



Corporate Risk International

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Special Security Report

Chechen Terror Attacks Increase with Spring Thaw

Double Blasts Rock Moscow

During the early morning hours of March 29th, two female suicide bombers boarded Moscow's subway system at the Yugo-Zapadnaya station in southwestern Moscow before detonating their explosives-packed belts at two separate, highly symbolic train stops. The twin blasts killed 39 people, injured 100 others, and brought the country's ongoing battle with Islamist militancy to the forefront. The attacks highlight just how vulnerable the city remains to well-trained and organized attacks. The first blast, reported at 7:52am local time, occurred at the Lybyanka train station, just below the headquarters of the Federal Security Service; while no major damages were reported to the FSB building, the attack served a symbolic blow to Russia's security forces. The second suicide bomber detonated her explosives at 8:36am local time at the Park Kultury station, near Gorky Park, the city's cultural center. Both blasts, with the equivalent force of 4kg and 2kg of TNT, were well designed, with the bombers waiting until packed trains pulled into their stations during the busy rush hour and opened their doors.

The Moscow subway bombings are the worst terror attack to strike the city in six years, triggering immediate panic in the city. Russian authorities have since increased security at airports, train stations, and other high-profile sites that could be of interest to terrorists. Additionally, checkpoints have been reported throughout the city and random searches reported. Immediately following the blasts, Chechen rebels were suspected due to the use of female suicide bombers, the presence of nuts and bolts in the bombs, and the targeting of the subway system, all common tactics employed by Chechen rebels in previous attacks. Female bombers are frequently used by Chechen rebels for their ability to stay under the radar and avoid detection by security forces. Often the widows of killed Chechen rebels will carry out attacks. Shrapnel is typically used in bombs as projectiles to maximize the casualty count. Finally, Chechen militants have routinely targeted the Moscow subway system due to its security vulnerability and high ridership; the subway system is the second most heavily used metro system in the world with nearly seven million riders each work day. In August 2004, a female suicide bomber killed 10 people outside the Rizhskaya station and seven months earlier, 40 people were killed when a Chechen suicide bomber detonated a bomb on the Zamoskvoretskaya line.

Dagestan Attacks

Only two days after the Moscow attacks, a suicide bomber detonated their explosives-laden vehicle after law enforcement intercepted him en route to several government buildings in Kizlyar, Dagestan Republic. The suicide bomber reportedly targeted the Russian Interior Ministry and the Federal Security Services regional headquarters buildings. The explosive detonated with a force of 440 pounds. Approximately 20 minutes later, when local law enforcement had arrived on the scene, a second suicide bomber dressed as a lieutenant colonel in the local police penetrated the

security lines and detonated an explosive vest. The second blast targeted responders but appeared to be specifically aimed at Kizlyar Police Chief Col. Vitaly Vedernikov, who was killed.

While the region frequently sees terror attacks during the annual spring thaw, authorities say the Kizlyar attack demonstrated advanced coordination and sophistication and would have required extensive planning. Taking place only days after the Moscow attacks, authorities believe Chechen militants are likely behind both bombings in a major push to demonstrate their strength.

Implications

The spring thaw typically brings a surge of attacks by militants, as it is easier to conduct attacks as travel conditions improve and casualty counts can be significantly higher as people tend to travel more. However, the latest attacks were also likely motivated by several recent killings by Russian authorities of Chechen rebels. Following several major setbacks, Chechen rebel leader Doku Umarov, who has since claimed responsibility for the Moscow bombings, vowed to move the war into Russia's cities in February 2010. Umarov specifically threatened attacks against economic interests, particularly gas and oil pipelines, power stations, the electricity grid, and factories.

Security nationwide will remain high in the near-term to avoid any additional large-scale attacks that have likely been planned. The Federal Security Service reports that the suicide bombers involved in the Moscow and Dagestan attacks are part of a 30-strong suicide bomber team trained by rebel leader Said Buryatskiy; nine of the 30 are believed to be dead, but authorities warn that the others remain at large and additional attacks cannot be discounted.

