

# Preparedness for terrorist incidences essay

[Law](#), [Security](#)



Information is the most important aspect of preparedness for terrorist incidences as well as natural disasters. Prevention of these two occurrences can be successful but the reality is that the two situations cannot be avoided totally. Hence the first step towards preparation is to know what terrorism and natural disasters entail so as to be better equipped in preparedness. The first piece of information that should be gathered relates to the symptoms of natural disasters and terrorist activity. This may require constant surveillance of meteorological reports for any impending natural disaster as well as local news to be acquainted with the security situation of the country as well as nationally. In many instances, terrorist send out information regarding future attacks. For example, two months before the attacks on the World Trade Centre, the Al Qaeda leader, Osama bin Laden hinted at the imminent suffering of the American people.

For individuals and families, the next step after information collection is planning. The first step of planning is to understand that episodes of terrorism as well as natural calamities often leave the local economy in ruins hence life after such occurrences is not likely to be enjoyable. Families are advised to put together survival kits which are enough for every family member and space for a few extra supplies to help out during disasters. A standard kit will consist of items such as first aid kits, flashlights, blankets, plastic sheets, towels, cell phones and back up batteries and emergency food provisions in addition to extras such as vital documents and medical supplies . The next step after putting together supply kits is to capitalize on safety. Most casualties in disasters are as a result of poor knowledge about safety on the side of civilians. Convenient evacuation spots should be

identified as well as safe shelters should be mapped out in homes.

Alternative shelters should be identified also. In addition, every home should have items which can mitigate disasters such as fire extinguishers and axes to break through any impassable places. Life jackets are also important for flood prone areas. Lastly, every individual or family should have contacts of relatives or friends who live outside their state that may assist them to shelter during disaster recovery if possible. Personal preparedness and family preparedness are likely to be very successful when the risks of a certain disaster are understood. For example, every person should know that hurricanes may occasion water borne diseases in their aftermath hence medical supplies have to be part of emergency preparedness. Terrorist attacks are likely to cause high levels of damage and hence recovery plans have to be included in preparedness.

Private businesses are supposed to equip themselves with as much information as possible regarding disasters and their aftermath. This may require a special taskforce which should identify any possible threats such as bombings, fires, earthquakes, chemical attacks, floods or assault by terrorists who are bent on destroying property. These risks should be rated and preparedness procedures put together for each risk. The general preparedness plan for every business is to determine the critical business functions as well as critical records. Critical functions are processes in the business which if shut down for more than a few days will lead to massive losses . Critical records are document which if destroyed can cause considerable inconvenience when lost. Backup solutions should be provided for critical functions. Critical records can be saved in software form as well as

hardcopy and stored in a secure location. After determining the critical functions and critical records, extra assets such as printers can be purchased and stored in a safe strong room away from the business premises on safer ground. This will enable the continuity of business after a calamity. Certainly, private businesses should establish procedures to save its most important asset; the labor force. The procedures for employees are very similar to home disaster preparedness measures. Lastly, any special procedures which have to be undertaken during disasters such as the shutting down of reactors or the locking up of factories should be established and the individuals who will be responsible for enacting such measures notified.

Al Qaeda does not have formal history as an organization itself. It was a movement of ex militia youth who had fought in the Mujahedeen wars of the 1980s to protest the invasion of the Soviet Union into Afghanistan. The founder, Osama bin Laden did not use the word Al Qaeda to describe this organization at its inception. From carrying out the patriotic calling of defending their land against invasion, this movement progressed to cleansing Afghanistan of any foreign interference on their land . The objectives of Al Qaida were to: expel any foreign military present in Afghanistan as a recognition of the sovereignty of Afghanistan, overthrow the present governments of Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan because the members of ' Al Qaeda' felt that they were secular and compromised the values of Islam due to manipulation by the West and lastly, to institute Sharia laws in their spheres of operation. Osama bin Laden and his followers rejected the notion of manmade laws and asserted that laws are divinely instituted. Al Qaeda does not have one chapter only and neither does it carry

out any global conventions where all members of the organization can meet. The recruits were organized in groups which are known as 'cells' in counter terrorism terminology. These are individuals who share in the Al Qaeda ideology who carry out terrorist agendas. These cells operate in various parts of the world under various chapters. The East African chapter of Al Qaeda is known as Al Shabaab and constitutes of several cells. Al Qaeda's biggest 'enemy' is the United States. Al Qaeda has carried several attacks on U. S soil and several others on U. S property in countries such as Tanzania and Kenya, where the U. S embassies of both countries were bombed on the same day. The most infamous Al Qaeda attack on U. S soil is the bombing of the World Trade Center and Pentagon in September 2001. These attacks caused the deaths of more than 3000 people.

In June 2011, the United States instituted a National Strategies for counter terrorism . These strategies are in line with the American core values of respecting human rights, good governance, and respect of civil liberties, transparency and upholding of the rule of law. These strategies encompass U. S action against terrorists on many fronts worldwide. The term for these fronts is 'theaters'. These theaters are areas where Al Qaeda activity is suspected to be rife such as the Middle East and northwest Africa. The U. S homeland is one of these theatres. The U. S government recognizes that there may be terrorist influence or activity within the borders of the U. S. The first step in protecting the homeland in the dossier is to monitor the movement of terrorists into the U. S and within the borders of the U. S by strengthening border security, aviation patrols as well as maritime patrols. The next step is to involve all law enforcement agencies within the U. S

borders to detect, disrupt and defeat terrorist plots. The U. S has instituted strict border patrols, weapon of mass destruction detection systems, as well as the use of biometrics to intensify the search for terrorists. The U. S federal government also intends to support local community leaders to help prevent the radicalization of individuals. The federal government recognizes that the threat of terrorism also includes U. S citizens who have been influence to accept terrorist doctrines. Teaming up with local leaders aims to stop this scenario. Lastly, the government carries out real time threat based screening of all international flight into U. S territory to curb further attacks. This measure was inspired after a review of attempted terrorist actions on U. S soil such as the attempted bombing of a Detroit bound airliner in 2009. Critical infrastructure and assets are basic services and facilities which are vital to the day to day life of individuals as well as businesses. The incapacitation of these facilities and services sets back the economy in terms of security, economic progress and public safety. Protection of critical infrastructure involves strengthening facilities, building resiliency, enhancing cyber security measures and conducting measures which ensure continuity in the event of natural disasters as well as terrorist attacks. There are 16 identifiable critical infrastructure categories in the U. S as per the Presidential Policy Directive 21 on Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience. The major categories are the communications sector, the energy sector, water and waste water systems, food and agriculture sector and information technology sector.

The challenge with critical infrastructures is the level of importance to the affected regions in relation to the level of importance attached to the

infrastructure on a nationwide scale. This weakness in logistics is what causes the concern for terrorists. It is likely that terrorists may choose not to attack fortified critical infrastructures but instead opt for infrastructure of lower protection priority but which can still cause a great deal of injury on the local economy if the infrastructure is attacked. Protecting physical infrastructure such as dams, silos and chemical industries is a lot more difficult than protecting cyber infrastructure such as internet and financial services sector. Physical threat requires surveillance within and outside U. S borders for precise information while cyber-attacks can be pinpointed from one surveillance center regardless of the origin of the threat.

The most important thing to note is that critical infrastructure cannot be completely protected but they can be strengthened and measures for quick recovery introduced to their performance plans. A good amount of risk assessment has to be done for every possible eventuality ranging from natural disasters to human assault and detection measures put in place.

## **Works Cited**

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