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Potential Indicators of Threats Involving Vehicle Borne (VBIEDs) and Other Improvised Explosive Devices

**Based on Homeland Security (DHS) Information
Bulletin -- Dated: May 15, 2003
Compilation/Summary/Analysis and New Data
Added by The Emergency Response
& Research Institute (ERRI)
Chicago, IL – February, 2004**



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Purpose of This Presentation:

- This presentation is intended to provide general information to assist in efforts to recognize potential VBIED-related threats or incidents based on the recent Riyadh, Saudi Arabia bombings.
- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) believes that a truck bombing by terrorists may be pre-empted if the general public remains alert for certain indicators.
- Additional ERRI data has been added to the D.H.S. information, primarily focusing on VBIEDS and other IEDS in Iraq.



Riyadh Attack on Housing
Compounds – 12 May 2003

VBIED Attack in Saudi Arabia



Tactical Assessment: Riyadh Attack Details

- In the 12 May, 2003 Riyadh attack terrorists, possibly Al-Qaeda, assaulted three compounds occupied by western guest workers using multiple vehicles.
- At least one vehicle in each assault team carried a large explosive charge which was detonated by a suicide bomber.
- International terrorist groups have demonstrated the ability to plan and conduct complex attacks, simultaneously, against multiple targets.

Tactics Used in the 12 May 2003 Riyadh Attack

- **Multiple targets**
- **Simultaneous attacks**
- **Multiple vehicles per target**
- **Assault/breaching cadre accompany the VBIED to clear security personnel and gain access to the compound.**



Riyadh Attack on Housing
Compounds – 12 May 2003

Additional Reference: http://www.emergency.com/2003/saudi_bmbs_051203.htm

Some Potential VBIED Indicators:

- Theft of explosives, blasting caps, or fuses, or certain chemicals used in the manufacture of explosives.
- Rental of self-storage space for the purpose of storing chemicals or mixing apparatus.
- Delivery of chemicals directly to a self-storage facility or unusual deliveries of chemicals to residential or rural addresses.
- Chemical fires, toxic odors, brightly colored stains, or rusted metal fixtures in apartments, hotel/motel rooms, or self-storage units.
- Rental, theft, or purchase of truck or van with minimum (1) ton carrying capacity.
- Modification of truck or van with heavy duty springs to handle heavier loads.

Surveillance of Targets

- It is likely that “bad guys” involved with executing several recent attacks conducted extensive preoperational surveillance of the compounds selected.
- Meticulous planning, to include preoperational surveillance, is a hallmark of Al-Qaeda (or associated) terrorist attacks.



Characteristics of Terrorist Surveillance:

- **Fixed surveillance is done from a static position, possibly an adjacent building, business, or other facility. In fixed surveillance scenarios, terrorists may establish themselves in a public location over a period of time or choose disguises or occupations such as street vendors, tourists, repair or deliverymen, photographers or even demonstrators.**
- **Mobile surveillance usually entails observing and following persons or individual human targets, although it can be conducted against non-mobile facilities (i.e. driving by an embassy to observe the building or compound). To enhance mobile surveillance, many terrorists have become more adept at progressive surveillance.**
- **More sophisticated surveillance is likely to be accomplished over a long period of time. This tends to disrupt detection techniques and improve the quality of gathered information. Some terrorists are noted to perform surveillance of a target or target area over a period of months or even years.**
- **Terrorists are known to use advances in technology such as modern optoelectronics, communications equipment, video cameras, and other electronic equipment. Such advances include commercial and military night-vision devices, GPS systems, and cellular phones. It should be assumed that many terrorists have access to high-dollar technological equipment.**

Iraq and Improvised Devices



Considerations: Iraq IED Data



Dynamite Car bomb

- At least 382 IEDs of various kinds (conservative estimate) have detonated at or near convoys in Iraq, according to members the 760th Ordnance Company's explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) unit.
- Iraq is an “IED laboratory” the likes of which haven’t been seen in recent conflicts in Afghanistan, Bosnia or Kosovo.

Some VBIEDS in Baghdad, Iraq



U.N. Compound Blast – Iraq: 19 Aug 2003



Jordanian Embassy Blast – Iraq: 07 Aug 2003

Some General Notes on VBIEDS...



