

Suicide/Homicide Bombings: Review of Middle-Eastern Tactics & Techniques

April, 2003

**Presented by C. L.
Staten, CEO & Sr.
National Security
Analyst**

**Emergency Response
& Research Institute**

Chicago, IL



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- **In the 21st Century our hypothesis would suggest that U.S. and allied forces are facing a new and different paradigm where guerilla warfare, civil disobedience, psychological operations,, and terrorism are all being going to be used by a weaker opposition force against a stronger (conventional) foe.**

"Even a country as large and sophisticated as the United States could suffer greatly at the hands of an educated, equipped, and committed group of fewer than 50 people [terrorists]. At the present time, such an attack could realistically be expected to cause an effect vastly disproportionate to the resources expended to undertake it."

Source: Asymmetric Warfare, the Evolution and Devolution of Terrorism; The Coming Challenge For Emergency and National Security Forces

**By: Clark L. Staten, Executive Director & Sr. Analyst
Emergency Response & Research Institute
04/27/98**



General Assessment of Threat

- The present ERRI assessment would respectfully suggest that the near term threat to Americans and our country's security may bring a confusing mix of "stateless actors," separatist and fringe "independence movements," insurgency operations, terrorist attacks, the use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), Information Warfare (IW), and other unconventional threats. The nature of our defense thinking, training, weapons, equipment, intelligence operations, and national emergency response systems must be redefined and redirected in order to meet these threats that are concurrently both devolving and evolving.



Knowledge of Your
Enemy is Power...
and Can Save Lives

The Four Generations of Warfare (4GW)

(Part 1 – 1st and 2nd)

- First generation warfare was reflective of tactics and technology in the time of the smoothbore musket and Napoleon. The tactics were of line, column, and mass armies.
- Second generation warfare, as defined by the authors and condensed here, was in response to the technological improvements in firepower and communications, particularly the railroad. It was based on fire and movement, but the essence was still attrition warfare, i.e., heavy applications of firepower.

The Four Generations of Warfare (4GW)

(Part 2 – 3rd and 4th)

- Third generation warfare was also seen as a response to the increasing firepower on the battlefield. The difference, however, was the emphasis on maneuver and non-linear warfare. The German Blitzkrieg and later Russian operations in World War II were seen as breakthrough strategies in 3rd Generation warfare.
- Fourth Generation Warfare. It is based on belief that future war would be characterized by: very small independent action forces (SIAF) or cells acting on mission-type orders; a decreased dependence on traditional logistics support; more emphasis on maneuver; and psychological goals rather than physical ones.

The authors have identified three basic constructs of 4GW:

- (1) the loss of the nation state's monopoly on war,
- (2) a return to a world of cultures and states in conflict, and
- (3) internal segmentation/division along ethnic, religious, and special interests lines within our own society.

In a set of chilling predictions, the authors suggest that in fourth generation warfare:

- (1) There will be a shift in focus from the enemy's front to his rear;
- (2) The practitioners of 4GW would seek to use the enemy's strength against him;
- (3) They would use democracy's openness against itself; and finally,
- (4) The 4GW force would not need a lot of money or logistics to wage fourth generation warfare.

Identification of Bombers

- **Some signs in spotting a bomber are:**
 - **Potential Wearing unseasonably warm attire.**
 - **Protruding bulges seen in clothing.**
 - **Sweating, mumbling or fidgeting.**
 - **Avoiding police/military forces.**
 - **Trying to fit into crowds.**
- **Disguises: As friendly forces have become more vigilant in recent months, homicide/suicide bombers have employed new tactics to avoid detection, such as dyeing their hair to look more European, and by dressing in civilian clothes or similar appearing army uniforms. Women have also been used as bombers.**
- **Car bombs indicators:**
 - **suspicious or mismatched license plates,**
 - **vehicles parked in unusual locations**
 - **the car is weighed down at the back, because of explosives in the trunk.**

Citizens who suspect a homicide attacker or car bomb are urged to stay calm, inform police immediately and keep the suspect in sight but at a safe distance.

Identification/Background of Homicide/Suicide Bombers II

- The suicide bomber of the Middle East has risen to a very revered status among supporters of Palestinian liberation and other Islamic causes. Such bombers are driven by a number of causes, including religious fanaticism where a successful bombing can be seen as way to martyrdom and a desirable afterlife.
- The Bush Administration has coined the term “Homicide Bomber” to describe what formerly was called a “suicide bomber” in the media. This is appropriate in that the bomber’s goal is to kill and injure as many people as possible through the detonation of the explosives concealed on their person. Also, past scenarios have used vehicles and boats to transport larger caches of explosives.

