Soft Target Hardening: Protecting People from Attack

Dr. Jennifer L. Hesterman
Colonel, U.S. Air Force (retired)
Security is always seen as too much until the day it’s not enough.

~ William Webster, former FBI Director
Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland
- Home of Air Force One
- 20,000 Employees
- Schools, churches, daycare, restaurants, shopping, housing, 3 golf courses
What is a Soft Target?

A civilian-centric place
Not typically “fortified”
Vulnerable, unprotected, undefended
Privately owned
Possibly resource constrained
Security not a primary mission
Maybe co-located or near a hard target
Soft Target Security Truths

✓ Actions cause results.
✓ Inaction also causes results.
✓ “Not seen” does not mean “not there”.
✓ Goal: remove the enemy from the fight before it starts.
✓ Actions are not universally applicable, must be tailored.
✓ The plan is fluid; constantly assess/adjust based on changes in the environment.
✓ The “fog of war” means you don’t know everything about the threat, there are inescapable unknowables.
✓ You have no experience with the situation that might occur in your organization; nothing that happened in the past can prepare you.
✓ Copycat attacks will happen.
Overview

- Mitigation Model
- Psychology of Soft Targeting
- Soft Targeting Motivations
- Soft Targets Assessment
  - Schools
  - Churches
  - Hospitals
  - Malls
  - Sporting/Rec venues
- Hardening Tactics
- Fifteen Takeaways
Mitigation Model

**Target**
Place, person or venue we are trying to protect

**Threat**
Terrorist or criminal group/individuals with the ability to exploit vulnerabilities and attack the target

**Vulnerability**
Psychological, sociological or physical characteristics that can leave the asset unprotected or exploitable for attack

**Mitigation**
Activities that lower risk: threat education, vulnerability assessment, planning, physical hardening, testing security and response

**Risk**
Potential for damage by threat which detects vulnerabilities that expose the asset
Psychology of Soft Targeting

- 90% of casualties in conflicts now civilians
- We protect these targets, don’t strike them
- Perhaps bound by international law, Geneva Conventions, religious doctrine or rules of engagement in a coalition battle
- Threat met with disbelief, but…
  - What do we most fear?
  - How should we respond?
5 Emotional Traps

1. **Hopelessness** – There’s nothing we can do.

2. **Infallibility** – It will never happen here.

3. **Inescapability** – If it’s unavoidable, why even try to prevent.

4. **Invulnerability** – It can’t happen to me/us.

5. **Inevitability** – If it’s going to happen anyway, why prepare.
Soft Targeting Motivations

- Easier, cheaper, short planning cycle
- Increased likelihood of success
- Success = Credibility
- Recruiting value
- Proof of viability
- As a group’s last gasp
- Backed into a corner
- Test a new strategy, tactic or weapon
Soft Targeting Motivations

- Fundraising through kidnapping, hostage taking
- Quickly damage a market
- Delegitimize a government – can’t protect its people
- Get the government to the negotiation table
- Cause political instability during and election
- Attain global media coverage
- Target rich environment
- Psychological fear
School violence on the rise worldwide; mass shootings and stabbings
  o K-12 most vulnerable; Beslan school attack case study
  o College campuses under attack physically and through espionage and cyberattacks; culture an issue
  o Relationship between higher education and law enforcement not good (in U.S.)

Kidnapping of boys and girls for profit in Nigeria
Massacre at private, elite Army School in Peshawar
Attacks on schools by governments in civil war

Bottom line – schools are now seen as legitimate targets
Soft Target Assessment: Churches

- Church violence on the rise worldwide; mass shootings, stabbings, theft
  - Invite in all of society, especially those with problems
  - Mega-churches extremely vulnerable
  - Asymmetric undertone – every religion has its fringe actors

- Symbolic targets
- Attacks on churches by governments in civil war

Bottom line – churches are now seen as legitimate targets
Hospital violence on the rise worldwide; mass shootings, stabbings, theft of drugs, bombings
  - Open doors, invite in all of society, those in psychological pain
  - Increasing target of choice by terrorists

- Emergency room most vulnerable; multiple cases
- Loading docks vulnerable
- Theft and repurposing of ambulances by bad actors
- Attacks on hospitals by governments in civil war

Bottom line – hospitals are now seen as legitimate targets
Soft Target Assessment: Malls

- Nairobi Mall attack
- Multiple threats against shopping malls worldwide
  - People trapped in a confined space
  - No security checks at doors
  - Symbols of wealth and prosperity
  - Co-located operations may be the target: casino, alcohol, amusement areas
  - Open markets extremely vulnerable

- For profit mentality is a factor – want a pleasurable shopping experience, think security measures detract

Bottom line – malls are now seen as viable targets
Soft Target Assessment: Main Street Shopping/Dining

- Café attack in Australia
- Kosher Market in Paris

Trends:

- Small, confined spaces
- Only one hostage taker, maybe a second
- Preplanning/surveillance
- Terrorist is prepared to die - no “happy ending” for hostages
Soft Target Assessment: Sporting and Recreation Events

- Multiple threats against sporting events and concerts worldwide
  - Confined crowd of unsuspecting people
  - Live television coverage
  - Good news: entry control points
  - Bad news: risk of insider threat high; seasonal staff a problem
  - Concessions – opportunity for food related attack high

- Luxor attack, Dubrovka theater siege
- Sochi Olympics – the $$$ to secure a major event high

Bottom line – sporting and rec event may be targets
What can we do?
360 Burglars said....

