were living there to move away, they refused, which led to a confrontation. The villagers were allegedly armed with knives and axes to attack the police. The more than 100 military police attempted to clear the area in Kbal Spean village, where over 200 families lived. **iJET: Land disputes are on the rise in Cambodia, where registries were largely destroyed under the Khmer Rouge regime. Activists also claim that many tracts of land are being unfairly given to big business interests.**

[Alert **I**] **CHINA** (Security Rating: 3), **Human Rabies Cases Hit 10-Year High in Guangdong**: Officials March 16 reported that 244 people had died of rabies in Guangdong Province during 2004 - a 10-year high. In response, public health authorities issued an emergency order to kill unvaccinated dogs. On average, the Guangdong province reports approximately 60 human rabies cases per year, but the number has increased rapidly in recent years, and includes cases from at least eight cities. Maoming has been especially hard hit. Other provinces experiencing similar trends include Guangxi, Hainan, Hunan and Jiangsu. Rabies cases have risen for six consecutive years in China.

[Sit.Rep.] **EAST TIMOR** (Security Rating: 4), **New Airline Launched**: On March 18, Kakaok Air launched operations with an inaugural flight from Dili to Kupang in Indonesia's East Nusa Tenggara province. The airline has one plane - a CASA 212. The airline is offering two weekly flights between Kupang and Dili.

**iJET: Kakaok Air is East Timor's first airline. Since 2003, Merpati Nusantara Airlines has been operating flights between Kupang and Dili. Merpati staff trained Kakaok employees. Kakaok is using a Merpati livery because it cannot yet use its own colors under International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) rules.**


[Alert **I**] **HONG KONG SAR** (Security Rating: 1), **Shellfish Warning:** Health officials March 18 reiterated a warning to residents not to eat fresh scallops after the toxin in scallops purchased locally sickened 45 people between March 10 and 15. Victims purchased the toxic shellfish from a total of 18 markets in 11 separate districts. The districts include: Chai Wan; Mong Kok; Sha Tin; Sheung Shui; Tai Po; Tin Shui Wai; Tseung Kwan O; Tuen Mun; Wan Chai; Wong Tai Sin and Yuen Long. Residents reported an additional 15 cases to the Hong Kong Department of Health through a hotline set up on March 16 to provide advice regarding the shellfish poisonings to the public.

[Sit.Rep.] **INDIA** (Security Rating: 3), **Mobs Attacks Orissa Police Station:** On March 18, a mob of approximately 5,000 people attacked a police station in Kuchinda in the Sampalpur district of Orissa State to demand the release of a local resident arrested for public drunkenness a day earlier. The man died after several hours in custody. The crowd ransacked the station, prompting officers to fire tear gas. They also attacked the mob with batons. Several people sustained injuries. **iJET: The riot started because local residents claimed that officers beat the man to death. However, police claim that the suspect hanged himself. Human rights abuses by Indian security personnel and custodial deaths regularly spark unrest in cities and towns throughout India, particularly in insurgency-affected areas. The Orissa government has ordered a judicial inquiry into the death of the prisoner in Kuchinda, as well as another custodial killing in a Bhubaneshwar jail on March 3.**


[Sit.Rep.] **INDIA** (Security Rating: 3), **Nationalists Protest U.S. Government's Visa Refusal:** Indian nationalists in Gujarat State attacked PepsiCo and Coca-Cola warehouses March 19 in protest over the U.S. government's denial of a diplomatic visa for Narendra Modi, the Hindu nationalist chief minister of Gujarat. About 150 activists forced their way into a PepsiCo warehouse in the western city of Surat, smashed bottles and set the building on fire. Witnesses claim the protesters were from a group affiliated with Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which governs Gujarat state. **iJET: Opposition and human rights groups have charged that Modi, while chief minister, did little to stop the 2002 riots in Gujarat that killed up to 2,000 Muslims. Rioting broke out following claims that a Muslim mob torched a train carrying Hindu activists at Godhra, which officials later determined was an accident. Besides denying a diplomatic visa, the U.S. Embassy also revoked Modi's valid tourist and business visa under provisions of the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act. The act makes any foreign government official who was responsible for, or directly carried out, severe violations of religious freedom, ineligible for a visa. A U.S. State Department spokesman has said Modi's visa denial was based on India's findings that Modi's administration had failed to control human rights violations.**

[Alert **I**] **JAPAN** (Security Rating: 2), **Strong Quake Rocks Kyushu Island:** A 7.0 magnitude earthquake shook southern Japan March 20, killing an elderly woman, injuring 400, and forcing hundreds to flee their homes. Japan's Meteorological Service issued tsunami warnings, but the advisories were lifted about an hour later. The agency said the quake, which hit approximately 70 km (40 miles) off the coast of Kyushu island at 1053 local time, was centered at an "extremely shallow" depth below the ocean floor.


