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Special reading - Protective security and the threat of terrorist attack

The most effective security response against terrorist attack should have a combination of physical, information and personnel security measures. The proper mix of security measures would depend largely on the nature of the risk-led assessment of the threats and vulnerabilities in different sites and locations. There is never any value in having all resources spent towards only a particular aspect of security – the approach to security against terrorist attack should always be multi-layered.

A physical attack by terrorist would likely involve improvised explosive device IED. It is very common to look into the means of delivery. With vehicle bomb, large quantities of explosive can be directed towards the target with relatively reasonable precision. A person-borne device, on the other hand, is concealed upon a person or carried in a bag or briefcase. It is usually weighted less than 15 kg, which is still enough for producing serious structural damage. The impact can even be increased through packing the device with objects such as nails, nuts and bolts.

An incendiary device works differently - it ignites but not explodes. It is intended primarily for causing damage and disruption through fire. Letters, parcels or packages that contain an explosive are usually designed to look innocuous. However, they are almost always sent from an unexpected or unfamiliar sender, and with a pin-sized hole in the packaging.

To protect against attack by a vehicle bomb, all unauthorized vehicles should be kept at a safe distance. All access routes, car parks and their surrounding open areas should be assessed, with traffic calming devices such as bends and chicanes being deployed. Possible vehicle security barriers may include retractable bollards, rising arm barriers and swing /sliding gates.

Static protection measures against bomb threat include structural walls, bollards and planters. External doors should be built to be very strong and solid. They should be properly lit and fitted with high quality locks. Doors that are not supposed to be frequently used should be internally secured. Windows should also be secured with locks. The quality of glass glazing must be emphasized to avoid injuries caused by flying glass pieces. Anti-shatter film and laminated glass should also be considered.