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**Plans to Target Transportation Infrastructure
Surrounding Republican National Convention
27 March 2008**

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Summary:

The *Republican National Convention-Welcoming Committee (RNC-WC)* is an anarchist/anti-authoritarian group that formed in the spring of 2007 in order to disrupt or stop the Republican National Convention (RNC). It is likely that they will target transportation infrastructure surrounding the RNC in an attempt to accomplish their goal. The *RNC-WC* strategy utilizes a layered approach that emphasizes flexibility and diversity of tactics in order to maximize member strengths and knowledge, both individually as well as en masse. Overall, the *RNC-WC's* early formation, comprehensive membership drives, strategic partnerships and flexibility is likely to result in a more robust and balanced effort than other groups' at previous conventions. Also, a basic social network analysis shows the *RNC-WC's* potentially high power centrality and betweenness relative to other protest/anarchist groups with similar intentions, and reveals that collaboration and information sharing are likely prevalent. Consequently, security is apt to be more difficult to maintain than during previous national conventions.

Discussion:

The Republican Party will hold its National Convention in St. Paul, MN with some activities being held in Minneapolis, MN on Sept. 1-4, 2008. The *Republican National Convention- Welcoming Committee (RNC-WC)* is an anarchist/anti-authoritarian group which formed in the spring of 2007 in order to disrupt the RNC and ultimately start a “new reality” through teaching.¹ The group was formed because its founding members believe “the Republicans are responsible for an enormous amount of the horror and devastation currently experienced by the world and its peoples.”² Since its inception, the *RNC-WC* has attempted to obtain financial support and increase membership via the Internet³ and public appearances at various locations across the US.^{4,5}

The *RNC-WC* plans to utilize a layered approach that emphasizes flexibility and diversity of tactics. The strategy seeks to maximize the knowledge and experience of the *RNC-WC* members, both individually as well as organizationally.

The individual layers they plan to use are:

Tier One: Establish 15-20 blockades, utilizing a diversity of tactics, creating an inner and outer ring around St. Paul’s Xcel Energy Center, where the RNC is to take place.

Tier Two: Immobilize the delegates’ transportation infrastructure, including the busses that are to convey them.

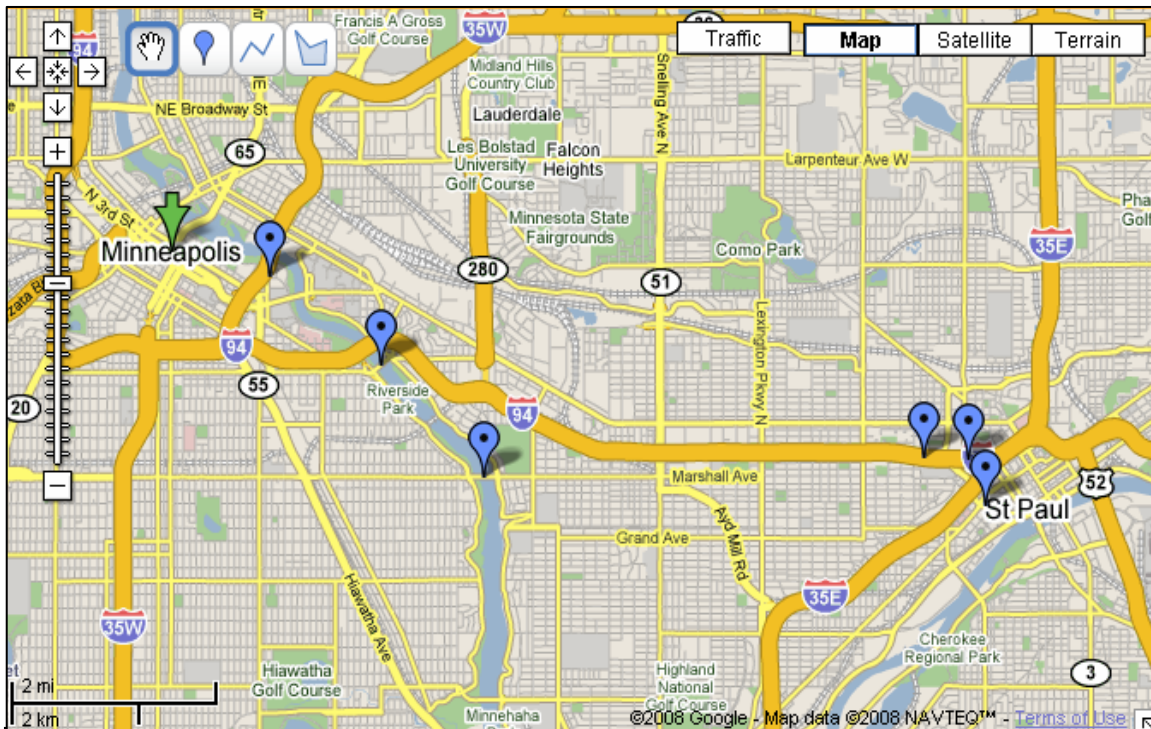
Tier Three: Block the five western bridges connecting the Twin Cities.⁶