Several aftershocks followed the initial quake. Authorities ordered buildings in Fukuoka to be evacuated, warned of landslides around Fukuoka, Saga and Nagasaki prefectures, and reported some water and gas main breaks, and power blackouts. The quake forced the suspension of train services for safety inspections. Media reports said the quake destroyed at least 50 buildings on the island and partially damaged many more. Fukuoka Airport (FUK) suspended operations for checks but there were no reports of damage and later reopened. More aftershocks are likely.


[Alert ] **MYANMAR** (Security Rating: 3), **Small Bomb in Yangon Hotel:** A bomb exploded in the bathroom of an unoccupied third floor guest room of the Panorama Hotel on Pansodan Road in Yangon March 19. The hotel is popular with foreign backpackers but no injuries have been reported. The bombing comes amid increased security for the 60th anniversary of Armed Forces Day on March 27. The Vigorous Burmese Student Warriors claimed responsibility for the hotel bombing but denied targeting foreigners or local civilians. The group is demanding the release of political prisoners. **iJET: Security forces detonated two small bombs found at a bus terminal in eastern Yangon on March 17. The Panorama Hotel is located near the central train station where five small bombs exploded last June.**

[Sit.Rep.] **NEPAL** (Security Rating: 4), **U.K. Cuts Off More Aid:** After cutting military aid to Nepal nearly a month ago, the United Kingdom announced March 18 that it has also canceled aid it had committed to support the police, prison services and the prime minister's office. The aid package committed for the fiscal year 2004-2005 was GBP 2.4 million. Officials of the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) stated that they considered it inappropriate to continue the support given the current environment in Nepal. On Feb. 1, Nepal's King Gyanendra dismissed his country's government, suspended civil liberties and declared a state of emergency. **iJET: DFID officials said one reason the decision was made was due to the inability to ensure that their programs could continue to help poor and excluded people in Nepal and not be diverted for other purposes. Human rights in Nepal is also a deep concern for the U.K. Before Gyanendra's takeover, the international community funded 62 percent of Nepal's development budget. The country is one of the poorest in the world with 42 percent of people living below the poverty line. The cancellation of aid, as well as other international pressure on Nepal, will likely encourage terrorism in the kingdom and severely hurt the country's economy.**

[Alert ] **PAKISTAN** (Security Rating: 4), **Bombing at Muslim Shrine in Balochistan Province Kills 35:** At about 2230 local time on March 19, a powerful bomb exploded near a shrine of a Sufi Muslim saint in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province. At least 35 people were killed and 40 wounded in the blast. The attack occurred in the remote town of Fatahpur, about 300 km (180 miles) south of the provincial capital Quetta, as tens of thousands of pilgrims gathered near the shrine for an evening meal. A second unexploded bomb was found near the shrine, but was safely removed. Earlier on March 19, two homemade bombs went off in a residential area of the town of Turbat, about 640 km (400 miles) southwest of Quetta, wounding four people. Authorities do not know who carried out the attacks. On March 18, twin bomb blasts ripped through two trains traveling in opposite directions, killing one person and injuring nine others. The first bomb hidden in a toilet exploded in a carriage of a passenger train heading towards Quetta, killing one person and injuring five. The second bomb went off on the Chiltan Express headed in the opposite direction towards Lahore, wounding four people. The nationalist group Balochistan Liberation Army is likely responsible for the bombings as they have claimed responsibility for similar attacks in the past. **iJET: Although no one has claimed responsibility for the shrine blast and there is no evidence linking the bombing to lingering sectarian tensions between majority Sunnis and minority Shia' or to an escalating tribal rebellion, retaliatory attacks are possible. Separatist violence has escalated considerably since the end of 2004. Security posts, government buildings, vital infrastructure, energy installations and rail lines are potential targets.**