Although conflict with Chechen militants has been ongoing for decades, there was an overall sentiment over the past few years that the major conflict was contained in the Northern Caucasus region. The attack brings to the forefront Russia's long-term instability and the ongoing unresolved conflict. As in the past following a major attack, the Kremlin is expected to launch a major crackdown in the Northern Caucasus in an effort to disrupt any additional plots. President Dmitry Medvedev has already vowed to use "more cruel" measures to fight those responsible. While such crackdowns are generally successful in foiling militant operations in the short-term, these fail to address the underlying problems and resolve the long-term conflict. Instead, such measures typically fan the flames of extremism and radicalize the population. Although tough policies will help to diminish the near-term threat from Chechen rebels, the overall threat will persist until the Kremlin also addresses the socio-economic issue. The rampant corruption, high unemployment, and other social ills that continue to feed the Chechen rebel movement.

World Overviews

Africa

In March 2010, the impoverished but oil-rich Niger Delta region of **Nigeria** experienced renewed violence as rebel groups in the area claimed the government had failed to honor promises made during earlier ceasefire agreements. On March 4th, the Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC) claimed responsibility for an attack on an Italian-owned pipeline. The leading rebel group in the region, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) claimed responsibility for the March 15th car bombing outside a government building in Warri, spurring Acting President Goodluck Jonathan to call for the speedy implementation of the ceasefire agreement. On March 19th, the JRC claimed that its fighters attacked an Anglo-Dutch oil facility in the Niger Delta. Four days later, a white collar union of Nigerian oil workers threatened to launch a strike after the killing of two Nigerian workers in Delta State.

Meanwhile, **Togo** held its first presidential elections since 2005 in March, leading to public unrest. On March 4th, the Togolese people voted as some 6,000 soldiers and police officers monitored for unrest. Two days later, hundreds of opposition supporters clashed with police in the streets of Lome in protest after incumbent President Faure Gnassingbe was named the victor with 61% of the votes. Although the opposition claimed the vote was rigged, observers from the European Union (EU) and African Union (AU) declared the vote largely fair. Protests continued before and after the Constitutional Court in Lome confirmed Gnassingbe's victory, with some 30 people reportedly injured in March 24th clashes between opposition supporters and the police in the capital.

Elsewhere, **South Africa** experienced a flurry of violent protests in March, including violent clashes with police. On March 2nd, police outside Johannesburg fired rubber bullets and water cannons on protesters blocking major roads to demand improved services. Two days later, police clashed with students outside a Johannesburg university as students demanded free education for the poor. On March 8th, Pretoria township residents protested to demand improved government services, hurling rocks and blocking roads with tires. Seven days later, minibus drivers barricaded roads in Soweto to protest the introduction of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, with security forces forced to escort BRT buses to protect commuters. On March 17th, police used tear gas and rubber bullets as 2,000 student protesters protested a court decision in Soweto. Finally, on March 23rd, police fired on protesters in Pretoria's Phomolong Township after the latter began looting shops, blocking roads with burning tires, and throwing stones. Continued protests in South Africa could disturb the World Cup scheduled to be held in June and July.

In other news, **Madagascar** remained unstable in March, over a year after Andry Rajoelina swore himself in as transitional head of state. On March 5th, Rajoelina rejected an AU invitation for talks in Addis Ababa to end a standoff among Madagascar's four main political factions. Twelve days later, the AU imposed sanctions on Madagascar after it failed to implement a power sharing government, while hundreds of protesters clashed with police in Antananarivo.

