

WOLF-PACK TERRORISM, DISASTER PREPARATION, MORE K-9 SUPPORT, IED INCIDENTS

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WESTMINSTER AND
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Cover Photo: *Pixabay*



My personal experience dealing with terrorist bomb/Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) incidents started in 1989 while serving in the British Army with B-Coy, 1-WFR for 22 months in Northern Ireland; since then, bomb/IED awareness has always been a part of my security procedures and planning.



DEALING WITH BOMBS AND IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE (IED) INCIDENTS

By Orlando Wilson

I have to say that it astounds me these days after numerous, well-publicized IED attacks globally that many security and law enforcement professionals are severely lacking in realistic IED awareness.

If you are working in the center of a large city, such as London, Paris, or New

York, or are working in the emerging markets where bomb scares are not unusual, it is likely that you may get caught up in a suspicious package or actual IED incident. Whether your venue, office, or residence is targeted directly or it just happens to be on the same street as an IED, you will need

to know how to react and should have procedures in place.

Improvised Explosive Devices are a threat to everyone and are used frequently and with great affect by criminals, cranks, and terrorists the world over. If you follow international events, then you will see that there is a lethal bombing

A U.S. Marine with Echo Company, 4th Reconnaissance Battalion, clears glass from a window during breacher training at Goettge demolitions range, Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., July 22, 2014. Photo by Lance Cpl. Diana Sims.

somewhere in the world almost every day. The basic IED can be made from commercially available materials that are sold over the counter in most places. Information on how to construct IEDs is available from military or survival bookstores, the Internet, and former military or demolitions-trained personnel. The size of an IED can range from as small as a cigarette packet to as big as a large container truck.

IEDs can be disguised as virtually anything; this gives the bomber the advantage of being able to kill their targets without alerting them to the threat, giving the bomber a large degree of anonymity. IEDs can be used to kill selected targets or to kill indiscriminately. These facts are why the IED is often the favored weapon of criminals, cranks, and terrorists the world over and is the most dangerous threat to security, law enforcement, military, and the public.

In this article, I have listed some basic information on IEDs and some basic guidelines for dealing with an IED incident. I also dissect the law enforcement response to the NYC times square car bomb incident in 2010. And after reading this article you should be a lot more knowledgeable and competent than those members of the NYPD who were in charge of the response to that incident, well, more of a circus than a response!

EXPLOSIVES

There are many types of explosives available on the market, all of which have differing characteristics, chemical compositions, and properties. What they all have in common is that they can be extremely dangerous. I am not going to go into the details of explosive composition because you don't need to know it; it makes no difference if a device has Composition B or gasoline in it, it's an explosive device and can kill you.

There are two categories of explosives: high and low.

- High explosives such as Dynamite, Gelatin, TNT, RDX, PETN, C-4, and Semtex undergo a rapid chemical change upon detonation. This change is a transformation from a solid or liquid to a gaseous state. The change, which takes approximately one billionth of a second, results in the gas rapidly moving away from the point of detonation at speeds of up to 26,500 fps in the case of C-4. The moving gas is the force that cuts steel, concrete and anything else in its path.
- Low explosives burn quickly instead of exploding. The best examples of low explosives are gunpowder and match heads. The burn rates of low explosives are usually under 3000 fps. Low explosives are usually more sensitive to heat, shock, and friction than high explosives, which tend to be pretty stable.

Commercial and military grade explosives are available on the black market either bought from corrupt soldiers/police or stolen. Also, you need to remember commercial explosives are used in construction, quarrying, and by farmers and are available for sale from explosive distributors.

BOMB AND IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE IDENTIFICATION

Bombs and IEDs can be disguised as virtually anything, so you need to identify whether you, your clients, or your location could be targeted for an IED attack. You need to compile a threat assessment and identify all the threats you could be targeted by; if IEDs are in the threat assessment, you need to start making procedures for dealing with an



A model of the Palestinian IED, hidden as a guitar Photo by MathKnight.

incident. You must remember when compiling the threat assessment to also think about what other potential IED targets could be in your area, which if targeted could cause issues for you. I remember one client telling me that during the 90s in Colombia he booked into what he thought was a nice secure hotel only to look out of the window of his room to see it was next to a small military base, which at the time would be an ideal target for narco-guerrillas.