[Sit.Rep.] **PHILIPPINES** (Security Rating: 4), **Scuba Diving Training for Al-Qaeda-Linked Militants:** A Philippine military report claims militant groups in Southeast Asia are working together to train terrorists for underwater attacks. According to a recently captured guerrilla, Jemaah Islamiyah and Abu Sayyaf militants were being trained in scuba diving as part of a bombing plot on unspecified targets outside the Philippines. The report also noted that Abu Sayyaf militants in the Philippines had received financial and explosives assistance from the Indonesia-based Jemaah Islamiyah. **iJET: Last month, the U.S. Coast Guard announced it was developing a sonar system that could help protect the nation's ports from terrorist attacks by scuba divers. Authorities fear terrorist scuba divers could target ships, bridges, power plants and waterfront targets with more accuracy than a small explosive-laden boat similar to the one used during the 2000 attack on the USS Cole in Yemen.**


[Alert ] **SRI LANKA** (Security Rating: 4), **U.S. Issues Warden Message:** The U.S. Embassy in Colombo issued a warning March 18 urging U.S. citizens to use heightened caution while traveling or working in the eastern parts of Sri Lanka. The warden message cautions individuals against participating or attending any political demonstrations that may occur. **iJET: Eastern and northeastern parts of Sri Lanka are dominated by pockets of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) militant group. The warning comes after a series of attacks against LTTE personnel that have led to a deterioration of security conditions between the rebels and government forces. Rebels are accusing the government of breaching a ceasefire, while the government lays the blame on a breakaway LTTE cell. Though the warning has been issued for U.S. citizens, all individuals and agencies operating out of rebel-held territories, including the towns of Batticaloa, Kilinochchi and Trincomalee should review security protocols.**

[Alert ] **TAIWAN** (Security Rating: 2), **Anti-Secession Law Protest:** The ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) is planning a massive rally March 26 in Taipei against Mainland China's recently passed anti-secession law. Organizers of the protest have called for more than 1 million protesters to take part in the rally. The law calls for non-peaceful means against Taiwan if the island declares independence. Details of the rally have not been released at this time. **iJET: A large turnout is likely given overwhelming dissatisfaction over the passage of the law. Expect major transportation delays near protest venues.**

[Sit.Rep.] **THAILAND** (Security Rating: 3), **Violence Continues in South:** On March 20, two near simultaneous bombings in Thailand's deep south injured 14 people. The first bomb went off at 0923 at a park pavilion in the capital of Yala province shortly after police searched a group of four young men. The blast reportedly wounded seven policemen and the four men. Seven minutes later in neighboring Narathiwat province, a bomb exploded outside an army checkpoint in Cho-ai Rong district, wounding three soldiers. On March 19, a village defense volunteer was shot dead and a forest guard was wounded in two separate attacks in Narathiwat's Tak Bai district. **iJET: The attacks were the latest in a string of violent incidents attributed to Muslim extremists in southern Thailand. Despite the deployment of additional security personnel in three insurgency-affected provinces, attacks have escalated (see Surge in Violent Attacks - 03/08/2005).**

---

## CARIBBEAN


[Alert ] **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC** (Security Rating: 3), **WHO Rescinds Call for Anti-Malaria Medications in La Altagracia:** World Health Organization officials March 18 rescinded their recommendation that tourists to resorts in La Altagracia Province take prophylactic anti-malaria medication before departing for the Dominican Republic. Authorities at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), however, continued to recommend prophylaxis (chloroquine). Twenty tourists acquired malaria in La Altagracia Province at resort areas not previously known to be at risk for malaria, including Punta Cana and Playa Bavaro, between November 2004 and Jan. 10. One person acquired malaria in San Francisco de Macoris in Duarte Province during late November. *P. falciparum* malaria, the most severe form of malaria, caused all the cases. At least six people required admission to the intensive care unit. **iJET: Doctors at the CDC told iJET that the CDC plans to recommend prophylaxis for three months following the return of the last tourist case (Jan. 10.) They indicated that the recommendation could be lifted earlier than April 10 if they are comfortable that no cases are occurring locally in Altagracia. All international health authorities agree that travelers to rural areas throughout the DR should take anti-malaria medication. The U.S. CDC Feb. 4 rescinded its recommendation for malaria prophylaxis for travelers to resorts in Duarte Province.**