Perception of Effectiveness of Burglary Deterrents According to Burglars: % of sample identifying factors that would cause them to avoid a target (N=360)

Most Effective Deterrents

- Steel bars
- Dog inside
- Car in driveway
- People walking nearby
- Limited escape route
- Traffic nearby
- Cameras / Surveillance
- Seeing neighbors
- Alarm
- Noise inside
- Officer nearby
- People inside
Dr. Martin Gill’s research of murders on death row

- Why criminals choose their targets - because they are easy!
- CCTV does not affect the way violent actors commit their offenses, in fact, may escalate their actions
- More concerned about being stopped by people than any type of technology
- Favor large, bulky security guards since they can be outrun
- The decision to shoot and kill a lone security guard actually comes easy - eliminates the one key piece of evidence

Seeing the potential crime scene through the eyes of a criminal is invaluable
Sandy Hook Elementary
Hardening Tactics

Accept the threat, accurately/honestly assess vulnerabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Vulnerability</th>
<th>High Vulnerability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td>10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20</td>
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7. Security Environments and Overall Vulnerability to an Attack

Does your organization have effective internal security procedures? What is the law enforcement presence in your area? What is the hardness, level of blast protection, etc. of your facilities? How accessible (security presence, access control, id badges, metal detection buffer zones, fences, etc.) is your facility? Are your assets and/or its potential recognized as a symbol? What level of public access is necessary for you to function? Can you control high-speed vehicle approaches to your facility?

Source: FBI – Terrorism Vulnerability Self-Assessment Checklist
Lower the “heat”
Attractive Fortification

Education City

Hospital

Secured Housing Compound

Church City
Attractive Fortification
Effects Based Hardening

- Cross applied from the military model
- A system to visualize violent scenarios in an unemotional, data driven way
- Harmonizing/synchronizing/prioritizing security activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prioritized Scenario</th>
<th>Desired Effect</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Capabilities and Cost</th>
<th>Implement/ Partially Implement/Table</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Highly visible location on busy highway draws opportunists</td>
<td>Lower “heat”</td>
<td>Remove external signage facing road</td>
<td>In house, volunteers, free</td>
<td>Implement</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Too many people with keys to the main door</td>
<td>Restrict building access</td>
<td>Install electronic key lock on main door and obtain keying equipment and cards</td>
<td>Contracted; $3,000</td>
<td>Partially implement; rekey current lock, reissue keys; budget electronic key system for summer 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Holding meetings after hours for outside groups, attendees wandering in building</td>
<td>Restrict access to the rest of the building</td>
<td>Install locking door between basement and upstairs offices</td>
<td>Contracted; $1,500 with labor</td>
<td>Implement</td>
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Insider Threat: A Fifth Column

- Don’t assume that serious insider threats are NIMO (not in my organization)

- As we harden facilities, the insider threat will grow

- An insider is a serious threat. An insider, lone wolf is dangerous. An insider, lone wolf, radicalized jihadist is the gravest.

Crisis Response Training

- Exercises: practice response from desktop exercises, to realistic events all the way to “simulator training”

- Establish a command center or a hold room with computers, phones, water and supplies, first aid kit, checklists; evac point

- Be prepared on social media – craft the message

- Red Teaming of Soft Targets: outside assessment
Fifteen Takeaways

1. We all have a psychological blind eye to soft targeting that impacts our preparation.

2. Soft targets are now hit everyday worldwide.

3. With asymmetric threats, what we don’t know is more important than what we know. Encourage use of imagination, instinct.

4. Identify the “Achilles heel” – the weakest, most vulnerable part of your organization.
Fifteen Takeaways

5. “The human is the best weapons system” – technology not the central part of security.

6. Build your crisis leadership skillset.

7. “Lowering the heat” works.


9. Strongly consider the insider threat.

10. Fight the 5 emotional traps.
11. When budgeting, ask “what is the cost of NOT protecting our facility/people?”

12. Think about vulnerability, not probability.

13. Invest in preparedness, not prediction.

14. Think consequences, not likelihood.

15. Try to strike a balance between normalcy and vigilance.
Conclusion

Everyone has the right to study, worship, heal and play…

without the fear of attack.
Soft Target Hardening

Protecting People from Attack

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