At a personal level, you need to be aware and suspicious of any objects, cars, or activity in or around your locations that could be a cover for an IED: an unattended and out-of-place bag, an unknown car that has been parked next to your building, an approach road too long, unknown people acting nervously, etc. You must be aware and suspicious, but you must understand the realistic threats or you will be seeing IEDs and terrorists everywhere. Common sense is something that is lacking in people today in general but, as a security or law enforcement professional, you need to be able to keep things real and not get caught up in what can be classed in many

cases as group hysteria. So, at a basic level everyone needs to know what to do if they are caught up in a IED incident, need to deal with a suspicious object, or in the worst-case scenario have to survive the aftermath of a IED attack!

Detecting IEDs can be extremely difficult; there are many bits of equipment on the market that can sniff explosives, x-ray bags and vehicles, etc. These are all good if you have them and they are well-serviced and -maintained. As far as I know most of the “bomb sniffers” have to be regularly calibrated and have their filters changed... I remember visiting quite a few high-profile locations in Abuja, Nigeria, where the gate guards were using such devices to check cars, but I doubt the devices had been maintained since being taken out the box, and I would be surprised if they were even charged up. I paid numerous visits to a very high-profile hotel in Abuja, and even though you had walk through a metal detector, it was clear if you looked that the power cable was unplugged...

The best example of fake bomb detectors was the British-made ADE-651 that claimed to be able to detect

You must be aware and suspicious, but you must understand the realistic threats or you will be seeing IEDs and terrorists everywhere.

explosives, guns, drugs, ivory, and even truffles and was powered by the users’ static electricity. You may laugh, but the Iraqi Government apparently bought £52 million UK pounds’ worth of them. It’s claimed that up to 20 different governments bought the fake device at £60,000.00 a piece... They were made by the British company ATSC, which was dissolved in 2013, and the company owner Jim McCormick was sentenced to 10 years in prison on fraud charges. So, if you use bomb detectors, make sure they are real, are maintained, and the people using them know what they are doing.

In my opinion, the best thing for



The site of the first bomb at the 2013 Boston Marathon Photo by Aaron “tango” Tang.

detecting IEDs and explosives is properly trained and handled sniffer dogs.

Again, at a base level, the dog needs to be properly trained, looked after, and handled... I know of one company in UK that used to ask their guards to bring their pet German Shepherds etc. on residential security details so the clients could see what they believed to be handlers and trained dogs. I have seen Civil Defense sniffer dogs in Nigeria that were so afraid of the cars they were checking they had to be literally dragged to them. Always verify you're getting what you are paying for, of all industries the security and defense industry should be one of the most credible but, in many cases it's a scammer's paradise.

The issue with using dogs and the man-portable bomb detectors is you must get close to the potential device and within the blast range. This is a big issue if you are dealing with devices that could have been put in place just to draw security forces into an ambush.

THE SECONDARY DEVICE

Remember: The Secondary Attack, The Secondary Attack, The Secondary

Attack!!!! If one incident has just occurred, then what's next: another IED, follow-up ambush, ambush on those responding, or ambush on evacuation routes?

An IED can be used on its own or in conjunction with other IEDs or weapons. Good bombers will always place a second device near the first device in a likely control point for security forces or on an evacuation route from the blast area of the first device. The second device is to catch the personnel or emergency services coming to the aid of anyone hurt in the first blast, security forces dealing with the incident, or personnel escaping from the first blast. Sometimes the first device is designed to go off for no other reason than to draw in emergency or security services or drive people into the larger main device.

This happened in Northern Ireland with the Omagh bombing in 1998. Irish terrorists called in the location of a car bomb to local police with the wrong address, this resulted in civilians being evacuated into the blast area of the device; 510 lbs of AMFO... 29 people were killed and over 220 injured... I have a good friend whose family lives in Homs, Syria, where there have been too many car and suicide bombings to count. After

one suicide bombing incident, the locals rushed to help the victims, and one man came out of the blast area bleeding and screaming for help. When people started to pick him up to carry him to an ambulance, he blew himself up, killing several of the civilians who went to help him; he was a terrorist.

I was recently talking with a client/friend who had a relative working at a hospital in Orlando, FL, on the night of the recent terrorist attack on a Pulse nightclub. After such incidents, the security for the casualty-receiving hospitals, etc. needs to be upped because they are a prime secondary terrorist targets, as are the responding ambulance crews. When republican Irish terrorists bombed Thiepval Barracks, Northern Ireland, in 1996, they placed a secondary car bomb outside of the barracks medical center to try to maximize British military casualties. Think about it: Where will everybody be heading after a terrorist attack, and if the terrorists murder the doctors and nurses, who will treat the casualties? Terrorists do not operate by the same human rights laws they expect to be protected by!