[Sit.Rep.] **JAMAICA** (Security Rating: 3), **Air Jamaica Suspends Flights:** In the latest in a series of setbacks for the struggling carrier, Air Jamaica announced on March 18 that it has suspended flights to Grenada, St. Lucia and Barbados for a month in order to meet new maintenance regulations set by the Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority. The decision came a month after the airline took half its 20 planes out of

service and canceled several flights to the U.S. and United Kingdom after a U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) audit raised questions about its maintenance schedule. The FAA has insisted that Air Jamaica conduct major maintenance on planes every 15 months instead of every 18 months. According to Air Jamaica officials, the flight cancellations last month cost the company millions of dollars. **iJET: Air Jamaica had earlier denied any maintenance scheduling problems, claiming the canceled flights were due to low bookings. Air Jamaica has been in serious financial difficulty for the past year and was recently taken over by the Jamaican government. Jamaica's civil aviation record has been good for much of the past decade, with the only notable incident being a poor performance during a 1994 audit. Jamaica has since raised its standards and has been in full compliance in the interim. The latest flight suspensions are likely to slow tourist arrival from neighboring islands.**


---

## CENTRAL / SOUTH AMERICA

[Alert ] **ARGENTINA** (Security Rating: 3), **Buenos Aires Airport Strike:** Airline workers shut down Aeroparque Jorge Newbery Airport (AEP) in Buenos Aires for three hours March 18 and threatened more strikes during Easter Week March 21-27. Protesters marched through the airport carrying the Argentinian flag and making noise with drums and whistles. They also called for the resignations of Transportation Secretary Ricardo Jaime and Undersecretary of Aviation, Ricardo Cirielli. The workers' union was protesting plans to privatize the government-owned Federal Airlines (LAFSA) and Southern Winds. About 300 travelers were stranded for hours until flights resumed.

[Alert ] **BRAZIL** (Security Rating: 4), **Military Opens Healthcare Clinics:** Brazilian military forces on March 18 opened healthcare clinics throughout Rio de Janeiro to alleviate the city's overburdened public hospitals. Municipal authorities denounced the military incursion into the city, but central government officials said the temporary facilities were necessary to improve local medical services. **iJET: Authorities did not mention any specific illness or labor action that prompted the decision to establish military-run clinics. The move is likely an effort to force Rio's authorities to improve public healthcare. Expect delays throughout the city's healthcare centers in the short term. Private clinics may also be more crowded than usual.**

[Sit.Rep.] **COLOMBIA** (Security Rating: 4), **Congressman Assassinated:** Armed assailants assassinated Colombian Congressman Oscar Gonzalez Grisales and a bodyguard at his office in Manizales, Caldas department on March 18. Following the attack, President Alvaro Uribe announced the establishment of a COP 50,000,000 (USD 20,000) reward for information leading to the resolution of this crime. Two of Gonzalez' brothers were also murdered since 2002, but authorities have not said whether these crimes are linked. **iJET: Colombian rebels and paramilitaries readily target local elites and politicians for extortion and kidnappings and even assassinations, though the later is not as common. Authorities have not yet blamed any specific rebel group for this attack. Gonzalez' murder follows the mid-February murder of Mayor Jose Heriberto Castro of the town of Genova in Quindio department, which is less than 50 km (30 miles) south of Caldas department. Heriberto is the first mayor killed by rebels in 2005, but the fourth assassinated by the suspected Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) insurgents since the beginning of 2004. President Uribe's swift response to the murder demonstrates the severity of this crime.**

[Alert ] **EL SALVADOR** (Security Rating: 3) and **NICARAGUA** (Security Rating: 4), **Serious Diarrhea Outbreaks:** Health authorities in Nicaragua March 16 declared a health emergency following 41 deaths and more than 41,000 cases of diarrhea among children. The children in El Salvador are also suffering from outbreaks of diarrhea; the health minister there declared a state of emergency in February. The diarrhea outbreaks began in January in both countries. Most cases are due to rotavirus. Authorities are warning that outbreaks could expand during the Holy Week holiday (March 20-27) when many people frequent pools and beaches that may be contaminated. In Nicaragua, the hardest hit areas include

Managua and northern provinces, especially New Segovia, Esteli and Madriz. Doctors in El Salvador reported more than 71,000 cases of diarrhea in the first two months of the year. Hard-hit departments include San Salvador, La Libertad and La Paz.