Americas

Colombia saw an escalation of attacks and plots by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in March 2010, demonstrating that the group, despite suffering a number of setbacks in the past several years, retains the capability to disrupt security improvements. A string of small attacks took place in the run up to the March 14th congressional elections, with authorities reportedly thwarting a number of attacks: deactivating a car bomb in Cali and seizing 300kg of explosives in Neiva, Huila department. On March 24th, FARC detonated a car bomb near the Attorney General's office in Buenaventura, killing nine people and injuring a dozen more in the largest attack this year. FARC attacks are expected to continue, as the commander of the Colombian armed forces reported on March 26th that FARC rebels are planning to disrupt May 30th presidential elections. Intelligence sources indicate that teams of two to three rebels, in civilian dress, are planning to attack major cities and roadways and two FARC bomb makers are reportedly plotting attacks in Bogota. While major bombings typically occur in urban areas, with Cali, Buenaventura, Neiva, and Bogota likely targets, the rebel group is also known to target vehicles along major highways in remote areas.

Separately, attacks on media workers in **Honduras** escalated in March 2010, with authorities reporting that five were executed during the month. In the most recent attack, two journalists were shot and killed along a highway in rural Olancho province after leaving a radio station on March 26th. Twelve days earlier, the director of a television station in Tocoa was intercepted by several vehicles and shot dead while a journalist was ambushed and killed in La Ceiba on March 11th. The fifth victim, a television station worker, was killed and a journalist injured during a March 1st attack in Tegucigalpa. Authorities say none of the killings have been solved and motives remain elusive, but the attacks indicate a worsening climate for the country's media.

Haiti continued its slow reconstruction efforts in March, but will likely see further devastation during the upcoming rainy season expected to begin in April. A top U.S. aid coordinator in the country issued a warning on March 18th that the country will not be able to avert a second disaster as the estimated 200,000 quake survivors remain vulnerable from major flooding and mudslides. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive announced that postponed presidential and legislative elections may take place sometime between November 2010 and February 2011, calming fears that the January disaster could lead to a political crisis in the country.

Separately, while a turf war in **Mexico's** northeast has seen a soaring number of violent attacks between organized crime groups and law enforcement, foreign nationals have also continued to come under attack. On March 2nd, a group of Canadian tourists were robbed by men armed with a machine gun and a knife in Puerto Vallarta. Two days later, a Canadian national was injured when gunmen attempted to rob his RV at a Mazatlan trailer park. In a high-profile attack, gunmen ambushed two vehicles of U.S. Consulate employees in Ciudad Juarez on March 13th and killed three people, including two U.S. nationals. Authorities investigating the attack say members of the Juarez cartel-linked Barrio Azteca gang ordered the killing, targeting a Texas jail guard married to a U.S. Consulate employee. Later in the month, a Spanish businessman was killed by

gunmen who ambushed him outside a parking garage he owned in Chihuahua City on March 26th. The security environment in Mexico remains poor, and while organized crime syndicates do not typically targeted foreign nationals, law enforcement is overwhelmed and criminals will likely continue to take advantage, increasing the risk to expatriates.

Asia

In March 2010, events in **China** demonstrated the risks faced by foreign firms operating in the country. On March 17th, the trial of four officials with an Anglo-Australian mining firm, including an Australian national, began in Shanghai, with the men facing charges of taking some US\$900,000 in bribes and of corporate espionage. The men pled guilty to the bribery charges and were sentenced some 12 days after the trial began to 14 years in prison. The Australian government protested the Chinese government's decision to hold part of the trial behind closed doors to no avail. On March 22nd, a leading U.S. search engine closed its Internet search service in mainland China and began to redirect its mainland Chinese users to its uncensored Hong Kong page. The decision was the outcome of alleged cyber espionage attacks on the email accounts of human rights activists as well as a high-profile dispute over censorship restrictions. The Chinese government denied access to the Hong Kong site and on March 31st, the U.S. firm's Internet content provider license in China expired. On that same day, reports surfaced that the email accounts of at least eight foreign journalists in China and Taiwan were hacked. U.S. Trade Representative David Kirk issued a report on March 31st warning that China had erected barriers to prevent the entrance of foreign innovation to promote indigenous Chinese firms.

