

Introduction

Terrorism has been defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation as “the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment of it in furtherance of political or social objectives.” More importantly, it is necessary to understand that the objective of terrorism is not destruction or death – it is the psychological impact to the targeted population and world opinion. Disruption to public services, economies, and social patterns or a feeling of insecurity is the desired goal.

High Probability Low Impact	High Probability Moderate Impact	High Probability High Impact
Moderate Probability Low Impact	Moderate Probability Moderate Impact	Moderate Probability High Impact
Low Probability Low Impact	Low Probability Moderate Impact	Low Probability High Impact

Terrorism Probability vs. Terrorism Impacts

Hazard Identification

Terrorism can be categorized as either domestic or international. Domestic terrorism incidents are acts conceived of and carried out by U.S. citizens within the U.S. borders. Examples of domestic terrorism include environmental groups like the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), groups opposing abortion, animal rights groups opposing the fur trade, or the Oklahoma City bombing of the Murrah Building.¹ Each year King County Police receives calls related to hundreds of bomb threats. International terrorism originates from groups based outside the U.S.A. and may be perpetrated against U.S. interests abroad or within the territorial boundaries of the U.S.A. Examples would be Al Quada and sympathizer groups.

Terrorist targets tend to be located in urban areas. Seats of government, stadiums and public meeting places are high-value targets that produce substantial news coverage. Contrary to this, there is some evidence that terrorist organizations prefer rural safe houses from which to operate. The rural environment offers an environment that is more difficult to observe.

On a worldwide basis, explosive and small arms remain the primary method of aggression. Domestically, this theme was evident in the shoe bomber incident (Richard Reid),² Washington, D.C. shootings,³ Twin Trade Towers, University of

Washington School of Horticulture bombing, Atlanta Olympics bombing,⁴ and Atlanta abortion clinic bombing. Officials are increasingly concerned about the use of weapons of mass destruction on U.S. soil. Concern for this possibility began to grow with the disintegration of the Soviet Union. At that time the Soviet military acknowledged it could not account for many “suitcase” or portable nuclear devices.

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) can be categorized as belonging to one or more of the following groups: chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or explosive. Incendiary devices and cyber terrorism can also be added to this list. Title 18, U.S.C. 2332a, includes the accepted definition for weapons of mass destruction in the United States:

“(1) any destructive device as defined in section 921 of this title [which reads] any explosive, incendiary, or bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than one quarter ounce, mine or device similar to the above; (2) poison gas; (3) any weapon involving a disease organism; or (4) any weapon that is designed to release radiation or radioactivity at a level dangerous to human life.”

The concept of using chemical weapons is based on the field of toxicology. As such, chemical weapons are comprised of a fairly large, growing and creative list of materials that can kill humans or pollute the environment. While listed as a weapon of mass destruction, typical chemical weapons do not destroy property – rather, they deny the use of the area of distribution or scatter through persistence of a difficult to clean up chemical. In this way, chemical, radiological and biological terrorist weapons are similar. Military chemical weapons are designed to be used in battlefield conditions against combatants. Their persistence or impact is of short duration (hours or days) to allow occupation of some strategic area by friendly forces.

In many ways the common components used to make chemical weapons are similar to those used for industrial, commercial and agricultural purposes, although with a destructive intent and outcome involved. Chemical weapons began as industrial materials with military applications. They have been used in organized military programs since the Germans used chlorine and arsine in World War I. The list expanded to the use of nerve agents like sarin and tabin when it was realized that insecticides could effectively be used against human targets.

Radiological materials are very similar to chemical materials. They usually do not kill humans outright. Exposure to such a dose would require very large amounts of radioactive material at fairly close range. While the time required for a material to decay and render itself inert varies widely, many materials can

persist in the environment for years to centuries at levels that can impact humans and the environment.

The usefulness of radioactive materials to the terrorist is derived from long-term exposures to moderate amounts of radiation and the difficulty in cleanup of the impacted area. Like chemical and biological agents, radioactive materials can not be observed by a civilian. For this reason they instill a significant psychological impact to the public.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation defines biological agents as micro organisms or their toxins. The U.S. Code Title 18, Section 178 also provides a broad definition to biological agents. This definition would include viruses, bacteria, spores, and toxic materials given off by these organisms. Commonly, these include the plague, anthrax, smallpox, and other disease organisms.