[Sit.Rep.] **PANAMA** (Security Rating: 3), **Hundreds Lose Home and Possessions in El Chorrillo House Fire**: More than 500 people were displaced by a fire that raged in a housing complex in El Chorrillo, a suburb of Panama City. Officials reported that ten fire trucks and 100 firefighters were needed to extinguish the fire. The victims maintain that the fire was started by rival gangs, but the director of the National Police, Gustavo Perez, said it was more likely the carelessness of one of the residents. Perez and Minister of Housing Balbina Herrera promised there would be complete investigation into the blaze. The residents were relocated to temporary shelters or homes of relatives. **iJET: El Chorrillo is a poor neighborhood that is plagued by gang violence. Ironically, this neighborhood was bombed during Operation Just Cause in 1989, and residents still mark the anniversary of the bombing in December by setting fire to a model of a house and reenacting the rescues of children. The police have done little to curb violence there over the years.**

[Alert **I**] **PERU** (Security Rating: 3), **Doctors End Work Stoppage**: Doctors ended their 17-day work stoppage March 18 after officials agreed to increase their salaries. More than 10,000 public sector physicians launched their strike March 1. They had threatened to suspend emergency care to increase pressure on the government to meet their demands. **iJET: Lingerin g delays are possible in private health care clinics over the coming days.**

---

## EUROPE

[Alert **I**] **GREECE** (Security Rating: 2), **Airport Workers to Strike Nationwide March 22-23**: Airport workers in Greece intend to hold a two-day nationwide strike to protest staff shortages, beginning March 22. The Federation of Associations of Hellenic Civil Aviation Authority, which groups all administration and technical workers at Greek airports, said airport workers will only service emergency flights during the strike period. Flight delays and passenger processing delays throughout Greece are likely.

[Alert **I**] **PORTUGAL** (Security Rating: 2), **Police Officers to Rally in Lisbon March 22**: Members of the Union of Police Professionals have called on the public to join a police march in Lisbon slated for March 22. Police and others will march through the capital's central streets. Police have called for the protest to demand better equipment for officers and stricter punishments on criminals who target police. **iJET: The rally will likely draw drawn large crowds; previous police protests have drawn up to 5,000 officers in Lisbon. The call for the protest follows the shooting deaths March 20 of two officers in Lisbon. The gunman shot the officers several times after the police requested identification. The shooting brings the total number of police officers killed on duty to six since 2003.**

[Alert **U**] **UNITED KINGDOM** (Security Rating: 2), **Nationwide Public Sector Strike**: More than 1.23 million local government civil workers belonging to Amicus, T&GWU, Unison, UCATT and the Public and Commercial Services Union will hold a nationwide one-day strike March 23. The union members are protesting government's plans to raise the retirement age from 60 to 65. Officials stated that this is the largest civil service strike since the general strike of 1926. **iJET: The strike is likely to affect areas open to the public, such as tourist information centers, libraries, museums, social services and education offices. While demonstrations are expected, any protests will likely be peaceful.**


---


## MIDDLE EAST / NORTH AFRICA

[Sit.Rep.] **ALGERIA** (Security Rating: 4), **Three Killed in Militant Violence near Boumerdes:** Two suspected Islamic militants and a police officer were killed in a clash in an isolated area near Boumerdes, 48 km (30 miles) east of Algiers, March 17. Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) militants are active in the area. Two militants escaped after the clash, which came as Algerian security forces are preparing for the Arab League summit in Algiers March 22-23. At least a dozen people, including four police officers, have been killed in Islamic militant attacks in Algeria since the beginning of March. **iJET: Around 50 people are killed every month in Islamic militant violence in Algeria. The attacks, which discourage badly needed investment outside of Algeria's oil and gas sector, are a nuisance but do not pose a threat to regime stability. Islamic militant attacks are likely to continue at similar levels in coming months.**


[Sit.Rep.] **BAHRAIN** (Security Rating: 3), **Opposition Plans Pro-Reform Rallies:** Bahrain's predominantly Shia opposition will hold a series of rallies to pressure the government to implement democratic reforms, spokesmen for various opposition groups said in interviews published March 20. The Islamic Wafaq Society, the country's largest opposition group, will hold the first rally March 25 in Sitra (western Bahrain). Opposition leaders said some 20,000 people are expected to attend. **iJET: The opposition's primary demands are to make the appointed legislative chamber -which enjoys as much power as the elected chamber- an advisory body only and to implement constitutional reforms that would give elected officials more power in relation to the country's royal family. Opposition parties, most of whom boycotted parliamentary elections in 2002 to express their displeasure with the slow pace of reforms, claim they will not participate in polls scheduled for 2006 unless their demands are met.**

