



# Antiterrorism Historical Vignette

## 25 February 2007 Suicide Bomber

Economy and Administration College of Mustansiriya University, Baghdad

**Attack Summary:** On 25 February 2007, at 12:40 PM, in the Shiite Talibiya district of eastern Baghdad, Iraq, a female suicide bomber wearing an improvised explosive device (IED) packed with ball bearings attacked the Economy and Administration College of Mustansiriya University, killing 41 students, three security guards, and one professor, wounding 60 students, and damaging one university building and the main gate. The bomber detonated her explosives after being confronted by security guards in the main lobby of the university. The attack occurred as students were leaving morning classes and arriving for afternoon sessions. No group claimed responsibility. (Source: NCTC)

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**Key Lessons:** terrorists adapt their tactics to avoid strength, exploit weakness, and demonstrate their capability to attack at the time and place of their choosing

- Use of a female bomber demonstrates the **breadth of extremist tactics** employed to gain access to specific targets; recruitment, training and operational employment of female attackers also demonstrates willingness to go against cultural and religious norms to achieve tactical success; the bomber detonating her vest when approached by security guards demonstrates the terrorists goal to execute the mission despite intervention from security forces
- Specifics of the attack (female, suicide vest, ball bearings to increase lethality, willingness to inflict civilian casualties) reveal evolving **threat tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP)**
- Timing: the attack came days following the establishment of increased vehicle checkpoints to search for vehicle borne bombs and the day after Prime Minister al-Maliki announced optimism about improved security in Baghdad (**attack responds to changes in coalition security measures and political announcement on “optimism” about security**)
- **Target selection** of a University reflects an attempt to strike fear into the middle class
- Security force principles applied include **Detect, Assess and Warn** of imminent threats

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**Always Ready. Always Alert.**

*Because someone is depending on you.*

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