You must always expect if an explosive device has been found or gone off or that there could be a second or third device somewhere.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Here are a few examples of how IEDs were employed by Irish terrorists; these are taken from when I was a teenager serving in the British Army and stationed in Northern Ireland from 1989 to 1991. There were many more incidents; at the time, dealing with such things was the bread and butter work for the infantry battalions stationed in Northern Ireland.

- 9th of January 1990: Olven Kilpatrick was murdered by terrorists in the shoe shop that he ran in the town of Castlederg; he was shot at close quarters.



EOD technician assigned to the Canadian Fleet Diving Unit Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class ALFRED COFFIELD/Fleet Combat Camera Pacific.

The terrorists left behind an explosive device in a shoebox set to detonate 30 minutes after the shooting, by which time security forces and emergency services were in the immediate area. Mr. Kilpatrick was an off-duty member of the Ulster Defense Regiment. Think about how many shoe boxes there are in a shoe shop! The device detonated and several Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) officers were injured; there were no further fatalities due to the fact that secondary devices were expected to be left at crime scenes, and the area was evacuated.

- 15th January 1990: A car bomb was detonated in the Village of Sion Mills and caused major damage to the RUC station that was unmanned at the time. The security forces had limited routes they could use to get to the village. A QRF team from Strabane, led by at the time Cpl Lewis Weaver, responded to



Photo: Pixabay.

the incident and on the way out spotted a suspicious white van along their route; it was noted and they moved on at full speed. The same van was passed on the QRF's return route, and the info was reported. On further inspection, the white van contained 1000 lbs of AMFO. It was reported several years later that one of the terrorists involved in the operation

“Bernard Declan Casey” was working for British Special Branch and had ensured the command wire was not connected to the device in the white van... It was expected for an IED to be placed along one of the routes into the village to catch the security forces entering or leaving the area. If time was available, the routes would have needed to be searched

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and cleared, if time and helicopters were not available, this would consist of the responding patrol in driving in at top speed if there were no foot patrols in the area.

- 1990: A car was parked a short distance from the “Hump” security force base in Strabane with what appeared to be mortar tubes inside. A security force cordon was placed around the car to secure the area, and when the security force teams were conducting their clearance searches around their cordon points, a team found an IED attached to a trip wire. Further searches of the cordon positions turned up other IEDs. The mortar tube in the car turned out to be a piece of drainpipe, it was a hoax that was used to draw security forces into the IEDs that the terrorists placed in likely security force cordon positions.

- 4th May 1989: Corporal Stephen Mcgonigle, a very respected member of 1 WFR, was killed near Silverbridge, South Armagh. A car was parked on the side of a country road in an area regularly patrolled by security forces. When the foot patrol spotted the car, they checked with their control room to see if the car was registered as stolen. It was not. The patrol saw nothing overtly suspicious with the car and so moved forward to check it. At least one of the team was carrying electronic counter-measure equipment that can identify and block radio signals from remote-controlled bombs. The bomb was not remote controlled; it was detonated with a command wire. The three other members of Cpl Mcgonigle’s team were all injured in the blast.

You should take nothing at face value and always remember the secondary device. Always be suspicious of anything that looks out of place; if you are in an area where there is an active IED threat, you need to draw up plans and procedure for how you will respond if you are caught up in an incident.

TYPES OF DEVICES: LETTER AND PARCEL BOMBS

Up until the late 1990s the letter and parcel bomb was the most widely used of all IEDs. The bombers who use this type of device range from stalkers through to hardcore terrorists. The letter bomb gives the bomber a direct line of access to the target and affords the bomber virtual anonymity, as the device can be sent from anywhere in the world. As the name suggests, the device is placed into an envelope or parcel and posted to the target. Upon opening, the device explodes.

Below is a list of things that should be checked for on any package that you suspect of being an IED. If you or your

client is under a threat, all mail should be checked. If some of the following criteria are evident on a suspect package, it should be put through an x-ray machine to confirm or allay your suspicions. If you don’t have an x-ray machine, then the suspect package should be placed in a safe area and specialist assistance sought. The package would have been knocked around whilst in the postal system, so it will be safe to move—just don’t open it.

Letter and parcel bomb recognition checklist:

- Were you expecting the letter or package?
- Was it delivered by hand (to avoid the postal system)?
- Is it uneven or lopsided?
- Is the envelope rigid?



Mail Bomb Photo by dbking.

