

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey
970 Broad Street, Seventh Floor
Newark, New Jersey 07102



Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney

More Information? Call the Assistant U.S. Attorney or other contact listed below to see if more information is available.

News on the Internet. News Releases and related documents are posted at our website.
Go to: <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/press/index.html>

Contact:
Michael Drewniak, PIO
973-645-2888

duka0508.rel
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 8, 2007

Five Radical Islamists Charged with Planning Attack on Fort Dix Army Base in New Jersey

(More)

Public Affairs Office
Michael Drewniak, PAO

973-645-2888

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/press/index.html>

CAMDEN, N.J. – Five radical Islamists – three of them brothers – have been arrested and charged with plotting to kill as many soldiers as possible in an armed assault at the Fort Dix Army base in New Jersey, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie and Philadelphia FBI Special Agent in Charge J.P. Weis announced today. A sixth defendant is charged with aiding and abetting the illegal possession of firearms by three of the members of the group.

The arrests occurred last night in Cherry Hill as two of the defendants were meeting a confidential government witness to purchase three AK-47 automatic machine guns and four semi-automatic M-16s to be used in an attack they had been planning from at least January 2006, according to criminal Complaints unsealed this morning.

Some members of the group allegedly conducted surveillance at Fort Dix and also at Fort Monmouth in New Jersey, Dover Air Force Base in Delaware and the U.S. Coast Guard in Philadelphia. The co-conspirators obtained a detailed map of Fort Dix, where they said they hoped to use assault rifles and rocket propelled grenades to kill as many soldiers as possible. They also did small-arms training at a shooting range in the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania and distributed training videos amongst themselves that included depictions of American soldiers being killed and known foreign Islamic radicals urging jihad against the United States.

“The actions of these defendants posed a real threat to the safety and security of New Jersey citizens,” Christie said. “We will remain steadfast in our focus on protecting New Jersey from the terrorist threat among us whether that threat is against everyday citizens or our men and women in uniform.”

"This case underscores the need for continued vigilance against threats within our borders," said Kenneth L. Wainstein, Assistant Attorney General for National Security. "While these defendants are not charged with being members of an international terrorism organization, their involvement in weapons training, operational surveillance and discussions about killing American military personnel warranted a strong law enforcement response."

"I want to especially salute the unsung hero who took the initiative to report the video to local authorities," said Weis. "His or her actions are the embodiment of the cooperation we need from the public to keep this nation safe. We need to reach the point where everyone is willing to come forward and say to law enforcement, 'I have seen or heard something that you need to know.'"

“The individuals arrested today present an alarming example of the need to maintain a vigilant stance towards those who would do us harm,” said Julie Myers, ICE Assistant

Secretary. “This case is an excellent example of how ICE immigration investigative authorities are making the country safer.”

The five defendants are each charged with conspiracy to murder members of the uniformed services, which carries a maximum statutory penalty of imprisonment for any term of years or for life. All six defendants were to appear this afternoon before U.S. Magistrate Judge Joel Schneider in federal court in Camden, where the government would be seeking their detention without bail.

The investigation began on Jan. 31, 2006, after the FBI received a video recording showing the six individuals charged in the Complaint and four other men firing assault weapons in militia-like style at a Poconos shooting range. The recording depicted them calling for holy war (jihad) and shouting “God is great” in Arabic. The recording was recovered after one of the plotters took the videotape to a retail establishment seeking to have it converted into a DVD. According to the Complaint, the DVD was to be distributed and used as a training tool.

Alarmed by what they had seen on the videotape, store employees contacted the FBI. After the recording was turned over to the FBI, agents used a confidential witness (CW) to infiltrate the group. The CW convinced the plotters that he had the same jihadist goals and that he could get them weaponry needed to carry out the assault at Fort Dix.

Two of the defendants – Dritan Duka and Shain Duka – were arrested at a residence in Cherry Hill last night as they arrived to purchase the AK-47s and M-16s as previously arranged with the CW. (The weapons provided by the FBI for the controlled purchase were inoperable.) Eljvir Duka was arrested at Dritan Duka’s residence; the other three at their respective residences. All of the arrests and court-authorized searches of the residences were conducted beginning about 9 p.m. last night.

