

**Datestamp:** 09/10/2011

## **Police checkpoints, radiation detectors deployed in region to counter bomb threat**

Local authorities ratcheted up security measures Friday in the wake of a credible but unconfirmed al-Qaida car bomb threat timed to the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks.

Police patrols were added, checkpoints set up and radiological-detection devices deployed in the Lower Hudson Valley as police in New York City and federal authorities chased down the tip that bridges and tunnels could be targets for a terror attack.

The FBI briefed local police agencies on the threat Thursday and Friday in Newburgh and White Plains. Authorities declined to comment on the details of the briefings.

"There seems to be some amount of concern that's a little bit more than usual, both on the federal and city level," Rockland County Sheriff James Kralik said. "So we also have ramped up our concerns as well."

Word of the threat against New York City and Washington, D.C., came as law enforcement agencies had stepped up security measures in anticipation of the weekend's commemoration of the anniversary.

"There's symbolism there that has to be paid attention," said Kralik, chairman of the National Sheriffs Association Counter Terrorism Committee. "The people that are involved in the jihadist movement are hard-pressed to accomplish something."

Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Friday afternoon that he was ordering additional state police and National Guard troops deployed primarily to transportation hubs, airports and the World Trade Center site.

He said the threat was credible but not corroborated. He wouldn't say how many additional police and troops were being deployed but called the number "significant."

"I believe it should go a long way towards helping to dispel any anxiety that New Yorkers may feel," he said.

Westchester County police began random traffic checkpoints and paying "extra attention" to vehicles entering and leaving Westchester County Airport, county police spokesman Kieran O'Leary said.

In addition, he said, county police and other agencies will assemble "Hercules teams," heavily armed police

units "deliberately intended to be highly visible and noticeable ," in major transit hubs, shopping centers and other public areas.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey said it had increased security at airports and bridges in response to the threat. In some cases during rush hour Friday, police checkpoints around the New York metro area caused traffic delays.

White Plains had added extra police patrols and was working with state police, county police and the federal Joint Terrorism Task Force, said Public Safety Commissioner David Chong.

"Certainly with the latest threat we will continue to be very much on high alert," he said.

White Plains police set up a checkpoint on Route 119 near the Westchester County Center Friday morning with six police cars and an Emergency Services Unit truck checking cars and trucks as they entered the city.

More patrol cars – marked and unmarked – were visible in the city's downtown, cruising slowly past the federal and county courthouses as well as the Galleria.

Putnam County Sheriff Donald B. Smith said he could not comment on some of the security measures the county was taking in response to the threat. But, he said, the county already had bolstered security in anticipation of the 10th anniversary weekend. That includes extra patrols at rail stations and at public events.

"We know that we could be a staging area for any attacks involving New York City," he said. "We also know we could be an alternate attack site for them if something didn't work out for them in New York City."

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority upped security efforts Friday, with police K-9 units deployed at bridges and tunnels.

Train patrols were doubled and heavy-arms units were deployed to transportation hubs like Penn Station and Grand Central Terminal, spokeswoman Marjorie Anders said. The MTA, which operates Metro-North Railroad, Long Island Rail Road, New York City subways and buses, stepped up police patrols by 50 percent.

"Some of these measures are very visible, while others have been taken behind the scenes to ensure the continued security of the MTA's customers, employees and critical infrastructure," Anders said.

The MTA, which also operates nine bridges and tunnels, said explosives-detection machines were being used in bag screening and that radiation detectors had been deployed.

The Rockland County Sheriff's Marine Unit is operating on 12-hour tours, Kralik said, and would be paying special attention to the Tappan Zee Bridge and the Indian Point nuclear power plant.

The office's countywide counterterrorism special operations team, called REACT, has been put on alert, he said. Extra police patrols were on duty and using radiation detectors and license-plate readers, he said. Sheriff's Office K-9 units were assisting the Clarkstown Police Department's increased patrol at the Palisades Center mall.

The potential for an attack through an explosives-laden vehicle was the chief concern, Kralik said.

"We're certainly considering it at the top of the list right now," he said. "But my own opinion is you don't rule anything out."

He said an attack could come by means of a backpack or bicycle just as easily as a car.

"If they can put it in a car," he said, "they can put it anywhere."

*Staff writer Ken Valenti and the Associated Press contributed to this report.*

**Caption:**

**Section:** NEWS

**Page:** 1

**Byline:** Timothy O'Connor

**Source:**

**From:**