

Press Release from the Institute of Terrorism Research and Response

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American Executives Face Personal Threats From Eco-Terrorists, Animal Rights Extremists

Business executives and their families have increasingly become the targets of choice in an escalating campaign by eco-terrorists and animal rights extremists, according to Mike Perelman, a director of the Institute of Terrorism Research and Response in Philadelphia. In light of this strategic shift among eco-terrorists, which began in Europe last year, Perelman explained, American executives and their loved ones also now face heightened threats of vandalism to their homes and cars, or even personal violence. In February 2006, animal liberation terrorists released a series of communiqués boasting of thefts, invasion of privacy and vandalism - and intimating more serious actions to come - against US-based pharmaceutical company and investment executives.

"The animal rights extremists and eco-terrorists have, in the past year, consciously decided to target individuals, executives and employees, as well as their families, in their war against pharmaceutical companies," Perelman said.

Reports in the first two months of this year of new vandalism and personal defamation attacks by Animal Liberation Front terrorists on GlaxoSmithKline, Roche and investment company executives in the UK and the US, as well as reports that the construction workers at Oxford University's new biomedical laboratory are fearful of being identified because of threats by animal rights extremists, are merely the latest indications of the turn taken by such groups.

In October 2005, an anonymous communiqué allegedly from animal liberation terrorists, and publicized by above-ground animal-rights organizations, claimed responsibility for the firebombing of the home of a director of a pharmaceutical firm in Spain. "Your homes, cars and families are not safe from our attacks until the animals are safe from yours. See you soon," the bombers ominously concluded. In addition to firebombing, the terrorists have employed tactics such as vandalizing the homes and cars of executives of targeted institutions, stealing personal information such as credit-card and bank information and posting it on websites, harassment and personal threats of physical harm. 2005 and the start of 2006 have seen an increase of such attacks on pharmaceutical executives and their families (including, in one case, on the widow of an executive who passed away a year prior to the attack), as well as on investment firm employees, and government and university officials.

Perelman warns that the shift to attacks on homes and threats of physical violence directed at executives and their families is only one half-step away from deadly attacks on the targeted individuals. The intellectual groundwork and appropriate incitement has already been laid for such an escalation, Perelman noted, referring to statements by Dr. Jerry Vlasak of "the North American Animal Liberation Press Office" made before a congressional hearing in October. Vlasak said that if animal researchers "won't stop when told to stop, one option would be to stop them using any means necessary." Asked directly about murdering them, Vlasak replied, "That would be a morally justifiable solution."

The Institute of Terrorism Research and Response <www.terrorresponse.org> serves as a single point of access to domestic and international counter-terrorism research, education, training and related materials. As one of its primary missions, ITRR provides high-quality counter-terrorism and emergency response training designed for America's public and private sector entities.

ITRR co-director Michael Perelman, CPP, is a retired police commander whose consulting practice specializes in providing services to organizations at high risk of domestic terrorism.