

UPDATE TO THE NATIONAL TERRORISM ADVISORY SYSTEM

Background: The National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS)

In 2011, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) replaced the color-coded alerts of the Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS) with the National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS), designed to more effectively communicate information about terrorist threats by providing timely, detailed information to the American public.

When it was launched, NTAS featured an advisory system that consisted of two types of “Alerts”: Elevated and Imminent. An “**Elevated Alert**” is intended to warn of a credible terrorist threat against the United States and its territories that is general in both timing and potential location such that it is reasonable to recommend implementation of protective measures to thwart or mitigate against an attack. An “**Imminent Alert**” is intended to warn of a credible, specific, and impending terrorist threat or on-going attack. DHS has continuously evaluated intelligence threat streams through the NTAS process since the system’s creation, but it has never issued an Alert because neither the circumstances nor threat streams have risen to the required level or purpose of the system.

In order to determine how DHS can more effectively and quickly communicate information to the public and other partners regarding threats to the homeland in the evolving threat environment, and following discussions with homeland security stakeholders, Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson directed a review of the NTAS to consider possible revisions. Based on this review, DHS is updating the NTAS to add a new form of advisory – the NTAS “**Bulletin**” – to the existing NTAS “Alerts.”

NEW: NTAS “Bulletins”

DHS will achieve the objective of more flexible, timely, and useful communication with the public regarding terrorist threats through the introduction of an additional component of NTAS to accompany the existing NTAS Alerts: **the NTAS “Bulletin.”** NTAS Bulletins will provide information describing broader or more general trends and current developments regarding threats of terrorism. They will share important terrorism-related information with the American public and various partners and stakeholders, including in those situations where additional precautions may be warranted, but where the circumstances do not warrant the issuance of an “elevated” or “imminent” Alert. An NTAS Bulletin will summarize the issue and why it is important for public awareness, outline U.S. Government counterterrorism efforts, and offer recommendations to the public on how it can contribute to the overall counterterrorism effort.

With the introduction of the Bulletin, NTAS will now consist of two types of advisories: Bulletins and Alerts. As under the existing system, if there is sufficient information regarding a credible, specific terrorist threat against the United States, such that it is reasonable to recommend implementation of protective measures to thwart or mitigate against an attack, DHS will share an NTAS Alert – either Elevated or Imminent – with the American public. The Alert

may include specific information, if available, about the nature of the threat, including the geographic region, mode of transportation, or critical infrastructure potentially affected by the threat, as well as steps that individuals and communities can take to protect themselves and help prevent, mitigate, or respond to the threat.

The update to the NTAS announced today will allow us to better achieve the goal of making sure Americans across the country have the information they need to keep themselves and their communities safer. This action is not in response to a specific, credible threat to the homeland, but is a prudent measure to ensure that Americans are better prepared and aware of the evolving terrorist threats.

For more information, visit <http://www.dhs.gov/ntas-frequently-asked-questions>.