[Sit.Rep.] **EGYPT** (Security Rating: 3), **Riot Police Clash with Protestors:** Violence broke out at a small protest outside the Supreme Court building in central Cairo March 17 when riot police used their batons to disperse about 100 people who had gathered to protest the eviction of several farmers from their land in northern Egypt. The protestors claim farmers in the northern Nile Delta were evicted from their land in January and authorities have failed to address the issue. The protest followed weeks of clashes between farmers and security forces in Damahur, about 96 km (60 miles) northeast of Cairo. In a separate development, some 500 protestors gathered in the northern city of Alexandria March 19 to demand that the government implement more comprehensive reforms and lift a state of emergency that has been in place since 1981. A third protest erupted March 20 at Ain Shams University in Cairo to commemorate the two-year anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. Minor scuffles were reported at the protest. **iJET: Protests in Egypt are usually fairly small and heavily policed, with security forces outnumbering demonstrators at a ratio of at least three to one. Truckloads of troops are posted outside universities and government buildings every day to discourage protestors from gathering, while troops are posted en masse outside mosques throughout the city during Friday mid-day prayers to prevent agitated worshipers from undermining security in the event that a cleric defies government warnings and deliver a provocative sermon. Protests have become increasingly common in Egypt in recent weeks but do not pose a threat to stability in Egypt. Nonetheless, the willingness of increasing numbers of citizens to risk arrest or abuse by security forces to express their displeasure with various government policies and social issues underscores slowly rising tension between the government and the populace.**


[Alert ] **EGYPT** (Security Rating: 3), **Protesters Clash with Security Forces in El-Arish:** Hundreds of protesters clashed with police March 18 in El-Arish over the continued detention of individuals suspected of having links to the October 2004 Sinai bombings. This is the second consecutive Friday that hundreds have gathered at the Al-Rifai mosque following mid-day prayers. At least 20 demonstrators were arrested during a March 11 rally outside the mosque. **iJET: Protesters, many of whom are family members of those detained, have held multiple protests calling on the Egyptian government to free those who remain in police custody. Further clashes between protesters and security forces are likely. Police frequently use batons and tear gas to disperse protesters.**


[Alert ] **EGYPT** (Security Rating: 3), **Opposition Protest:** Individuals opposed to a fifth presidential run by President Hosni Mubarak plan to hold a demonstration in Al-Tahrir Square in central Cairo on March 21. **iJET: Additional security measures are likely throughout Cairo, especially near Al-Tahrir Square. Both the U.S and British embassies are located near the square. Expect a large police presence, resulting in the blocking of several roads and severe traffic delays in central Cairo.**

[Sit.Rep.] **IRAQ** (Security Rating: 5), **Shia' Protesters Gather outside Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad:** Some 2,000 Shia' protesters March 18 staged the third anti-Jordan demonstration in less than a week outside the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad to protest the alleged involvement of a Jordanian national in a suicide bombing that killed some 120 mostly Shia' Iraqis in Hilla last month. The protesters, who burned the Jordanian flag and portraits of Jordan's King Abdullah, demanded an apology from the Jordanian government and the closure of Jordan's embassy in Iraq. The protesters also denounced Syria's alleged support for insurgents operating in Iraq. **iJET: The protests come amid a longstanding backdrop of latent anti-Jordan sentiment in Iraq. Many Iraqis, particularly within the Shia' community, resent Jordan for maintaining cordial ties with Saddam Hussein's regime in order to receive vast amounts of free and sharply discounted oil. Many Iraqis similarly resent average Jordanian citizens from profiting from sanctions-busting trade and treating the thousands of Iraqi refugees living in Jordan as second-class citizens.**


[Alert ] **IRAQ** (Security Rating: 5), **Bomb Blast Targets Funeral Procession in Kirkuk:** A bomb exploded in the center of Kirkuk, March 19, killing at least three Iraqi police and wounding seven others. The blast occurred at 1030 local time as a funeral procession of policeman gunned down a day earlier passed by.


