

Chapter 29 - IFPO - CPO

Terrorism: What Protection Officers
Need to Know

Purpose

- ▶ In reality, all assets cannot be protected 100% of the time.
- ▶ To better protect the assets to where they are assigned, protection officers must become familiar with terrorism, terrorists and their tactics. This can be done by reading after-action reports, case studies, think-tank analysis and information from reputable news outlets.

Terrorism: A Definition Dilemma

- ▶ The word “*terror*” comes from the Latin word *terrorem*, meaning “great fear.”
- ▶ A terrorist uses violence (or threat of violence) to kill, cause fear, intimidate, and coerce.
- ▶ A terrorist act translates intentions to action.
- ▶ The first use of the word terror as related to violent acts comes from the French Revolution or the *regime de la terreur* (reign of terror) prevailing in France from 1793 to 1794.
- ▶ The US Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) defines terrorism in the United States as “the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives”.
- ▶ We struggle with the definition of the word “terrorism” and “terrorist” due to **political** and **social** aspects of the government’s definition.
- ▶ Officials are afraid to use the word “terrorist” because it could increase fear in society or people will become numb to always hearing about “terrorism”.
- ▶ Some say it doesn’t matter whether a violent act was criminal or terrorist, since clarification won’t bring back the dead or heal the injured. However, it certainly does make a difference in terms of our hardening activities.
- ▶ Security professionals who are assigned at soft target locations (civilian-centric venues) must understand the rising terror threat and prepare accordingly.

Security Fatigue

- ▶ People have a very short memory about or have a sense of denial regarding terrorist threats.
- ▶ They become victims of an emotional phenomenon called “*Security Fatigue*.”
- ▶ The five traps of “security fatigue”:
 1. Hopelessness: Nothing we can do to prevent terrorism.
 2. Infallibility: It will never happen here.
 3. Inescapability: It is unavoidable. Why even try?
 4. Invulnerability: It will never happen to me.
 5. Inevitability: It’s going to happen and there’s nothing I can do to prevent it.

Threat Assessment

- ▶ Al Qaeda and its splinter groups present the greatest international terrorism threat to the West.
- ▶ Hezbollah and Hamas operate throughout the world including Latin America, Mexico, Canada and the United States.
- ▶ Domestic terror broken down into three categories:
 - ▶ Active
 - ▶ Dormant
 - ▶ Persistent

How Terrorism Differs from Crime

- ▶ Terrorism is an act of extreme violence, as terrorists seek to rapidly advance an agenda or cause, instill mass fear and panic in the populace and gain as much press coverage as possible.
- ▶ The threat of prison or even death does not deter.
- ▶ A terrorist will step up and engage law enforcement, not retreat.
- ▶ Cameras, armed security officers, and other types of security enhancements will likely not deter.
- ▶ Unlike traditional crime, the terrorist attacker's methodology will also be asymmetric and unique, meaning we must imagine the different ways they may strike.
- ▶ The goal of target-hardening is to stop the fight before it begins; the terrorist may go elsewhere to carry out the attack, and this is not your concern—stay focused on protecting your facility and its occupants.

Detecting Surveillance

- ▶ The 14 major terrorist attacks since 2014 had one common thread—*the terrorists performed some type of pre-attack surveillance*.
- ▶ All terrorists perform some sort of pre-attack surveillance.
- ▶ Generally, most terrorists lack the requisite skillset to conduct effective covert surveillance; thus, their surveillance is sloppy and detectable to the trained eye.
- ▶ Protection officers **MUST** be aware of unusual activities in their areas of operations.

The Human is the Best Weapon System

- ▶ Humans detect subtle changes in behavior, learn, and have intuition— attributes not (yet) perfected by artificial intelligence.
- ▶ Technology was never meant to be the central focus of protective measures, but to complement human security efforts.
- ▶ Data shows humans deter bad actors, including terrorists, who seek the path of least resistance to carry out their attack plan.
- ▶ A study of 360 burglars showed the best deterrents against their criminal activity were the presence of people, guards, noise inside, and dogs.
- ▶ Data collected from convicts indicates cameras do not affect how determined actors plan an attack. They assume the camera isn't working, taping, being monitored, or is real.

Exploitation of the Security Industry

- ▶ There is a recent trend toward terrorists and other violent actors gaining experience in the security services industry.
- ▶ Extremists in the West sought employment with private security firms to “gain weapons experience and access to secure facilities.”
- ▶ Not all security personnel receive weapons training; however, their position still affords credentials, uniforms, and access to otherwise restricted areas.