- Is there excessive securing material such as cellophane tape, string, etc.?
- Are there any visual distractions on the envelope such as company, official stamps?
- Are there any protruding wires or tin foil?
- Was there excessive postage paid?
- Was the address poorly written/typed?
- Any excessive weight?
- No return address?
- Any oil stains, discoloration, fingerprints?
- Any incorrect titles?
- Any titles but no names?
- Any misspellings of common words?
- Any restrictive markings such as Confidential or Private?
- Any suspicious postmarks such as Belfast, Baghdad, etc.?
- Is the address stenciled?
- Any holes or pinpricks, which could be to let out explosive fumes?
- Any smell of almonds, marzipan, or perfume used to mask the smell of explosive fumes?
- Any mechanical sounds?

INCENDIARY DEVICES

A simple form of this device can be made as small as a cigarette packet and be made from condoms and commercially available chemicals. When properly ignited, they will burn at high temperatures and are primarily designed to destroy property. Incendiaries require an initiator (flame or chemical action), delay mechanism, igniter, and main incendiary charge. Incendiary bombs are usually used against shops and businesses for extortion purposes, or they could be used against a lawyer's office to destroy case records before a trial, etc. They can easily be placed between the cushions of furniture, among flammable objects in the case of thermitite, or on or above machinery or vehicles, and timed to go off when the business is empty

of staff, causing the maximum fire damage. This can also help to give the bomber anonymity.

If either your client or his business is under the threat of incendiary attack, the following precautions should be taken. A deterrent would be to install overt CCTV and employ high-profile 24-hour security guards. The CCTV could, in the event of an incident, be used to identify the bomber, but keep the videos in a fireproof container or, if using Internet cameras, back everything up on the cloud. If the client's workplace is an office suite, then access needs to be restricted as much as possible. Visitors should not be left unsupervised, all non-fire retardant furniture should be removed, and all areas should be searched at the end of the business day. Cameras should be placed in high-risk areas entrances/exits and outside toilets, and all personnel entering the suite should be searched.

BLAST BOMBS

This device can be made very small. A device can easily be placed in a take-away food container or bag or hidden in a trash



Grenades Photo by Chenspec.

can or pile of rubbish. This type of device is used to cause disruption and confusion.

In the city of London, UK, in the early 90s, a spate of such devices placed in trash cans resulted in all trash cans being removed from the streets and the London Underground. These devices can cause great disruption and kill indiscriminately.

Realistically, there is very little that can be done to stop a bomber planting these devices in city areas. The device can be easily disguised and moved during rush hour. It would be impossible to watch everyone, let alone search them; dogs could be employed, but they will not be able to sniff everyone. Security cameras on buildings and in shops would be useful when trying to identify the bomber after the device has detonated.

PIPE BOMBS/GRENADES

Pipe bombs are simply metal tubes filled with some type of explosives, usually mixed with a type of shrapnel (nuts, bolts, nails) and detonated by various means. If put together properly, they can be very portable, concealable, and devastating weapons. Military-grade hand grenades are available on the black market and are again very portable and concealable, most with an effective blast radius of 10 to 15 meters. One incident that comes to mind is from when I was in Jos, Nigeria, in 2011, where a church was attacked on Xmas Day... A grenade was thrown at a church, and the police officer working security was shot and killed... This simple attack took seconds, and the attackers escaped.

You have to be aware of your environment and constantly assessing people and their body language; in high-profile areas where the threat assessment identified a possibility of this type of IED attack, extra security measures need to be put in place such as screens on windows, etc. so nothing can be thrown in.

UNDERCAR BOOBY-TRAP (UVB)

This device was a favorite weapon of Irish terrorist groups when targeting off-duty police and military personnel. The device is placed in a container such as a Tupperware container and attached to the underside of a vehicle using magnets, usually under the driver seat. The usual method for triggering the device is by using a tilt or vibration-sensitive switch. The UVB enables the terrorists to attack selected targets. There is a risk of discovery involved when placing this device, as access to the target's vehicle is

attached to the door of the garage or a mine in the driveway. If the vehicle has to be left unattended, the surrounding area needs to be searched and then the vehicle. Searching a vehicle for IEDs is a basic and important skill and needs to be practiced regularly.