The group’s stated strategy is dependant on the number of supporters they are able to garner. The *RNC-WC* leadership is likely to have an approximate number of attendees, however, the final count will not be known until August 31, 2008.

According to the stated plans, the “targets” will be assigned individual colors based on their importance to the overall mission and the tactics that followers will use to achieve whatever successes they hope to achieve. The *RNC-WC* plans to designate some targets as “red zones (prepared for self-defense), yellow zones (peaceful but assertive), and green zones (aiming to avoid any risk of arrest) so as to accommodate a wide variety of creative tactics and involve individuals with differing needs, talents and commitment levels.”⁷ If the number of participants is relatively low, then only “Tier One” will be carried out; but, if the numbers are optimal, based on *RNC-WC*’s judgment, then all three tiers will be utilized.⁸

The amount of information researched about the transportation infrastructure in the area is high (see Appendix 1 & 2). Overall, photographs placed on the *RNC-WC* website show a pattern of bridge and roadway pre-surveillance (Figure 1). *RNC-WC*’s members have proposed numerous methods of disrupting or closing

the RNC, using the transportation infrastructure. These methods include setting vehicle tires on fire underneath expressway bridges, to decrease motorist visibility, or planting stalled vehicles, to limit thoroughfare access.⁹ Also, members have suggested spreading large metal chains across highway lanes or placing star-nails (caltrops)¹⁰ on access roads to restrict access to the RNC. The group also disclosed plans to use dump trucks to spill dirt or other large materials onto the road.¹¹ Law enforcement should consider monitoring all potential methods to restrict or block traffic.



**Figure 1: Areas of Known Surveillance by RNC-WC
(including Xcel Energy Center, lower right)**
Courtesy: HWW-ISAC

The group has also announced that they are purchasing tasers for its entire membership.¹² Even though the RNC-WC denies that it is reacting to the St. Paul Police Department's recent purchase of similar non-lethal devices, or that the tasers are for anything other than personal protection, this announcement should not go unnoticed by law enforcement in the area, now or during the convention. Though they are accepting donations in person and via the Internet, it is unknown whether the group has the financial resources to buy such devices on a large scale since they range in price from \$300 - \$1000.

The group's stated goal is the disruption of the RNC; to that goal they are collaborating with other anarchist/anti-authoritarian groups, such as *Unconventional Action (UA)*. UA states that its primary objective is "to complement the work of local organizers in Denver and the Twin Cities with

regional organizing throughout the rest of the country.”¹³ The *UA* website posts copies of its own strategies, general anarchist guides/principles and a list of anarchist contacts across the country. On Feb. 9, 2008, the two groups co-sponsored an event called the “Northwest DNC/RNC Resistance Conference” at the Evergreen State College in Olympia, WA.¹⁴ The “workshop” discussed topics “ranging from street tactics to supporting protests” and even had childcare available for its participants. *Unconventional Action* states that, after the completion of the Democratic National Convention (DNC), members will travel to Minneapolis to assist with the RNC effort.¹⁵ This will provide a quality venue for sharing information concerning general security procedures and effective counter-measures. Furthermore, at least one protest/anarchist group (i.e. *PNC2RNC*) is using an “open” wiki (accessible to the public, but only members can edit) as its website.¹⁶ Therefore, “private” wikis (only members can access and edit) may be in use to share tactics and/or strategy among these individuals or groups which are located across the United States.