The defendants are as follows:

- Mohamad Ibrahim Shnewer, 22, of Cherry Hill. He was born in Jordan, is a U.S. citizen and is employed as a taxicab driver in Philadelphia.
- Eljvir Duka, 23, of Cherry Hill, a.k.a. “Elvis Duka,” a.k.a. “Sulayman,” was born in the former Yugoslavia. Duka is illegally residing in the U.S. and operates businesses known as Qadr. Inc., Colonial Roofing and National Roofing, all of which list business addresses the same as his residence.
- Dritan Duka, 28, of Cherry Hill, a.k.a. “Distan Duka,” a.k.a. “Anthony Duka,” a.k.a. “Tony Duka.” He was born in the former Yugoslavia, is illegally residing in the U.S. and

operates businesses known as Colonial Roofing and National Roofing, both which list business addresses at the residence of defendants Eljvir Duka and Shain Duka. (All of the Dukas charged are brothers).

- Shain Duka, 26, of the same address as Eljvir Duka in Cherry Hill, a.k.a. "Shaheen," was born in the former Yugoslavia. Shain Duka is illegally residing in the U.S. and operates businesses known as Colonial Roofing and National Roofing, both which list business addresses the same as his residence.
- Serdar Tatar, 23, of Philadelphia, was born in Turkey. Tatar is legally residing in the U.S. His last know employment was at a 7-Eleven convenience store in Philadelphia.
- Agron Abdullahu, 24, of Buena Vista Township, Atlantic County, was born in the former Yugoslavia. Abdullahu is legally residing in the U.S. and is employed at a Shop-Rite Supermarket.

The Duka brothers and Abdullahu are ethnic Albanians born in the former Yugoslavia.

Abdullahu is charged only with aiding and abetting the Duka brothers' illegal possession of weapons, which carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison. Each of the Duka brothers are also charged with being illegal aliens in possession of firearms, which carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.

A criminal Complaint and this news release can be found at the U.S. Attorney's Office Public Affairs Office website: www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/press/index.html (All the affidavits for each of the defendants are the same.)

The CW, following his infiltration of the Duka Organization, recorded numerous conversations with the defendants, in which they discussed tactics, surveillance and plans for attacking U.S. military bases and killing soldiers, radical theology and hatred of America and support of jihad.

On Aug. 11, 2006, for example, Shnewer was recorded by the CW as Shnewer described his and the group's intentions in an attack at Ft. Dix:

“My intent is to hit a heavy concentration of soldiers.... This is exactly what we are looking for. You hit four, five or six Humvees and light the whole place [up] and retreat completely without any losses.”

Repeatedly, Shnewer was recorded saying that he knew what they were doing was illegal and that their activities had to be hidden. In one instance, Shnewer allegedly showed a

DVD from his computer to the CW, telling the CW it had to be done in private because, "It's about something that can lead to prison." The DVD depicted various jihadist images while a narrator recruits the observer to the jihadist movement.

Shnewer at one point gave his laptop computer to the CW with the instruction that he look at certain video files, according to the Complaint. (The FBI copied the hard drive before it was returned to Shnewer.) Among them, according to the Complaint, was a file that appeared to depict the last will and testaments of two of the September 11 hijackers and another with images of Osama Bin Laden and other Islamic extremists calling the viewer to join the jihadist movement.

A criminal Complaint is merely an accusation. All of the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Christie credited the Special Agents of the FBI's Philadelphia Division and the FBI South Jersey Joint Terrorism Task Force, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge J.P. Weis, in Philadelphia, for investigation of the case.

Christie and Weis also thanked investigators with member agencies of the FBI South Jersey JTTF, which is comprised of the Camden County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of the Acting Prosecutor Joshua M. Ottenberg, NJ State Police, under the direction of Col. Joseph "Rick" Fuentes, Superintendent, the Delaware River Port Authority Police, under the direction of Chief Vincent Borrelli, Philadelphia Division of ICE, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge John P. Kelleghan.

Additionally, Christie and Weis would like to thank the following agencies for their assistance and support in making the arrests: the Cherry Hill Police Department, Cherry Hill Fire Department, Camden County Sheriff's Department, Philadelphia Police Department, Pennsylvania State Police, Mt. Laurel Police Department and the Burlington County Prosecutor's Office.

-end-