CAR AND TRUCK BOMBS

Car and truck bombs enable the terrorist to conceal and move large devices. The car bomb can be used against individual or indiscriminate area targets. All it takes is for someone to drive the vehicle to the target and leave it to

tactic of Irish terrorists. It starts with the intended driver being kidnapped or having his home taken over. The driver is then informed that if they don't drive to the device or to the target, they and their family will be killed. If they drive the device, at least he has a chance of survival. The driver is then chained and locked into the vehicle with the device and he is told how long they have got to get to the target before the device explodes. The driver has little choice but to drive the device to the target and hope the security personnel has some bolt cutter on hand with which to cut him out of the car before the device explodes. Nearly all front gate guard posts and check points in Northern Ireland in the day had bolt cutters available for exactly this situation. On 24th October 1990, our Battalions main base "Lisanelly Barracks" in Omagh was proxy bombed; the driver of the vehicle was cut out by the front gate guards. This 1500 lb AMFO device failed to fully detonate due a faulty detonator.

As I stated earlier, in major cities you can get caught up in IED incidents without being a target, just in the wrong place at the wrong time. April 24th, 1994, I had just landed in Johannesburg, South Africa, and was at the main bus station waiting for a bus a to Durban and talking to a girl I knew there on a payphone. What I thought sounded like a bomb was a bomb that killed 9 people just up the road and I am sure injured way more, but the positive thing, as I remember, was my bus still left on time.

While in Abuja and Jos, Nigeria, late 2011 and early 2012, there were numerous attacks on churches. One car bomb attack in Abuja killed 37 people; the car had been parked in the church parking lot for days before the attack but never checked or searched. A simple pre-service sweep by a trained search dog would have identified the device.

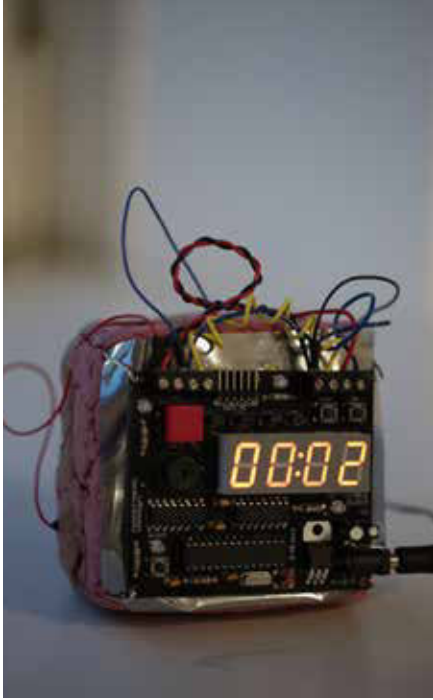


Improvised explosive device (IED) detection dog Photo by U.S. Department of Defense Current Photos.

needed. If the bomber manages to plant the device, it will kill and maim the occupants of the car if it is not discovered.

The best defense against the UVB is to deny the bomber access to the vehicle. If you are under an IED threat and the vehicle is secured in a garage, the entrance and driveway to the garage need to be physically checked before the vehicle is moved. There could be a device

explode. Against an individual this device could be placed along a route or near an entrance to a building that is frequented by the target. The device can be triggered by remote control, command wire, or, if the target is setting a pattern, by a timer. A method of delivering a device to a high-security area is to use a suicide bomber or force someone to drive the vehicle with the device in it. The latter was a common



A bomb or an IED Photo by Alexandre Dulauno.

IMPROVISED MINES

These devices can vary in size and be disguised as virtually as anything. Their triggering methods are only limited by the imagination and ability of the bomber. In Northern Ireland, large devices were usually placed in rural areas in culverts, under roads, or perhaps disguised as milk churns or in bales of hay. In the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria, IEDs have been hidden in animal carcasses. In urban areas, they can be placed in lampposts, rubbish bins, or vertical drain piping on the side of a building. To place a bomb into a drainpipe, the terrorist lowers the device into the drainpipe from the top, and a command wire detonates the device. The command wire can go over the building or be laid in the guttering connected to a firing point out of the line of sight of the killing zone. In all such operations, the terrorists use youths as watchers. The child playing at the end of the street shouting to his friends could be telling the bomber you are in the kill zone.

SLEEPER BOMBS

An IED can be placed in a position a month before it explodes. If it is known that at a certain time in the future you or your client will be attending an event or function or staying in a hotel at a certain time, precautions need to be taken. In 1984 in Brighton, England, such a device killed five people in an IRA attempt to kill the then British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher.