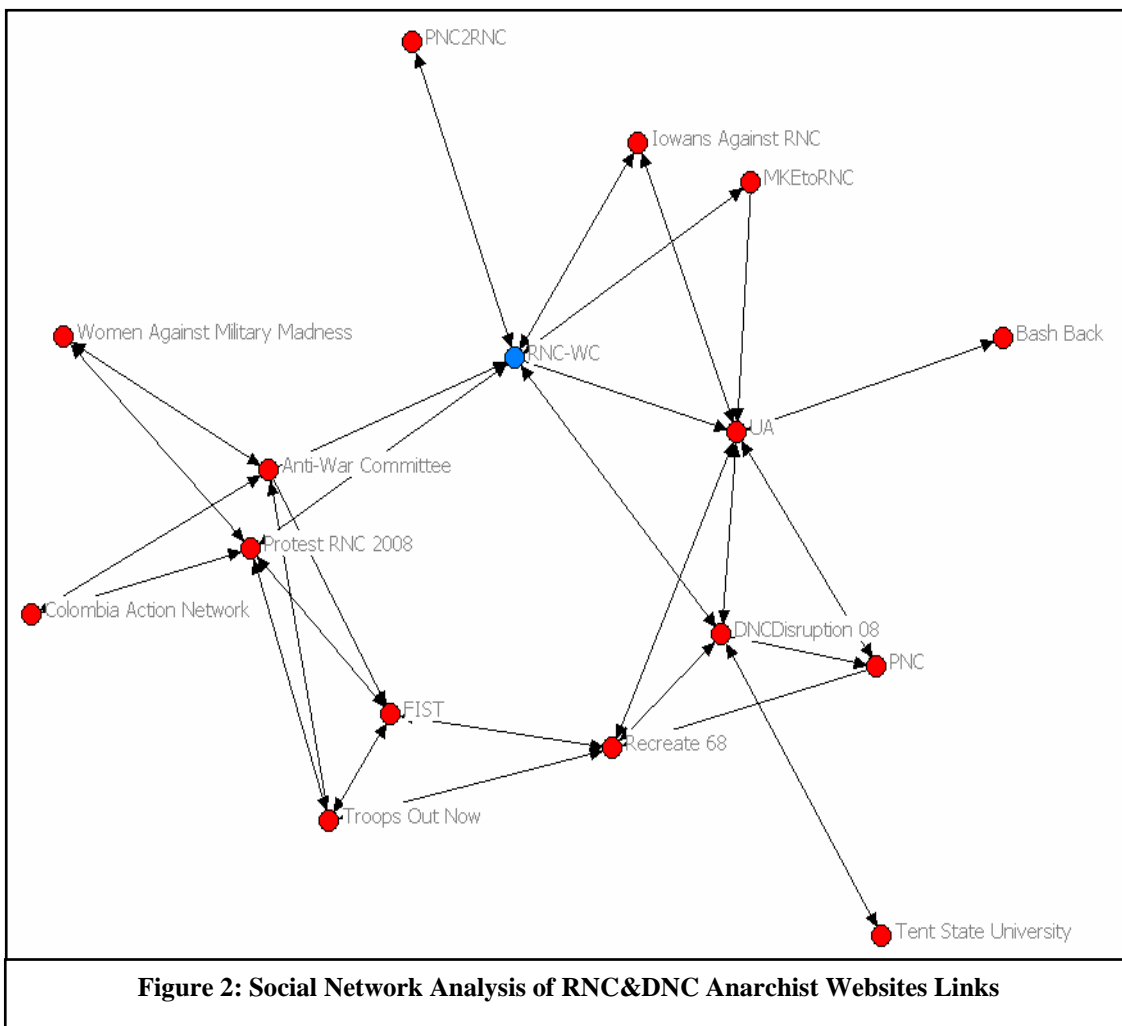


Figure 2: Social Network Analysis of RNC&DNC Anarchist Websites Links

A basic social network analysis (SNA), using only each group’s website and the links each possess to other “like-minded” sites, reveals how connected the

national convention protest/anarchist groups potentially are (Figure 2). The community at large appears to be a decentralized network since it does not possess one central hub; however, it does possess several important hubs. Consequently, these networks are more difficult to disrupt due to their loose connections and easy ability to replace damaged or compromised nodes. As such, the national convention anarchists are following the pattern of most terror networks in this aspect. Although it is decentralized, it appears that the *RNC-WC* possesses the most power centrality* among the protest groups within this community toward both the Republican and Democratic national conventions (Figure 3). The previously mentioned *UA* is second, most likely due to its coordination with both Republican and Democratic anarchist groups.