Natural materials with toxicity to humans are also being used for terrorist activities. Ricin, a toxin derived from Castor beans, has been used as a direct contact poison for assassinations. Another known natural poison is curare. Used for hundreds of years by South American tribes, this material (in smaller doses) has taken a beneficial roll in medicine. The medical profession has a fairly substantial list of these natural occurring materials.

Explosives have been defined by a variety of sources ranging from the fire service to the United States Code. Commonly, these definitions focus on chemical reactions that produce a shock wave and heat. This definition allows the inclusion of nuclear fission devices. These and incendiary devices are truly weapons of mass destruction, their purpose being to cause damage to property as well as injury to people. Definitions of explosives include black powder, pellet powder, initiating explosives, detonators, safety fuses, squibs, detonating cord, igniter cord, and igniters. Incendiary devices include chemicals that may accelerate or initiate fire.

Any individual or combination of the WMD classes listed can be used as booby traps, mines and bombs and can be directly or remotely detonated or initiated.

Increasingly, experts are putting efforts into countermeasures related to cyber terrorism. The global economy's reliance on transactions and communications presents an inviting target to terrorists that can operate in almost any corner of the globe. Terrorists are also likely to use cyber attacks as a force multiplier in a physical incident to impede first responders, spread misinformation, and promote panic in the general populations.

Presidential Decision Directive #39 designates the Federal Bureau of Investigation as the lead agency responsible for terrorism investigations within the borders of the United States and its territories. This lead designation has

required a new partnership and increased cooperation between local law enforcement, federal officials and hazardous materials teams in Washington State.

History of Events and Hazard Impacts

The U.S. population has largely been spared the impacts of international terrorism until recently. The devastation which occurred at the World Trade Center in New York and the Alfred Murray building in Oklahoma City illustrates the need to plan for potential threats within our own communities. Domestically, the distribution of anthrax spores using the United States Postal System as a delivery mechanism caused concern nationwide for several weeks. The bomb detonated at the Atlanta Olympics in (1996) resulted in an investigation/manhunt that lasted years. The Richard Reid (a.k.a. the Shoe Bomber) disrupted air travel and changed security measures in airports; he was sentenced to life in prison.

Washington State and King County locations have witnessed multiple examples of terrorist activity over the last decade. One East Coast incident involved a Tacoma gun shop connection. See the table below for a list of events over the past decade:

Table 5-12: Recent Washington Terrorism-related Events					
Type Event	Date	Group	City/ Location	No. of Incidents	Damage or Injuries
Explosive	1993	Skinheads ⁶	Tacoma	2	Figures not available
Chemical-Explosive	1995	Unknown ⁷	Burien District Court	1	No damage reported
Explosive	Dec 14, 1999	Ahmed Ressam ⁸	Port Angeles	1	none
Incendiary	May 2001	ALF	University of Washington	2	\$5 M
Biological White Powder	Jan 2000 to Dec 2002	Miscellaneous individuals ⁹	Seattle, Federal Way, Tukwila, Port of Seattle, other cities	208	Overtime and service disruption
Fire Arms	Oct 2002	John Allen Muhammad & John Lee Malvo ³	Washington, DC & Tacoma	13	10 killed, 3 wounded

Past Mitigation Efforts

While some legislation and operational countermeasures have existed for some time, the events of September 11, 2001 have accelerated terrorism mitigation efforts. Broadly, grants have been awarded to local first responders since 1998

for the purchase of important response equipment; national and local exercises of plans a procedures conducted; powers given or broadened for law enforcement regarding surveillance; and the consolidation of several agencies into the U.S. Department of Homeland Security have been completed. Capabilities related to bioterrorism have received increasing attention.

Equipment grants for decontamination, detection, and protective gear for first responders have been available to local first responders since 1998. These grants and supplemental grants have provided millions of dollars in increased capabilities. As these capabilities have improved, the definition of first responder has been broadened from fire and police to now include hospital personnel and facilities, public works and emergency medical responders.