[Sit.Rep.] **ISRAEL** (Security Rating: 3) and **WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP** (Security Rating: NR), **Ceasefire Continuation Announced in Cairo:** A meeting of Palestinian factions in Cairo reached a six-point agreement March 17 which details expected developments in the West Bank until the end of 2005. The factions, including Fatah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, agreed that the current "lull" in attacks against Israel will continue indefinitely, so long as Israel does not renew military operations against Palestinians, frees Palestinian prisoners and ends settlement and security wall construction. The agreement calls for continued reforms of all Palestinian Authority institutions. The sides agreed to hold free elections - with the participation of most factions - at the local level in May and parliament level in July. Both Hamas and Islamic Jihad agreed to join the PLO by the end of 2005, meaning they will join peace negotiations with Israel at that point. Lastly, the factions agreed that the "use of weapons to solve internal disagreements among the organizations is forbidden." **iJET: The agreement was only made possible due to the direct involvement of Egypt, represented by Oman Suleiman, and Syria, represented by Walid Al-Mualem. The extension of the temporary ceasefire was welcomed by Israel though Israeli leaders cautioned that it must be fully implemented and that the Palestinian factions must also disarm from their illegal weapons. The extension of the ceasefire sets the stage for a critical summer as Israel withdraws from Gaza and the Palestinians hold parliamentary elections. If both events proceed relatively smoothly, it is possible that the peace process will be propelled forward. If, however, the two fail, the peace process could return to its dormant stage and the cycle of violence will return.**

[Alert ] **ISRAEL** (Security Rating: 3), **Students Strike and Demonstrations:** University students are holding strikes and demonstrations against proposed cuts in government spending on education March 20-24. Strikes and demonstrations are planned at Tel Aviv's Bar Ilan University March 23 and at Haifa University during the week, though no specific date has been announced. **iJET: Demonstrations will cause minimal travel delays outside university campuses.**

[Alert ] **ISRAEL** (Security Rating: 3), **Municipal Workers Strike:** Municipal workers in Israel will hold a one-day strike March 23. No municipal services will be available during the strike, but the primary education system will remain open. **iJET: The effects of municipal strikes are immediately noticeable in Israel. Garbage collectors do not work and garbage collects on city streets. Parking officials do**

**not work and drivers often park on sidewalks. Workers may also stage a demonstration in front of the Knesset (parliament) in Jerusalem.**

[Alert ] **ISRAEL** (Security Rating: 3), **Security Stepped Up for Purim:** As Israel prepares to celebrate Purim March 26, thousands of extra security personnel will deploy to cities nationwide. Traditionally, children walk the streets dressed in costumes and collect candy. Parades (known as *Adladaya*) are held in major cities. **iJET: Expect road closures during the morning and early afternoon. Dizengoff Street in Tel Aviv between King George and Frishmann will be closed. In recent years, the largest parade has been held in Holon, south of Tel Aviv. Many streets in downtown Holon will be closed, including Sokolov, Witzman and Histadrut. Most shops and offices are open for business on Purim. Despite the lull in terrorist attacks since the temporary ceasefire agreement between Palestinian factions, Israeli security forces will be on a high state of alert. On March 18, the Gaza-based Popular Resistance Committees said it would no longer abide by the terms of the temporary ceasefire agreement. Expect increased security throughout Israel, especially in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and in areas along the 1967 border (Green Line) such as Wadi Ara.**

[Alert ] **LEBANON** (Security Rating: 5), **Political Tensions Remain High:** Political tensions in Lebanon remain high as the opposition refuses to negotiate with re-appointed Omar Karami over the creation of a new government. There are also increased calls for the resignation of the six security services director generals and for President Emil Lahud to step down. However, both the opposition and pro-government forces have decided to reduce the number of street demonstrations. Pro-government forces, led by Hizballah, canceled all future rallies March 17. Additional opposition rallies will be held, but not on the scale of a March 14 rally, which about one million people attended. The largest rallies will remain the Monday opposition rallies beginning at Martyrs' Square. Syrian troops and intelligence have nearly completed the first phase of their withdrawal from Lebanon. Most military and intelligence positions in Beirut and Tripoli were vacated March 14-18. Continued troop movement may cause travel delays on the Beirut-Damascus Highway and main roads in the Beka'a Valley. **iJET: Violence between pro-government and opposition forces remains possible. Also, clashes between protesters and Internal Security Forces (ISF) are possible if the government outlaws future rallies. There is continued speculation that Syria will encourage either terrorist attacks or civil unrest in Lebanon with the goal of creating a reason for the troops to remain in Lebanon. Attacks by Islamic fundamentalists on Western establishments such as restaurants, grocery stores and shopping malls remain a possibility; attacks on Western civilians are possible as well. On March 15, security outside the United Nations Headquarters in Beirut was increased. Militant activity along the Lebanon-Israel border - especially by Hizballah - is also possible. Such activity may draw retaliatory Israeli attacks on Hizballah positions.**