DEFENSE AGAINST CAR BOMBS AND MINES

To beat the area car bomber, one has to be vigilant and suspicious. If a vehicle looks suspicious, then get it checked out. Security forces have an advantage over private security personnel in being able to check out the background (whether it is stolen or rented) of a vehicle very quickly. So, if you are suspicious of a vehicle, call the authorities and let them check it out; if you are unwilling or unable to contact the authorities, then just avoid the vehicle. For private security personnel: When the car bomb or mine threat is directed at your client, then

precautions need to be taken. If there are limited routes in and out of the client's residence or office, then these routes need to be regularly physically checked. Any suspicious cars, recent digging, or wires leading away from the road need to be checked out. When the client is traveling to and from work, the routes must be varied as much as possible. All trips should be kept secret until the last minute and then be preceded by an advanced security team, which needs to arrive at the client destination with enough time to check out the area before the client arrives. When entering or exiting a building, different entrances/exits need to be used. If possible, use fire escapes and staff entrances. If the client is to stay in a hotel, their room will need to be searched along with the adjoining rooms, if possible, and a check kept on anyone using the rooms. If the rooms are booked a while in advance, a check will need to be done on all building work and maintenance carried out in between the time of booking and the time of stay, as this work may have been used to cover the planting of a device.



U.S. Army Photo by Spc. Derek Gaines.



IDF forces apprehended a terror operative wearing the explosive belt pictured. Photo: Israel Defense Forces.

SUICIDE BOMBERS

Suicide bombings are not a new issue; back in WW2 the Japanese employed attacks against allied forces to great effect in the Pacific campaigns, but in recent years suicide attacks have become the hallmark of Islamic extremist terrorists.

The Israeli security forces have been dealing with the threat of suicide bombings for decades and at a front-line level rely on training their police and military personnel extensively in reading and understanding people's body language to try to identify suicide bombers and eliminate them before they can detonate their devices. There is no politically correct way to deal with possible suicide bombers; luckily for the Israeli forces, their Government understands their situation and supports their actions. This is a huge contrast to the witch hunts British Armed Forces have

been subjected to over the past few years.

In the wars in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Afghanistan, the front-line troops constantly face the threat of suicide attacks, from devices in armored vehicles to devices strapped to children. In the battle for Mosul the Iraqi forces have been dealing with an extremely complex situation, as every vehicle and every civilian could be a potential bomber.

Kurdish forces in Iraq and Syria abiding by rules of engagement advised to them by their Western trainers put themselves at risk constantly by giving surrendering and wounded terrorists the benefit of the doubt rather than a double tap. The Kurds are seeking independence and doing everything possible to fight a fair war against an enemy that deserves no quarter.

From a security professional's

perspective, if dealing with the threat of suicide attacks, you must understand you are going to take casualties, but you need to plan to limit the extent of the casualties as much as you can. A recent example is the attacks on the Coptic Churches in Egypt on Palm Sunday, 2017; one surveillance video shows one of the bombers detonating his device at the security checkpoint, most likely realizing he would not get into the Church without the device being discovered.

So, at a front-line level everyone needs to understand what indicators they need to look for in someone's body language that could identify them as a potential threat. From a planning perspective, procedures need to be put in place to limit the bombers' access to target areas and limit the potential blast areas at checkpoints, etc. in the case of an attack.

MORTARS

These days no one seems to consider the threat from mortar attacks. Mortars can be improvised, and I see no reason why terrorists should not be able to get military mortars and ammunition. Mortars and grenade launchers have been found in the arsenals of Mexican drug cartels and recently in raids on illegal arms dealers in Spain, so they are on the open market. Improvised mortars were used widely in Northern Ireland against Security Force bases (and in the mainland UK against Heathrow airport and the Prime Minister's residence in Downing Street, Central London). They were usually launched in quantities of ten from an improvised base plate mounted on a flat bed or high-sided truck. The mortars usually contained about 45 lbs of improvised explosives with a fuse time of 16 to 20 seconds and a flight time of 10 seconds. Their range was between 80 to 250 meters. The propellant was normally made from sodium chlorate-soaked "J cloths". Each mortar weighed about 120 lbs and usually went straight through most anti-mortar screening.

Attacks were common in Northern Ireland, one of our (1-WFR) patrol bases at the "Hump" in Strabane was hit in 1990 when D-Coy was on duty; Clady PVCP was hit when A-Coy was on duty. Luckily there were no casualties on both occasions. The Irish terrorists tried to hit the "Hump" again in January 1991 when 6 Plt, B-Coy was on duty; the terrorist tried to put the mortars in a location where a RUC patrol was having a tea break. After a quick exchange of fire where everyone missed, the terrorist escaped, but at least the attack was avoided.