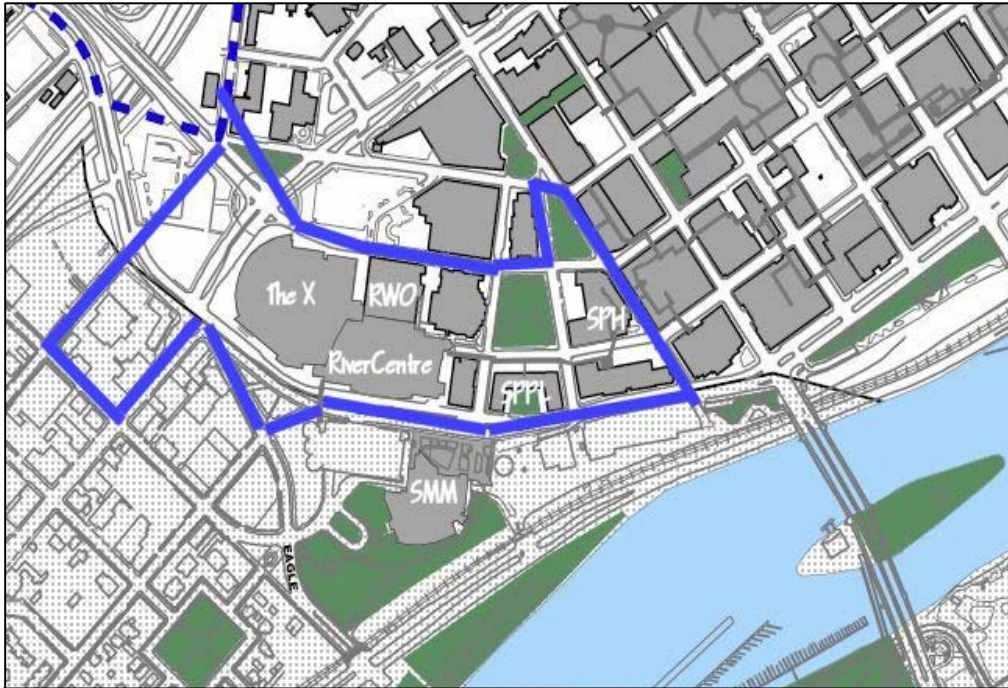
The *RNC-WC* also possesses the highest amount of betweenness in this community. The *Protest RNC 2008* and *UA* groups directly follow it. Overall, betweenness refers to the number of groups that a node, or individual group, has indirect ties to through the direct links that it possesses. In other words, it represents the number of times that a node lies along the shortest path between two others. Nodes with a high degree of betweenness act as liaisons or bridges to other nodes in the structure. Consequently, the concept shows the potential importance and information sharing capabilities that the *RNC-WC*, *UA*, *Protest RNC 2008*, and *DNC Disruption 08* represent to the rest of the community. Although this analysis only reflects the links that each website possesses to others, it provides a glimpse of how coordinated this anarchist community may be and allows law enforcement to plan accordingly. Overall, the *RNC-WC*'s early formation, comprehensive membership drives, strategic partnerships, and flexibility will likely result in a more robust and balanced effort than in recent conventions. Consequently, security will likely be more difficult to maintain than in previous years.