Identification of Bombers III

- Middle East experience has shown:
 - Men, women and older children have been homicide bombers.
 - Targets have included buses, restaurants, public markets, police or military checkpoints, and other public places where people congregate and socialize. Generally, there is no regard for “innocent victims” such as children; however, there has been effort shown to particularly target government representatives such as police and the military.
 - Devices used in the Middle East have been described as an explosive “belt,” usually a cloth vest-type garment with pockets to hold the explosives. A moderate amount of clothing can conceal the transport of a lethal amount of explosives without raising suspicion. However, do not automatically assume this would be the manner for the next attack.
 - A few Middle East homicide bombers have been killed by police/military responders, some have been wrestled into submission by bus drivers, but most use the element of surprise where the detonation is the first indication of their presence.

Identification of Bombers IV



West Bank Protestors with
Pictures of Saddam

- ERRI analysts believe that many of the current terrorist operators in Iraq are actually "foreign nationals" from the West Bank, Yemen, Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other countries (to include "Afghan Arabs" that were previously identified)....

Profile of Suicide Bomber - V

- There is no real profile of current terror bombers:
 - Most are 18-23, male, single, and “loners”

BUT:

 - Many of the Mid-East suicide groups are motivated by religion, religious/ethnic nationalism, or ethnic nationalism.
 - Can be any race, color, sex
 - Can be older, married people
 - Bombers often alter their appearance to “blend in” and appear similar to others in the target surrounding
 - Terrorist groups will employ bombers and disguises most likely to defeat security measures...or profiling
- The Mid-East experience suggests that a suicide terrorist is almost always the last link in a long organizational chain that involves numerous actors. Once the decision to launch a suicide attack has been made, its implementation requires at least six separate operations: target selection, intelligence gathering, recruitment, physical and “spiritual” training, preparation of explosives, and transportation of the suicide bombers to the target area. Such a mission often involves dozens of terrorists and accomplices who have no intention of committing suicide, but without whom no suicide operation could take place. Breaking this organizational structure by infiltration can help defeat the bomber before he/she detonates the device.

Perspective: Why Does it Continue? Do Suicide/Homicide Bombings Work?

This author believes that two events have prompted additional motivation for suicide/homicide bombers by those opposed to the U.S.A. and allied nations:

** Suicide bombing the US Marine Corps barracks and the headquarters of the French paratroopers in Lebanon on October 23, 1983

** Sunday, October 3, 1993 "Humanitarian" operation in Mogadishu, and subsequent firefight in Somalia that left 18 American soldiers dead and many more wounded.

As Usama Bin Laden has pointed out several times in his fatwas and other writing and speeches, on both of the above occasions...the tactic was successful and caused the United States to abandon their foreign policy objective and withdraw from a conflict. ERRI analysis suggests that Bin Laden and others of his ilk believe that given sufficient casualties, the U.S. will undoubtedly retreat. We must convince them, by decisive action, that this premise is NOT true.

Al-Qaeda Experience: Suicide Bombers

- **SUICIDE BOMBING**

- An individual wearing or carrying an explosive device into a crowded area or other key target. The attack is designed to inflict as many casualties as possible. Suicide bombers may also take part in car/truck bombings as in the 1998 East Africa Embassy Bombings.

- **Al-Qaeda Experience:**

- - Extensive experience in suicide operations at a sophistication level beyond what is normally seen in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; has not made as extensive use, however, of the type of low-level suicide bombings regularly seen in Israel
- - Listed as one of the missions of the Military Organization: "Blasting and destroying the places of amusement, immorality and sin; not a vital target. Blasting and destroying the embassies and attacking vital economic centers. Blasting and destroying bridges leading into and out of the cities."