In other news, anti-government protesters in **Thailand** carried out a series of mass rallies in Bangkok in an effort to topple the governing coalition of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva in March. Red-shirt protesters began to hold protests around Bangkok on March 12th, reaching a crescendo on March 14th, when some 100,000 demonstrators rallied near Government House, military bases, and downtown Bangkok. A day later, two soldiers were injured when four grenades were fired inside an army base in the capital. The next day, protesters began to draw and dump human blood as a form of protest against the government they perceive to be the product of a coup d'etat against self-exiled former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. On March 20th and 21st, two small bombs exploded near the national anti-corruption office in Nonthaburi province and on a road near the Ministry of Defense in Bangkok respectively. Other bombs detonated near government buildings in and around Bangkok, wounding soldiers and bystanders, as the number of protesters continued to decline. Although both sides have pledged to remain non-violent, analysts warn that a series of violence could lead to another coup.

Elsewhere, outlying islands of **Fiji** suffered serious damage in March after Cyclone Tomas struck the country on March 15th and 16th, killing two people, destroying hundreds of homes, and causing at least US\$33 million in damages. Fiji, which had already faced an outbreak of typhoid fever, faced worsening health conditions after the category four cyclone struck. By March 23rd, officials reported more than 116 cases of typhoid the country.

Meanwhile, **South Korea** placed its military on alert and launched an extensive search-and-rescue operation in March after a 1,200-ton South Korean Navy corvette sank off the coast of its Baengnyeong Island in disputed waters off the coast of North Korea on March 26th. Initial reports indicated that North Korea may have played a role in the attack, but South Korean officials later denied these claims. Some 46 sailors remained missing by the end of the month, with some 58 others rescued. The incident impacted financial markets around the world.

Europe

Workers across **Greece** continued to hold strikes in March 2010 in protest of the government's austerity measures. A massive nation-wide strike was held on March 5th, which resulted in significant disruptions in public service; a four-hour work stoppage by air-traffic controllers caused flight delays, while schools shut down and hospitals operated on skeleton staffs. Union members staged sit-ins in government offices as clashes broke out in central Athens outside parliament. Protesters chased the ceremonial guard away from the Unknown Soldier's Tomb, threw stones, and clashed with riot police, who responded with tear gas and baton charges. No injuries or arrests were reported. Earlier in the day, masked youths attacked the head of Greece's largest trade union as he addressed a crowd. The union head exchanged blows with the youths before being escorted away. A second major strike on March 11th brought public services and transportation to a halt as flights were grounded, schools shut down, and hospitals were open only for emergencies. Buses, trams, and ferries were idle in Athens and Thessaloniki and news broadcasts were suspended. Meanwhile, demonstrators clashed with police during a 10,000 person march in central Athens. Riot police fired tear gas into the crowd after protesters began throwing rocks. On March 17th, police fired tear gas to break up crowds of rock-throwing youths outside parliament as some 2,000 people marched through the city to protest austerity measures. Areas of the country experienced rolling blackouts after electricity workers staged a 48-hour strike. As the government continues to implement austerity measures in an effort to reduce the public deficit, further strikes and protests should be expected.

Former **Ukrainian** Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko and her government resigned following parliament's passing of a no-confidence motion on March 3rd. President Viktor Yanukovich's nomination for prime minister, Mykola Azarov, a long-time ally of the president, was approved by parliament on March 11th. Azarov, who previously served as a deputy prime minister and finance minister, supports Yanukovich's pro-Kremlin leanings. Azarov leads the new majority coalition, "Reforms and Order," which includes Yanukovich's Party of Regions, the Communists, and the Lytvyn Bloc. Sergei Tigipko, a former central banker who placed third in the presidential elections, accepted the position of a deputy prime minister and will be given responsibility for Ukraine's faltering economy. Meanwhile, Ukraine's parliament dismissed by a narrow margin the head of the National Security Service (SBU), Valentyn Nalivaichenko. The move is widely regarded as part of Yanukovich's efforts to oust Yushchenko's allies from power.

