



Office of Intelligence and Analysis

Homeland
Security

Homeland Security Assessment

(U) First Responders: Considering the Impact of Terrorism on Operations

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(U) Scope

(U) DHS is providing this Homeland Security Assessment to first responders and on-scene commanders for general terrorism-related incident response planning. The information in this report is based upon observations gleaned from previous domestic and international terrorist incidents that exposed first responders to significant life-safety risk or, in some cases, provided indicators of further terrorist plans or preparations. ***DHS does not possess any specific, credible, or time-sensitive information to indicate that terrorists currently are planning to conduct attacks in the Homeland or to attack first responders in the United States.***

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(U) Key Findings

(U//FOUO) Domestic and international terrorist incidents may expose first responders to significant life-safety risks that should be considered during emergency planning and response. In some cases, they also could provide intelligence on further terrorist plans or preparations.

- (U//FOUO) *The initial incident may not be the main attack effort.* Hoaxes and decoys are sometimes used by terrorists to conduct surveillance on first responders and assist them in attack planning. Alternatively, one or more small incidents may be used to “channel” victims and responders into larger “kill zones”.
- (U//FOUO) *First responders may be the target of an ambush.* There have been instances where first responders were attacked during incident response.
- (U//FOUO) *An emergency response may be an intelligence opportunity.* The site of a relatively small incident in some circumstances may provide indicators of larger, possibly unrelated terrorist plans or preparations.

(U) Initial Incident Not Main Attack Effort

(U//FOUO) Coalition forces in Iraq routinely encounter hoax improvised explosive devices (IED). These IEDs are used either to monitor reactions for future attack preparations or distract forces from the main attack effort. Hoax devices also have been used for the purpose of intimidation and keeping the populace in a state of fear.

(U//FOUO) Alternatively, an initial incident may not represent the main attack effort; rather smaller attacks may be used to “funnel” victims and first responders into larger kill zones. On 12 October 2002 a suicide bomber detonated an IED in “Paddy’s Club”, Bali, Indonesia. Less than one minute later, a large vehicle borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) detonated approximately 30 meters away in front of the “Sari Nightclub”. The initial suicide bomber caused many people to rush into the street, close to the location of the VBIED, which significantly increased the lethality of the attack.

(U) First Responders Ambush

(U) First responders have been targeted with direct fire or secondary IEDs during incident response. In 1997, Eric Robert Rudolph^{USPER} conducted two separate bombings in the Atlanta, Georgia area that incorporated the use of secondary IED attacks against first responders. The first bombing that occurred at a professional building included a secondary IED located in a parking lot that detonated one hour after the initial IED as emergency medical, law enforcement, and fire fighting personnel worked to secure the scene. The

second attack against a lounge in Atlanta included a secondary IED placed at the most likely location where first responders would arrive, but the IED was discovered and rendered safe before it detonated.

(U) A more complex, carefully planned ambush took place on 27 August 1979 in Northern Ireland when the Provisional Irish Republican Army deployed two large IEDs and snipers to attack British soldiers. A large IED detonated as British soldiers passed by, followed by sniper fire that forced the soldiers to take cover as they waited for medical evacuation. A second IED detonated close by and there were reports of automatic weapons fire at the surviving soldiers.

(U) Intelligence Opportunities

(U//FOUO) Routine law enforcement or emergency response activities may inadvertently gain insight into larger terrorist attack efforts. Occasionally, sites used to prepare for attacks may become involved in unrelated first responder operations.

(U) Response to an apartment fire on 5 January 1995 in Manila, Philippines revealed the existence of major terrorist plots tied to Ramzi Yousef, who conducted the 1993 bombing on the World Trade Center in New York City. These plots included an attempt to assassinate the Pope during his 1995 visit to the Philippines and a plot to bomb multiple U.S. airliners in Asia, called Operation "Bojinka". First responders discovered an apparent attempt to synthesize explosives in a sink within the apartment and police later discovered computer files outlining the magnitude of these plots.

(U) A routine border crossing interview on 14 December 1999, by a U.S. Customs Agent, yielded the apprehension of Ahmed Ressam and the discovery of the "Millennium Bombing Plot". Ressam attempted to smuggle explosives into the United States from Canada for use in an effort to bomb the Los Angeles International Airport.

(U) Implications

(U//FOUO) First responders should be aware of potential terrorist methods when training for and responding to incidents. First responders should be alert to potential direct threats to their operations; the possibility of ambush should be considered in response planning. Also, the potential for terrorists to reveal their activities during unrelated emergency responses provides opportunities to disrupt attack plans.

(U//FOUO) For more detailed information, please consult Protecting Emergency Responders Volume 3, Safety Management in Disaster and Terrorism Response; Joint IED Defeat Task Force Counter IED Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures, National Institute for Occupational

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Safety and Health and the Department of Defense; and the Center for Army Lessons Learned Handbook 05-23.

(U) Reporting Notice:

(U) DHS encourages recipients of this document to report information concerning suspicious or criminal activity to the local FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) and the Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC). The FBI regional phone numbers can be found online at <http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm>, and the HSOC can be reached by telephone at 202-282-8101 or by email at HSOC.Common@dhs.gov. For information affecting the private sector and critical infrastructure, contact the National Infrastructure Coordinating Center (NICC), a sub-element of the HSOC. The NICC can be reached by telephone at 202-282-9201 or by email at NICC@dhs.gov. Each report submitted should include the date, time, location, type of activity, number of people and type of equipment used for the activity, the name of the submitting company or organization, when this information is available, and a designated point of contact.

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