[Sit.Rep.] **SAUDI ARABIA** (Security Rating: 5), **Attacker Shot Dead Outside Newspaper Office:** Security personnel guarding the office of leading Saudi newspaper Al-Watan in the southern city of Abha opened fire on an attacker who drove his car through the compound's gates March 18. The guards fired warning shots and then shot the 20-year-old man dead when he continued driving toward them. Saudi police found a knife and a stick in the car of the slain assailant, who has been accused of involvement in past non-terror related criminal attacks. **iJET: Al-Watan offices have stepped up security in recent years amid a series of attacks targeting the paper's journalists and threats against its offices. The paper has aggressively criticized Islamic militants carrying out a series of attacks targeting Westerners in the country. The attempted attack probably had no link to Islamic militants, as it seems unlikely that a group with plenty of arms and explosives would send an attacker armed with a knife and a stick.**

[Sit.Rep.] **YEMEN** (Security Rating: 5), **Security Forces Kill Three Shia' Militants in Saada Province:** Three members of a Shia' militant group were killed in a clash with police officers near an arms market in the northern Saada province March 19, Yemeni officials said. The three were prominent members of the Believing Youth, a group that supported radical Shia' cleric Hussein Badr Al-Houthi during a three-month-long anti-government uprising in northern Yemen last year that left at least 400 people dead. The uprising came to an end when security forces killed Al-Houthi in September 2004. **iJET: Many of the Believing**

Youth's members evaded capture after the uprising, but several of the group's most charismatic leaders were arrested or killed. There has been no indication that the group will resume activities like those that prompted the crackdown against it, primarily violent anti-U.S. and anti-Israel demonstrations and small scale attacks on government buildings in northern Yemen. The latest incident will probably not prompt more violence between Shia' militants and security forces in the Saada province unless Believing Youth members launch some kind of retaliatory attack against government interests in the area.


---

## NORTH AMERICA

[Alert UNITED STATES (Security Rating: 2), **Tuberculosis Attributed to Raw Milk Cheese:** Public health officials in New York City are warning residents not to eat unripened raw milk soft cheeses following the death of a child due to tuberculosis acquired as a result of consumption of contaminated cheese from Mexico. Authorities have discovered soft cheeses contaminated with *Mycobacterium bovis*, bacilli that can cause tuberculosis in cheeses sold in Latin American markets in both Queens and Brooklyn, but doctors have reported cases of tuberculosis due to the *Mycobacterium bovis* in all boroughs of New York City. **iJET: The contaminated cheeses are illegally imported from Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua and include Queso Panela, Asadero, Blanco and Ranchero cheeses. The illegally imported cheeses may have labels that are not in English and do not state that the product was pasteurized. Soft cheeses produced with pasteurized milk are safe.**

---

## RUSSIA / CIS

[Alert RUSSIA (Security Rating: 4), **Regional Day of Mourning:** Authorities in Russia's Perm region have declared March 21 a region-wide day of mourning following the crash of an An-24 aircraft near Varandei in the Nenets autonomous district March 16. Twenty-eight oil workers were killed in the crash; 24 survived. The Nenets region declared a three-day mourning period March 18. **iJET: Expect many businesses and government offices to be closed; various entertainment activities such as concerts and shows may be canceled. Special services, processions and prayer vigils will be held throughout the region. Parades and services honoring the dead may cause temporary road closures.**

###

### About iJET

iJET<sup>®</sup> Intelligent Risk Systems ([www.ijet.com](http://www.ijet.com)) is a leader in enterprise risk management technology and integrated crisis response services. Since 1999, iJET has helped over 350 of the world's largest multinational organizations to cost-effectively mitigate global risks, reduce corporate liability, and successfully prepare for and respond to crises. iJET's patented Worldcue<sup>®</sup> system integrates world-class intelligence with unmatched technology to help organizations monitor and assess threats relative to facilities and assets, track and communicate with traveling employees, and deploy emergency response services throughout the world at a moment's notice. iJET's diverse and experienced intelligence analysts speak a combined 20 languages and work around the clock to monitor changing conditions worldwide and deliver timely, actionable intelligence to clients, so they can make pertinent, informed decisions across all classes of risk. iJET continues to receive high praise for its groundbreaking innovations and efficiency, and was most recently recognized by CIO Magazine as one of the "top 100 agile companies of 2004".

---

**COPYRIGHT NOTICE:** This document is copyrighted material owned by iJET International, Inc. and shall not be reproduced or redistributed in any form unless expressly permitted by iJET. All rights reserved. Please contact iJET Customer Service at 1-877-606-4538 with comments and reprint inquiries.

---