Tensions between **Spain and Venezuela** temporarily flared after a Spanish judge accused Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez of supporting the Basque separatist group ETA and allowing it to operate in his country. ETA operatives reportedly trained around 100 guerrillas from the

Revolutionary Armed Forces of **Colombia** (FARC) in camps in Venezuela, the judge claimed. According to witness statements made by four former FARC members to Spanish police, ETA operatives conducted lessons in advanced explosive techniques in at least six Venezuelan camps from 2003 to 2008. Members of the Basque group were also accused of collaborating in a plot to assassinate Colombian President Alvaro Uribe and other officials during a visit to Spain. The spat came to an end on March 6th, when the two countries agreed to jointly condemn all forms of terrorism. In a joint statement with Spain, Venezuela denied any collaboration between the government and ETA, and said it rejected the group's activities.

Despite reports earlier this month that a string of recent arrests had substantially weakened ETA, **Spain** raised its terror alert on March 22nd after the group was blamed for the killing of a policeman in France a week earlier. The alert was raised from "low" to "high intensity" within stage two of the four-level scale. Meanwhile, reports indicate that the group has made new extortion demands from businessmen in the Basque region, seeking up to 400,000 euros (US\$533,280) in "revolutionary taxes." The new demands have come after a gap of some six or seven months, with local businessmen receiving letters demanding sums between 60,000 and 400,000 euros. Extortion from businessmen in Navarra and the Basque Country is the main source of revenue for the group.

Middle East & North Africa

March saw renewed criticism directed at **Egypt** by human rights organizations. Egypt was strongly criticized for trying a blogger before a military court. The 20-year-old blogger was accused of publishing false information in a blog a year ago, alleging a case of nepotism at Egypt's premier military academy. The blogger, an engineering student, was charged with releasing information considered secret to the armed forces, and of spreading false information, which is said to have insulted officials responsible for admissions to the military academy. The prosecution of the blogger caused protests to break out on March 15th when it was reported the blogger had been sentenced to six months in jail in a case that had already been closed. Protests surrounding the blogger's case were reported on the same day as Egyptian police announced the arrests of nearly 50 members of the opposition Muslim Brotherhood who were staging anti-Israeli demonstrations. The members were rounded up after weekly prayers as they demonstrated against Israeli plans to build Jewish settlements in Arab east Jerusalem and place two West Bank shrines on a list of Israeli heritage sites. On March 29th it was reported that Egyptian police killed an Eritrean migrant as he tried to enter **Israel**. The death of the migrant on March 29th brought the total number of migrants killed at the Sinai border this year to twelve, according to Egyptian security sources. Border guards allegedly shot the 26-year-old and injured two others after they refused to stop at the checkpoint.

The situation in **Iran** continues to pose significant concerns for world leaders, who continue to express disapproval of the actions taken by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. This disapproval namely pertains to the nation's unyielding interest in developing nuclear technology. It was reported on March 2nd that Iran is not cooperating with the United Nations nuclear watchdog's investigation into the country's nuclear program. Iran's insistence its nuclear program was peaceful could not be confirmed. This led to the United States on March 4th circulating a draft resolution of new, tougher sanctions against Iran that concentrate on the banking, shipping, and insurance sectors of its economy. Iran responded on March 9th by urging China to resist pressure by the United States and its allies for new sanctions against Tehran over its nuclear program.

China, which has extensive trade ties with Iran, traditionally opposes sanctions, but went along with three earlier rounds of limited sanctions against the Middle Eastern country. **Saudi Arabia** and the **United Arab Emirates** have demonstrated a willingness to press China to support tough new sanctions on Iran, which comes after U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates and other top officials have appealed to the Saudis and to UAE leaders to use their economic leverage to persuade China to lift its opposition to slapping sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program. The urgency of these steps was reiterated on March 29th when it was reported that Western intelligence agencies have concluded that Tehran has escalated the covert elements of its nuclear program. The findings are partly based on anomalies in Tehran's nuclear inventory that were recently identified by inspectors from the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency. The inspectors have expressed serious concern that new uranium enriching equipment developed by Iranian scientists has mysteriously disappeared.