In 2000, the U.S. Department of Justice and Office of Domestic Preparedness began a national exercise program to integrate federal, state, and local terrorism response capabilities and elected official preparedness for such events. The TOPOFF (top officials) series began with an exercise involving Portsmouth, New Hampshire and Denver, Colorado. In 2002, this exercise opportunity presented itself to Seattle, King County, and Washington State as well as Chicago, Illinois. Cities and counties in Washington State continue to pursue opportunities to improve response capabilities by conducting additional local exercises and training. It is worth noting that TOPOFF 2 included a multi-jurisdiction cyber exercise involving King County, the City of Seattle, and Washington state business leaders and senior technologists. This forum provided an excellent learning opportunity and helped underscore how dependent business operations are on technology and some of the key vulnerabilities jurisdictions typically face with their technology infrastructure and cyber incident response capabilities.

Beginning in 2002, grants became available from several federal agencies for local jurisdictions to initiate and continue planning, training, equipment purchase, and exercise efforts. Federal funding agencies include Department of Justice, Office of Domestic Preparedness, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Transportation Security Administration, Federal Transit Administration and others.

An important step in the efforts to counter terrorism in the U.S. was made with the issue of Presidential Decision Directive #39¹⁰ on June 21, 1995. This directive identified the FBI as the lead agency for terrorism investigation. Subsequent to the events of September 11th, 2001 the U.S. Congress consolidated elements of the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Immigration, and other agencies into the Department of Homeland Security. The Aviation and Transportation Security Act was passed by Congress on November 19, 2001 giving responsibility for items like airport security to the Transportation Safety Administration.

The USA PATRIOT Act ^{11,12} contains provisions appreciably expanding government investigative authority, especially with respect to the Internet. The USA PATRIOT Act introduced sweeping changes to U.S. law, including amendments to:

- Wiretap Statute
- Electronic Communications Privacy Act
- Computer Fraud and Abuse Act
- Family Education Rights and Privacy Act
- Pen Register and Trap and Trace Statute
- Money Laundering Control Act
- Bank Secrecy Act
- Right to Financial Privacy Act
- Fair Credit Reporting Act

Other important federal acts and directives include:

- Homeland Security Presidential Directives 1-5
 1. Organization and Operation of the Homeland Security Council
 2. Combating Terrorism Through Immigration Policies
 3. Homeland Security Advisory System
 4. National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction
 5. Management of Domestic Incidents (NIMS-National Incident Management System)
- Presidential Directive #62, Protection against Unconventional Threats to Homeland and Americans Overseas.
- Title 18, USC Section 2332a Weapons of Mass Destruction
- Title 18, USC, Sections 175-178, Biological Weapons Anti-terrorism Act
- H.R. 5005, the Homeland Security Act of 2002

Federal, State, and local cooperation continues to improve relationships, capabilities and innovative methods to mitigate terrorism in the U.S. and impacts to its interests.

Some details of grants, exercises, plans and procedures are not subject to Freedom of Information Act release due to their sensitive or national/domestic security protection.

Terrorism Endnotes:

- ¹ CNN News, "Oklahoma City Bombing" April 19th, 1995, www.cnn.com/us/okc/bombing.html
- ² BBC News, "[Shoebomber Jailed for Life](#)", January 30th, 2003
- ³ CNN.com, "Ballistics match rifle to sniper attacks", <http://www.cnn.com/2002/US/South/10/24/sniper.shootings/>
- ⁴ CNN.com, "[Atlanta Olympic Bombing Suspect Arrested](#)", May 31st, 2003
- ⁵ Presidential Decision Directive #39, June 21, 1995, <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd39.htm>
- ⁶ Washington State Emergency Management Hazard Vulnerability Analysis, 1996
- ⁷ King County Emergency Management, Duty Officer Log, May 1995
- ⁸ Sam Skolink & Paul Shukovsky, "[Ressam- Seattle no Target](#)", Seattle PI, May 31st, 2001
- ⁹ Washington State Joint Committee on Terrorism figures, 2003
- ¹⁰ Presidential Decision Directive #39, <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd39.htm>
- ¹¹ "Uniting and strengthening America by providing appropriate tools to intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001", aka the Patriot Act (HR 3162), <http://www.epic.org/privacy/terrorism/hr3162.html>
- ¹² Electronic Privacy Information Center, the US Patriot Act (Summary/Brief & Commentary), <http://www.epic.org/privacy/terrorism/usapatriot/>