

Context Is Everything

There's an article that's been making the rounds, *Free Speech Zone*, written by James Bovard for *American Conservative*. While this article deals with some absolutely essential and real issues relating to the continued and methodical erosion of our civil liberties and most basic freedoms, and is overall quite well-written and attributed - the following quote is more than a little misleading, and intentionally so:

In a May 2003 terrorist advisory, the Homeland Security Department warned local law enforcement agencies to keep an eye on anyone who "expressed dislike of attitudes and decisions of the U.S. government." If police vigorously followed this advice, millions of Americans could be added to the official lists of "suspected terrorists."

Below is an excerpt from *Suicide/Homicide Attacker Behaviors and Suggested Countermeasures*, issued by the Interagency Intelligence Committee on Terrorism to local law enforcement agencies around the US, reprinted here to provide context for that phrase *expressed dislike of attitudes and decisions of the U.S. government*. Without context, words have no meaning, and are ripe then for misuse and abuse by those who intentionally usurp meaning for their own agendas.

Read the phrase in its original context, below, so that you can judge for yourself the legitimacy of his use of that quote.

I have been unable to locate the full text of this document, but this excerpt was taken from the St. Clair County Fire Chiefs Association (IL) website, where they have a PDF file, *TerroristIndicators.pdf* which draws from several sources including the one referred to in the aforementioned now-ubiquitous article. All text which follows was extracted directly from the pdf file and reformatted in HTML - no changes were made by me except to add **emphasis** to the salient passages.

Surveillance, Targeting, and Attack Indicators and Countermeasures

C. Attack ⁴

Pre-Attack Indicative Behaviors:

- Making threats directly to the target or indirectly to third parties.
- "Leakage" by attacker (behavioral signs of intent to attack), including:
 - vague threats (to manage own emotions of anger, anxiety, or fear);
 - bragging to third parties of intent to attack;

- exaggerated, larger-than-life articulated fantasies of success or outcome of bombing (e.g., number of victims, joining other martyrs that have preceded him);
- evasive when questioned concerning past history and future plans, or such information is not realistic or verifiable.
- Casing of properties/buildings.

Pre-Attack Countermeasures:

- Proactively pursue through investigation and questioning any individual reported to be a threat to bomb or carry out a terrorist act and thereby arouse suspicions in others.
- Interview collaterals (family, friends, employers, neighbors and co- religionists) who observe changes in the individual's behavior (withdrawal from previous social contacts; radicalization of beliefs; travel to countries know to be supportive of terrorist activities; associations with other suspected terrorists; new and unidentified sources of income; increase in religiousness).
- Gather intelligence in communities containing or supporting such activity.
- Develop and acquire assets among trusted community resources (local media, religious leaders, community activists, and professionals).

Attack Preparation: Indicative Behavior

- No direct threats to the target, but continues to communicate threat to trusted third parties.
- "Leakage" may continue to third parties, but may become more constricted on advice of higher-ups
- "Boundary probing" with physical approaches to measure restrictions access, if any (private security, physical boundaries, local law enforcement presence).
- Surveillance of target (victims and location); familiarization with area, decision making concerning dress and appearance, and select time and day maximize casualties; counter-surveillance of security personnel barriers already in place.
- Acquisition of materials for the bomb, including the explosive proper, the detonation device, and the container. The latter may be selected on the basis of commonly seen packages or items in the target area (backpacks, grocery bags, retail bags) derived from surveillance.
- May prepare a suicide note or video for dissemination after the bombing
- May give possessions away and get other worldly affairs in order.
- Emotions are likely to be more volatile (quickly changing; may be irritable, sad, easily upset).

- May indulge in "worldly sins" that directly violate religious beliefs (visiting bars, strip clubs, gambling) in order to blend in with victims and avoid apprehension.
- Will pay for items in cash.
- Daily behaviors become consistent with no future (e.g., forgetting to take change, purchasing one-way tickets).
- Handler's involvement increases to help suicide bomber stay focused and manage anxiety; chief communication will be through e-mail, cell phone, or direct contact.
- **May show arrogance and hatred toward Americans through bragging, expressed dislike of attitudes and decisions of US government, superiority of religious beliefs, and difficulty tolerating proximity to those hates (e.g., waiting in a grocery store line becomes intolerable).**
- Will engage in "private rituals" within hours of the bombing that have religious and symbolic meaning, such as bathing, fasting, shaving of body hair, perfuming, and increased praying. These acts reinforce the meaning of his suicide bombing, steal him to the task, and keep him focused on the larger cause.

Attack Preparation Countermeasures

- Actively interview suspects and close contacts reported to be engaging in preparation to attack.
- Detain and/or arrest, if probable cause to do so exists, to prevent further preparation and attack.
- Conduct "warehouse surveys" of retail outlets for bomb making materials to identify the suspect's acquisition behavior and gather evidence (e.g., computer stores, Radio Shack or other electronic instrument stores, and chemical ingredient or fertilizer outlets).
- Conduct counter-surveillance of the identified target.
- Harden the identified target to reduce or impede access by a suicide bomber or other suicide terrorists.
- Monitor e-mail or cell phone usage of the suspect bomber.
- Continue surveillance of the suspect's behavior.

Attack Initiation: Indicative Behaviors:

- Clothing is out of sync with the weather, suspect's social position (he appears well-groomed but is wearing sloppy clothing), or location (wearing a coat inside a building).
- Clothing is loose.
- Suspect may be carrying heavy luggage, bag, or wearing a backpack.

- Suspect sometimes keeps his hands in his pockets.
- Suspect repeatedly pats his upper body with his hands, as if double-checking whether he forgot something.
- Pale face from recent shaving of beard.
- No obvious emotion seen on the face.
- Eyes appear to be focused and vigilant. Does not respond to authoritative voice commands or direct salutation from a distance.
- May appear to be "in a trance."
- Suspect walks deliberately but is not running.
- Just prior to detonation, suspect will hold his hands above his head and shout a phrase; or suspect will place his hands and head close to the bomb to obliterate post-mortem identification.

Attack Initiation Countermeasures:

- Call or shout a voice command from a distance to break the suspect's concentration.
- Make physical contact with the suspect to distract his attention and physically impede his forward movement.
- Insure physical control before questioning, especially of hands and arms.
- Insure safety of civilian targets in immediate area.

Post Offense Behavior by Attacker's Handlers or Associates: Indicative Behaviors:

- Synchronized serial attacks implemented in stages, in close physical or temporal proximity to increase casualties of first responders, including law enforcement and medical personnel.
- If there is a second attack, it is likely to occur within 20 minutes and be carried out along evacuation route of casualties or near first targeted area.
- Surveillance of attack site to study first responders' behavior and plan for future attacks.

Post Offense Countermeasures:

- Make counter-surveillance team a part of the first response.
- Include bomb disposal experts in first response to search for additional explosives.

1. Source: Chief Warrant Officer 3 Del Stewart, U.S. Army Intelligence Center
2. Source: Chief Warrant Officer 3 Del Stewart, U.S. Army Intelligence Center; FBI Intelligence Bulletin 53, February 26, 2003, "Possible Indicators of al-Qaeda Surveillance."
3. This section extracted from "Use of Surveillance by Terrorist Groups," by the CONUS Analysis Section, Pol Mil/Force Protection Branch, Joint Forces Intelligence Command
4. **This section extracted from "Suicide/Homicide Attacker Behaviors and Suggested Countermeasures," by FBI Behavioral Analysis Program & Central Intelligence Agency analysts, and issued by the Interagency Intelligence Committee on Terrorism.**