It was reported on March 22nd that the Iranian Government has been accused by Afghan and Western officials of delivering weaponry to the Taliban. The government has allegedly supplied plastic explosives, mortars, grenades, and technical manuals. Weapons and documents seized indicate more than ten tons of weapons have been intercepted at **Iran's** desert border with **Afghanistan** in the past year, with a ton and a half recovered in the past week. The reports come as General David Petraeus, the head of U.S. Central Command, warned the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that Iran also provided a base for Al-Qaida operatives. Afghanistan's intelligence agency estimates that about 60 percent of the weaponry it has intercepted from Iran has been supplied by the Iranian Government rather than black market dealers.

There were reports of renewed clashes with rebels in **Yemen**, only a few weeks after a ceasefire offer was turned down by the government in the capital of Sana'a in late February. At least one person was killed in clashes between the government and secessionist rebels in southern Yemen on March 12th. Government forces tried to recapture a municipal building occupied by separatists, which led to the eruption of violence. The building in Tor al-Baha has reportedly been occupied for months by armed rebels. On March 17th it was reported that rebels in northern Yemen released 178 civilians and government soldiers. The release came after the Yemeni government accused the rebels of not fully complying with a ceasefire agreement in February. The rebels, known as Houthis, had fought Yemeni forces since 2004, until a major offensive by the government in 2009 led to the peace deal, which is tentative due to the mistrust that exists on both sides.

Kidnap/Ransom & Extortion

Drivers in India arrested for kidnapping

Police arrested two taxi drivers in Kolkata, India on March 3rd for allegedly kidnapping a software expert in Metro Kolkata's Rajarhat New Town reports indicated. The victim's wife reportedly memorized the license number of the taxi, which aided law enforcement in tracking down the suspects. The abduction reportedly took place after the taxi carrying the victim stopped in a deserted area near the Wipro crossing on Salt Lake Bypass, with the driver claiming the vehicle had mechanical problems. Shortly afterward, three kidnappers reportedly broke into the car and took the victim hostage for an undisclosed ransom. Drivers are often perpetrators of kidnappings in India; on March 17th, police arrested a driver for reportedly taking part in the kidnapping of three realtors in the Chennai suburb of Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu state.

Worldwide Incidents

Bangladesh: The United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) rebel group earns an estimated 1.20 billion takas (US\$17 million) per year from extortion in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), the parliamentary standing committee on CHT affairs announced on March 10th. The CHT reportedly controls development work, with contractors forced to pay 10% advance on work orders, while the group also claims a tax from teachers, commodity salesmen, and timber shipments.

Belgium: A Dutch coffee shop owner who was kidnapped in December 2009 escaped from his captors on March 23rd. The shop owner was held in a building in Maasmechelen after being forced into a van by five armed men in early December.

Cameroon: It was reported that kidnappers demanded US\$15,000 for the release of seven Chinese nationals abducted from a private fishing vessel in international waters off the Bakassi peninsula on March 14th. The abductors, who called themselves the Africa Marine Commando, claimed responsibility for the kidnappings.

Colombia: It was reported that Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebels kidnapped five local oil contractors after intercepting their vehicle in Tame, Arauca department on March 20th. Authorities said a sixth worker was kidnapped, but escaped when the rebels crashed their vehicle.

Croatia: A court jailed four men for sentences of up to four years on March 17th for the April 2009 kidnapping of a Bosnian-Croat leader. The suspects reportedly took the victim to Bosnia, demanding one million Euros (US\$1.3 million) for his return, although the man managed to escape back into Croatia one-day after his kidnapping.

France: Two managers of a German electrical and engineering group were released on March 2nd after being held in their offices overnight by employees. The electrical and engineering group refused to comply with the demands of the employees regarding concessions over job cuts.

