

SRMG HOT TOPIC: TERRORISM

DEFINITIONS OF TERRORISM

- The systematic use of terror especially as a means of coercion. (*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*)
- The calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological. (U.S. Department of Defense [DOD])
- The unlawful use of force or 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. (Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI])

TYPES OF TERRORISM

- **Physical Terrorism.** Physical destruction of property or the taking of human lives or both (e.g., the September 11 attack).
- **Psychological Terrorism.** Instillation of fear or terror in people as a way of taking away the basic rights of everyday life (e.g., a terrorist threat that prevents people from traveling, being in public places, or opening their mail).
- **Technological Terrorism.** Use of information technology and the Internet to formulate plans, recruit members, communicate between cells and members, raise funds, and spread propaganda.
- **Cyber Terrorism.** Use of cyber tools to shut down, degrade, or deny access to critical national infrastructures (such as energy, transportation, and communication) or government services or both in order to coerce or intimidate a government or civilian population. Cyber terrorism is an emerging threat that we must develop prevention, deterrence, and response capabilities to combat.
- **Chemical or Biological Terrorism (Bioterrorism).** Use of deadly chemicals or biological agents to produce illness or death in people or contaminate resources. The DOD estimates that as many as twenty-six countries may possess biological or chemical agents. Additionally, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reports that approximately ten countries are currently conducting research on chemical and biological agents for weaponization. The U.S. Biological Weapons Anti-Terrorism Act of 1989 created a general prohibition against the development, production, stockpiling, transfer, acquisition, or possession of biological weapons that is punishable by imprisonment or civil penalties or both. For more information, see <http://www.sunshine-project.org/bwintro/uscode.html>.

TERRORISM IN THE UNITED STATES

In the United States, the most recent significant terrorist attacks (prior to September 11, 2001) were bombings.

The 1993 bombing in the parking garage of the World Trade Center in New York City (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Trade_Center_bombing) resulted in thousands of injuries and five deaths. In the 1995 bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City, 168 people were killed.

Terrorist attacks take various forms depending on the terrorists' political motives and the technological resources available to them. They may involve the use of conventional weapons, explosive devices, and chemical and biological agents. Although the U.S. government constantly takes measures to ensure public safety, there are a number of reasonable precautions that individuals and businesses can take to provide some degree of individual protection and help detect suspected terrorists.

WAYS TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND SAFETY TIPS TO FOLLOW IN THE EVENT OF A TERRORIST ATTACK

Ways to Protect Yourself

- Take the time to learn more about the different types of terrorism and the terrorists' weapons (e.g., kidnapping, hijacking, shooting, and explosives).
- Find out what can happen, and learn how to react in the event of an attack (http://www.ready.gov/get_informed.html).
- Stay informed about the current terrorist attack threat level in the United States, and learn how the Homeland Security Advisory System works by visiting the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Web site (<http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?theme=29>).
- Be aware when you are out in public. Terrorists choose targets with easy public access where they cannot be readily spotted and that provide a quick escape route after an attack. Such targets include airports; large buildings; resorts; and major events like concerts, holiday celebrations, and sports games.
- Be careful when traveling. Do not accept packages from people you do not know, and do not leave your luggage unattended.

Safety Tips

- Make note of emergency evacuation plans in buildings, subways, at work, at school, and in other public areas.
- Look for objects near you that could move, fall, or cause an explosion.
- Learn how to respond in an emergency situation. Your first aid skills could save a life (<http://www.redcross.org/portal/site/en/menuitem.86f46a12f382290517a8f210b80f78a0/?vqnextoid=aea70c45f663b110VqnVCM10000089f0870aRCRD>).
- Prepare for the unexpected (<http://www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/pdf/Preparedness/AreYouReady/Terrorism.pdf>).

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT POSSIBLE TERRORIST ACTIVITY

Go to <http://www.ncpc.org/cms/cms-upload/ncpc/files/recterror.pdf> to learn how to recognize the signs of possible terrorist activity.

If you believe you have information that could be helpful to authorities or you notice signs of possible terrorist activity, do one of the following:

- Call 911 or your local police department or both.
- Contact your local FBI office.

(To find your local FBI office, go to <http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm>. To submit information to the FBI online, go to <https://tips.fbi.gov/>.)

INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

According to the U.S. Department of State (the State Department), international terrorism is defined as "terrorism conducted with the support of a foreign government or organization and/or directed against foreign nationals, institutions, or governments."

To find out more about international terrorism, terrorist organizations, terrorist attacks, and more, go to <http://www.ict.org.il/>.

Ways to Protect Yourself Overseas

- Review the helpful travel hints on the State Department's Web site (<http://www.state.gov/travel/>).
- Always contact the local U.S. embassy when you are visiting a foreign country. There are U.S. embassies in more than 160 capital cities around the world. Each embassy has a consular section that provides services to U.S. citizens. For specific country information, go to http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html.
- Before traveling to another country, review the current travel warnings issued by the State Department (http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html) and the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC; <http://www.osac.gov/>).
- Many countries are considered dangerous to U.S. citizens. Travel to these countries is not recommended. For a list of these countries, go to http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html.
- For more specific information on preparing for domestic and international travel, go to http://www.firstgov.gov/Topics/Usqresponse/Travel_Safely.shtml.

ADDITIONAL LINKS

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)—<http://www.fema.gov>
- Center for National Security Studies (CNSS)—<http://www.cnss.org/>
- The Counterterrorism Blog—<http://counterterrorismblog.org/>
- National Terror Alert—<http://www.nationalterroralert.com/>