Military mortars come in light, medium, and heavy variations. I would say that light and medium mortars would be the most useful to terrorists as they are quite mobile. The maximum range of light mortars, 50mm to 60mm, can be

anywhere from 700 to 3500 meters when firing high-explosive bombs of about 2 to 4 lbs, with rates of fire from 8 to 20 rounds a minute. The maximum range of medium mortars, 81mm and 82mm, is up to 5900 meters with high-explosive bombs weighing 6 to 8 lbs, with a rate of fire of 8 to 20 rounds per minute. The ideal targets for mortars would be busy airports, chemical plants, gas refineries, and petroleum storage depots. The best defense against improvised mortars is to identify and dominate any likely positions that could be used as a base plate location to launch mortar attack; this can be done with CCTV or patrols. If the terrorists have military mortars, you are going to have a lot of problems controlling an area of up to nearly 6 km around your location. This could be why no one wants to consider the threat from mortars!

HOW TO DEAL WITH AN IED INCIDENT

Police or security forces should be informed as soon as an IED is found or if you have good reason for suspecting an object or vehicle of being an IED. Disposal and diffusion of IED is to be left to trained professionals. Do not attempt this yourself.

Everyone should know the basics for dealing with an IED incident. If you are working in or have a business in an area where there could possibly be an IED threat, you will need to draw contingency plans for an IED incident. If you are traveling to a city where IED incidents occur, you need to know how things can develop and whether security forces know what they are doing or you are putting yourself and potentially others at risk.

There are four steps when dealing with an IED:

- **Confirmation:** Confirm, to the best of your ability, whether the object/vehicle is an IED, taking into account the following considerations: Are you

under a threat from IEDs? Are the objects seemingly out of place? Are you in an area where terrorists are operational? Is there a funny smell around the object such as almonds, marzipan or petrol? This is where your threat assessment comes in. An unattended bag in an airport will arouse more suspicion than an unattended bag in a bar or restaurant but both could be just as dangerous or just as harmless. If all unattended bags in bars or other public places were reported as IEDs, there would be hundreds of false incidents every day but one just might be an IED. If you have good reason to suspect an object or vehicle, then check it. The police and security forces should be willing to help you, if you give them good reasons for your suspicions.

- **Cordon:** Once a device has been confirmed, the area around it and roads leading to it needs to be cordoned off so no-one can access. It depends on the size and location of the device, as to how far away the cordon will be but a basic rule is that you should be out of line of sight of the device. This is because if you can see the device you can be hit by shrapnel or debris if it detonates. Think of the potential IED as a rifle barrel, if you can see it, it is pointed at you and has a clear shot at you, it can hit you. In the private security world, cordon preparations and duties would fall on the static/residential security teams etc. If an IED turns up at your residence, the RST, if you have security personnel, would have to deal with the initial cordon and clearing of the area. Cordon equipment needs to be on hand, such as cordon tape, torches, and maps of the area and communications equipment. Plans need to be made for the evacuation procedures and cordon points for the different types of device. All cordon and control point location need to be physically searched for booby traps before being set up, the basic search would be 10 meters around the position.



*U.S. Soldiers with the 3rd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment
Photo: U.S. Department of Defense Current Photos.*

- **Clearing the area:** People should be moved out of the blast area of the device; the blast area depends on the size and location of the device. In some cases, depending on the size of the device, it may be safer to leave people in buildings and under cover, rather than moving them into the open. It would make sense to assign a location in your building that could be used for this purpose, and internal room with no windows would be ideal. When evacuating people, a route should be taken that is out of line of sight of the device; if the device explodes when evacuating personnel, flying and falling glass is a big danger and needs to be considered when planning the evacuation route, as is the threat of secondary devices.
- **Controlling the incident:** Control of all IED incidents should be handed over to authorities, as soon as possible. You need to brief the responding personnel as to where the device is, when it arrived, how it arrived, where your cordon positions are, whether there is anyone

still within the cordoned area and where they are. You also need to pass on any relevant information of threats that have been made or suspicious incidents or people that have been in the area. Not only is this professional, but it could help apprehend the terrorists.

When a threat assessment reveals a threat from IEDs, a great deal of planning is needed. Whether you are a business owner, lone international traveler, or a close-protection team member, procedures need to be made for dealing with IEDs. Everyone in law enforcement, homeland security, and the private security industry must have a basic knowledge of how IEDs work, the effects of an explosion, and how to deal with incidents, but, sadly, they don't. These days basic search techniques and IED recognition are a necessity for all everyone, as IEDs are the most widely used terrorist weapon and will be for a long time to come.