India: On March 2nd, four leading Kolkata businessmen reportedly received extortion calls from Indian Mujahideen (IM) members in an effort by the group to raise funds for terror activities. The IM members reportedly threatened to kidnap or assassinate the victims, with similar threats issued to developers and industrialists in Mumbai, Surat, and Chennai. Special Task Force investigators reportedly traced some of the calls to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, Karachi in Pakistan, and Nepal. IM reportedly asked for ransoms between 200 and 400 million rupees (US\$4.3 and US\$8.7 million).

Mauritania: A Mauritanian court charged and jailed a man believed to be the main perpetrator in the Al-Qaida kidnapping of three Spanish hostages in December 2009, according to the prosecution team on March 30th. He was arrested by security forces in February 2010 on the border with Mali and has been kept in police custody since.

Mexico: Soldiers arrested five suspected kidnapers that routinely targeted doctors in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua state, on March 2nd. Authorities reportedly identified the suspects after a member of another criminal organization arrested several days earlier claimed to work with the group.

Nigeria: It was reported that armed kidnapers abducted a South African journalist and two Nigerian colleagues on March 1st during an attack on their bus traveling to Lagos near Owerri airport in Imo state. The gunmen reportedly ordered about 20 passengers off the bus, but demanded the three victims to remain onboard as they drove off with the bus. Kidnappings in Nigeria are traditionally concentrated in the Niger Delta region with ransoms ranging between US\$700,000 and US\$3 million.

Pakistan: It was reported on March 4th that a five-year-old British boy was kidnapped by robbers in Pakistan. The child was abducted in Jhelum, where his family was vacationing. The family was about to leave for the airport to return to the United Kingdom on March 3rd when four men armed with guns and a grenade approached the house. Up to 10 family members inside the house were beaten and the robbers eventually fled with the boy, demanding a ransom. The boy was later found alive and safe on March 16th. In other news, it was reported on March 23rd that Jordan's ambassador to Pakistan was the target of a Taliban kidnap attempt in Islamabad. The incident followed calls for attacks on the Jordanian government by an Al-Qaida double agent who killed seven CIA operatives and a Jordanian agent in Afghanistan in December 2009.

Somalia: Indian officials launched an investigation on March 30th into reports that some 100 Indian nationals were seized by Somali pirates. A reported eight Indian vessels were hijacked in a matter of three days off the coast of Somalia. Separately, Somali pirates mistakenly attacked a Dutch warship on March 29th sparking a gunfight in which Dutch marines destroyed two attack boats and detained 12 pirates. In other news, pirates clashed with private security guards aboard a Spanish fishing trawler in the Indian Ocean on March 4th.

Sudan: An aid worker with joint UK-French nationality was freed in Sudan's Darfur region on March 18th after spending five months in captivity. The worker, who works for the International Committee of the Red Cross, was the last foreign hostage being held in Darfur.

World Travel Warnings

The following countries are currently on the U.S. Department of State's official travel warning list:

Afghanistan	Eritrea	Lebanon	Somalia
Algeria	Georgia	Mali	Sri Lanka
Burundi	Guinea	Mauritania	Sudan
Central African Republic	Haiti	Mexico	Syria
Chad	Iran	Nepal	Uzbekistan
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	Iraq	Nigeria	Yemen
Colombia	Israel/West Bank & Gaza	Pakistan	
Cote d'Ivoire	Kenya	Saudi Arabia	

In addition, ARI recommends that travelers exercise heightened caution in **Brazil, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, India, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, Zimbabwe, and in the Middle East.**

About Altegrity Risk International

Altegrity Risk International (ARI) provides high quality due diligence, investigative, analytic, consulting, intelligence, and security solutions to multinational corporations and other organizations around the world. The company's multidisciplinary team of experts from the fields of investigations, forensics, data intelligence, and financial technology provides its clients with specialized solutions to identify, analyze, prevent, and remediate the entire range of financial, legal/regulatory, and reputational risks. Headquartered in New York City, ARI provides global coverage through offices in Chicago, Hong Kong, London, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C.