Figure 3: Power Centrality Rankings

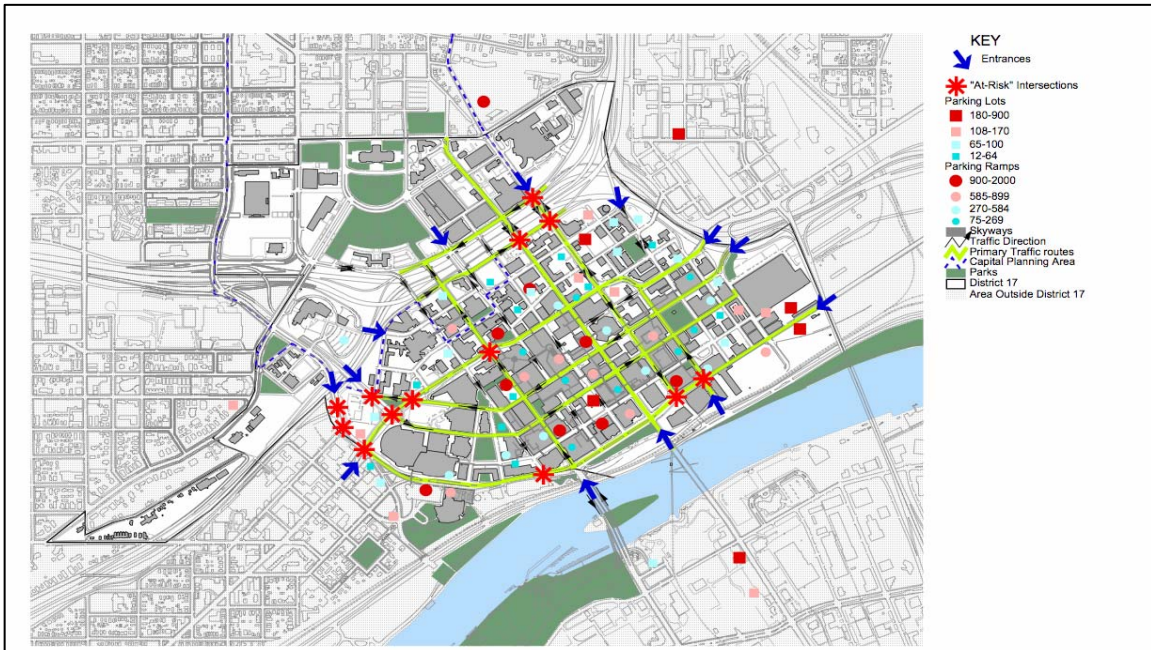
1.	RNC-WC
2.	UA
	Protest RNC 2008
	DNCDisruption 08
3.	Recreate 68
	Anti-War Committee
	Troops Out Now
4.	FIST
5.	MKEtoRNC
	PNC
	Iowans Against RNC
	Colombia Action Network
	Women Against Military Madness
6.	PNC2RNC
	Bash Back
	Tent State University

* Based on the HWW-ISAC database information inserted into SNA software.

Appendices



Appendix 1: Possible Security Perimeter for RNC (found on RNC-WC website)



Appendix 2: Map of Downtown St. Paul Transportation Characteristics (found on an RNC-WC PowerPoint)

Contact Information:

For any questions or comments regarding this product please contact HWW-ISAC, Intelligence Analyst, Cory Kutcher at 703-485-7379, or via e-mail at cory.kutcher@tsa.dhs.gov.

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¹ <http://www.ncwelcomingcommittee.org/2007/09/30/crash-the-convention-2008-call-to-action/>

² <http://www.ncwelcomingcommittee.org/media-faq/>

³ <http://www.ncwelcomingcommittee.org/>

⁴ <http://www.monkeywrenchbooks.org/node/576>

⁵ http://dryriver.org/index.php?option=com_extcalendar&Itemid=26&extmode=view&extid=333

⁶ <http://www.ncwelcomingcommittee.org/156>

⁷ <http://www.ncwelcomingcommittee.org/156>

⁸ <http://www.unconventionalaction.org/>

⁹ FBI IIR 4 201 1401 08

¹⁰ FBI IIR 4 201 0748 08

¹¹ FBI IIR 4 201 0748 08

¹² <http://www.ncwelcomingcommittee.org/2008/03/14/nc-welcoming-committee-orders-tasers-for-every-protestor/>

¹³ <http://www.unconventionalaction.org/>

¹⁴ <http://dncdisruption08.org/?p=26>

¹⁵ <http://www.unconventionalaction.org/>

¹⁶ <http://lothwiki.org/index.php/PNC2RNC>