- **Other Groups:**

- - Extensively used by Islamic extremist groups and others
- - Used by: al-Asqa Martyrs' Brigade, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)

- **Execution:**

- - May be executed in conjunction with other similar/different simultaneous/near simultaneous attacks or independently targeted operations

- **Potential Targets :**

- Airports, Buses and Stations, Civilian Airliners, Cruise Ships, Cultural Icons, Financial Institutions, Government Offices, High-Profile Corporations, Shopping Malls/High Density Locations, Large Events/Gatherings, Military Bases, Rail Targets (Subways and Railroad Lines/Stations)

Recent Tactics of Suicide/Homicide Bombers - I

- A Palestinian suicide bomber pulled a car packed with explosives alongside a moving bus and blew it up on Wed. 05 June, 2002, in a huge fireball that killed 17 passengers – 13 of them Israeli soldiers. The military warned that Palestinians were shifting tactics to kill more Israelis each time they strike. The Islamic Jihad group claimed responsibility for the bombing. U.S. and coalition forces can expect similar attacks on convoys.
- It is clear that the war in Chechnya is not over yet. The Russian army may have suspended its operation, but the Chechens definitely haven't. On the contrary, they have deployed a devastating new weapon in the shape of Kamikaze truck drivers, who go out at night to crash their deadly load into the dormitories of Russian soldiers or police. These suicide bombers are being blamed for the deaths of at least 37 crack police in a series of truck-bomb explosions.



Iranian Backpack
Suicide Bomb

Recent Specific Tactics of Suicide/Homicide Bombers - II

- On a number of occasions, both bicycles and pack animals have been used as weapons platforms. Caution is urged about time-delay or command detonated Improvised devices, hidden in apparently innocuous ways



Suicide Bicycle Bomb

Main Targets...

- On of the paramount tasks in the face of this asymmetric or 4th Generational warfare is that of “force protection,” as U.S. and allied troops and emergency services personnel can be expected to be primary targets of insurgents...



Additional Hazards...

- Beware of Secondary Devices:

These devices, which detonate after the initial explosion, target blast survivors and/or other individuals who converge on the scene, and, more often than not are responding military or public safety personnel. This is a tactic that has been used numerous times in recent history, and has been accomplished with secondary suicide/homicide bombers...as well as time delay and command detonated explosives. Thrown grenades, RPG's, and auto-weapons have also been used in this secondary role. Such a possibility points to an important need for site security and ensuring a safe perimeter.



Interdiction Techniques and Considerations for Military/Law Enforcement Personnel - I

- **“Close and negotiate” tactics should not be attempted. The desire of the suspect is not suicide; it is homicide. They will attempt to detonate their device if they believe they have been discovered. Switches have been on the chest area or held in the hands. Other Middle East terrorist devices have made use of cell phones for command detonation. Do not discount the fact that the bomb may have a “fail safe” cell phone initiator so an observer could detonate the explosives should the bomber be incapacitated. The standard police tactic of closing distance on a “suicidal” suspect in order to try to reason with them only increases the probability the “good guys” will become homicide victim(s). The homicide bomber is not despondent. They may be religiously motivated to the point of fanaticism so attempting rational negotiations may be futile.**

Interdiction Techniques and Considerations for Military/Law Enforcement Personnel - II

- **If timely verification can be completed and a determination can be made that the suspect is indeed a "homicide bomber," then this would appear to be a deadly force situation. Deadly force decisions must be based on local policies, procedures and rules of engagement, and must meet legal requirements. Note that there is considerable concern that a "center of mass shot" might set off an explosive charge if that is where the payload is being carried by the suspect. Local tactics and training should take this and potentially changing "rules of engagement" into account.**

Interdiction Techniques and Considerations for Military/Law Enforcement Personnel - III

- **IF/WHEN the bomber is incapacitated, either through direct police action or explosives detonation, no attempt should be made to approach and render aid to the suspect. Secondary devices should be expected such as a second suicide bomber, accomplices with an additional device, or pre-set vehicle bombs staged along main emergency routes to the scene. It should be noted that most explosive devices also contain fragmentation such as nails, nuts and bolts to maximize the deadly effects of the blast and kill or injure as many people as possible. Area evacuation should be completed, a crime scene cordon set up, and a bomb squad should be called to approach and evaluate the suspect and the scene for actual presence of explosives.**

Interdiction Techniques and Considerations for Military/Law Enforcement Personnel - IV

- If the suspect is neutralized and there is no explosion, do not immediately move to render aid. **Retreat to a point of observation a minimum of 900' from the suspect, and call for the bomb squad. The suspect may be alive and could detonate the explosives upon your approach either deliberately or unconsciously. Many of the bombers are unaware they have been accompanied by an individual with the capability of remotely detonating the device. Keep this in mind before any approach is conducted. Be prepared to fire again if the suspect attempts to flee or is otherwise moving. Even if the suspect appears dead, do not approach as the explosives could have anti-disturbance devices, a timer, or other mechanisms meant to cause a detonation. A bomb squad or EOD personnel should make the initial approach to a downed suspect using robotics or bomb suits...even if their arrival may be delayed.**

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