Times Square Car Bomb, New York

City, May 1ST, 2010

After reading what has already been written in this article, you should be able to pick out quite a few mistakes in the New York Police Department (NYPD) handling of the 2010 car bomb incident in Times Square in the City of New York.

The vehicle that contained the explosives was a dark blue 1993 Nissan Pathfinder sport utility vehicle with dark tinted windows; it had been parked on a busy tourist-crowded street. People in the area noticed smoke drifting from vents near the back seat of the unoccupied vehicle, which was parked with its engine running and its hazard lights on. They also heard firecrackers going off inside.

A police officer approached the car and observed the smoke, canisters inside, and the smell of gunpowder. The vehicle was set ablaze but did not detonate. Upon arrival, the bomb disposal team used a remote-controlled robotic device to break out a window of the vehicle and explore its contents. The device's ignition source

malfunctioned and failed to detonate the main explosives. Had it detonated, NYPD officials said the bomb would have cut the car in half, and “would have caused casualties, a significant fireball and would have sprayed shrapnel, and killed or wounded many people.”

OK, the U.S. had been engaged in the war on terror for 9 years, so did the NYPD and other agencies not know how to deal properly with a car bomb incident? It amazed me when I saw the incident on the TV; they showed the bomb squad defusing the device while crowds stood watching. Basic rule: You and cordon positions must be out of line of site of the device; if you can see the device, you can be hit by shrapnel, etc. If the device had detonated there would have been many unnecessary casualties from the stupid cordon positions alone. The car bomb was described as a crude device, so was it not taken seriously? My first thought if I came across a crude and amateur explosive device would be “Where is the real one?” and that the crude device was nothing but bait to draw security forces into a trap. I strongly doubt the area and cordon positions were checked for secondary devices. In the TV coverage you could see that roads at either end of the road where the device was located were still open and cops were milling and sitting around relaxing; a suicide bomber could have driven right through the cordon and blown up the bomb squad. You can't protect others if you can protect yourself! The NYPD's handling of this incident can be classed as very negligent and how you should not deal with an IED incident!

If you are in an urban area and there is a car bomb incident, you should initially find cover; get into a building and away from windows. If a device goes off, the shock wave can break windows for a few blocks around it. You don't want to be on an open city street with glass falling on you from 50 stories up. When safe

to evacuate the area, use back alleys and non-obvious routes and do not hang around to watch how things develop. This is because of the threat from secondary devices and because the first device may only be there to draw in crowds of onlookers or channel people into the main device.

CONCLUSION

So, hopefully from this article you can see that dealing with IEDs is a complex problem where generally the terrorists have the advantage. The responsibility for IED and terrorist attack prevention is everyone's responsibility, not just that of the front-line security forces.

- Urban planners and the like are responsible for including basic security features in their designs, be it for shopping malls or airports. Sadly, in places like South Florida, U.S., security considerations seem to be the last thing on their mind; who's going to attack a beautifully designed airport anyway... Next you will be saying terrorists will hijack planes and fly them into buildings...!
- Those responsible for security planning need to realistically understand the threats they could be facing and be allowed to put in place workable preventive measures and responses. I understand that a lot of times security management professionals (CPP) sadly have their recommendations for upgrading security procedures ignored by their senior management, etc., but they must persevere and make maximum use of the resources they have.
- Front-line security forces need the proper training, equipment, and workable procedures to do their jobs properly. Untrained and badly managed guards or police are not only putting themselves at risk but also those they are meant to be protecting.
- The general public needs to know the basics on how to identify and report suspicious activity and what to do if

caught up in a terrorist attack. At a family level, there should be plans in place for what to do if there is a terrorist incident at a shopping mall or public gathering, etc. Some simple knowledge and 5 minutes discussing plans and preparations can save lives.

Many thanks to former 1 WFR members Lewis Weaver (Moose) and Matt Trott for helping with details of the incidents in Northern Ireland.

We hope the information in this document has been of use to you. Please remember this is basic information, if you have any questions then please feel free to contact us.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Orlando Wilson

Risks Incorporated

International Defense Strategies LLC

E-mail: contact@risks-incorporated.com

Risks Incorporated: <http://www.risks-incorporated.com>

Personal Blog: <http://www.cornishprivateer.com>

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