Car Bombing – Baghdad, Iraq - 2004

Recent VBIEDS Have Been:

- **Command detonated**
- **Delay Detonated**
- **Remotely Detonated**
- **Involved in “secondary device” incidents that target responders and investigators**

Notes on Iraq IEDs/Roadside Bombs

- **Insurgent bombers in Iraq are reportedly using the transmitters from radio-controlled toy cars as initiators for IEDS: “They would take the electronic guts of the cars, wrap them in C-4 plastic explosive and attach a blasting cap, then detonate them by remote control,” a military source told ERRI analysts. Other “bad guy devices” used garage door opener transmitters, or cell phones to trigger explosions.**
- **In response, at least one unit in N. Iraq is countering the devices by mounted a toy-car remote-controller on the dashboard of their Humvee and taping down the transmit button. Because all the toy cars operated on the same frequency, this would detonate any similarly configured device about 100 yards before their Humvee got to that spot. This is a “poor man's anti-explosive device,” the report said.**



IEDs/Roadside Bombs in Iraq-II

- Almost all of the roadside bombs combine plastique and some sort of artillery round, from small mortars to powerful 155mm shells. On occasion, the 155mm rounds are strung together like Christmas tree lights, an arrangement that soldiers call “convoy killers.”
- Remote Controls from radio-controlled toy cars are only one of many devices used to trigger the bombs. The insurgents rig remote control car alarms, garage door openers, pagers and specially prepared cordless phones.
- Sometimes IEDs are buried in potholes and culverts. Scouts have found them packed in dead animals, tires, garbage bags, fire extinguishers and barrels. One 155mm shell was found encased in a muffler. The muffler may have been designed to be attached to a car, creating a vehicular IED.
- Piles of junk, commonplace on Iraqi roadsides, are also favorite spots to hide explosives. Tin cans and other metallic trash confuse metal detectors, used to help find the devices.

Anti-Terrorism Measures



Trained and Equipped Counter-Terrorism Forces Are a Part of a Larger and more Comprehensive Anti-Terrorism Plan

Understanding and Anti-Terrorism Measures I

- Terrorists continue to select **soft targets** for attack -- particularly those that will yield a high casualty count. **Some examples, though not all inclusive, are: residences, recreational and shopping venues, and business buildings and complexes.** All available antiterrorism measures should be rigorously reexamined to include: physical security perimeters set back distances between security fences and key buildings, and barricades.

Anti-Terrorism Measures II

- **Maintain situational awareness of world events and ongoing threats.**
- **Ensure all levels of personnel are notified via briefings, email, voice mail and signage of any changes in threat conditions and protective measures.**
- **Encourage personnel to be alert and immediately report any situation that may constitute a threat or suspicious activity.**
- **Encourage personnel to avoid routines, vary times and routes, pre-plan, and keep a low profile, especially during periods of high threat.**
- **Encourage personnel to take notice and report suspicious packages, devices, unattended briefcases, or other unusual materials immediately;**
- **inform them not to handle or attempt to move any such object.**
- **Encourage personnel to keep their family members and supervisors apprised of their whereabouts.**

Anti-Terrorism Measures III

- Encourage personnel to know emergency exits and stairwells.
- Increase the number of visible security personnel wherever possible.
- Rearrange exterior vehicle barriers, traffic cones, and road blocks to alter traffic patterns near facilities and cover by alert security forces.
- Institute/increase vehicle, foot and roving security patrols varying in size, timing and routes.
- Implement random security guard shift changes.
- Arrange for law enforcement vehicles to be parked randomly near entrances and exits of protected facilities.
- Review current contingency plans and, if not already in place, develop and implement procedures for receiving and acting on threat information, alert notification procedures, terrorist incident response procedures, evacuation procedures, bomb threat procedures, hostage and barricade procedures, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) procedures, consequence and crisis management procedures, accountability procedures, and media procedures.

Anti-Terrorism Measures IV

- When the aforementioned plans and procedures have been implemented, conduct internal training exercises and invite local emergency responders (police, fire, rescue, medical and bomb squads) to participate in joint exercises.
- Coordinate and establish partnerships with local authorities to develop intelligence and information sharing relationships.
- Place personnel on standby for contingency planning.
- Limit the number of access points and strictly enforce access control procedures.
- Approach all illegally parked vehicles in and around facilities, question drivers and direct them to move immediately, if owner can not be identified, have vehicle towed by law enforcement.
- Consider installing telephone caller I.D., record phone calls, if necessary.
- Increase perimeter lighting.
- Deploy visible security cameras, motion sensors, and other technical detectors.

Anti-Terrorism Measures V

- **Remove vegetation in and around perimeters, maintain regularly.**
- **Institute a robust vehicle inspection program to include checking under the undercarriage of vehicles, under the hood, and in the trunk. Provide vehicle inspection training to security personnel.**
- **Deploy explosive detection devices and explosive detection canine teams.**
- **Conduct vulnerability studies focusing on physical security, structural engineering, infrastructure engineering, power, water, and air infiltration, as feasible.**
- **Initiate a system to enhance mail and package screening procedures (both announced and unannounced).**
- **Install special locking devices on manhole covers in and around facilities.**
- **Implement a counter-surveillance detection program.**

- **Make all these suggestions part of a cyclical and constant security and facility management procedure.**

Additional Contact Information...

- This presentation is designed to advise the public as well as people who own and operate facilities about possible indicators of terrorist attack planning. DHS encourages individuals to report information concerning suspicious or criminal activity to law enforcement or a Homeland Security watch office. Individuals also may report incidents to the Homeland Security Center (HSC) at 202-282-1616, email to: State.Local.HSCenter@dhs.gov.**



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