



IntelCenter

al-Qaeda Tactic/Target Brief  
v1.0 – 25 May 2002

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

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## **INTRODUCTION**

During the past weeks and months there has been a barrage of threat warnings issued covering everything from apartment buildings to scuba divers to nuclear reactors. The sequential release of these threat warnings has fostered an attitude in many that the threat of the week is the greatest concern. Few remember the threat from two weeks ago.

The terrorist quiver contains a wide range of tactics and a greater range of targets. Terrorists will use whichever tactic guarantees them the greatest impact with the least amount of risk to the operation.

For the most part, the threat warnings issued over the past few months concern legitimate tactics and targeting that may be employed by al-Qaeda and affiliated groups. They do, however, only concern a relatively small number of the types of threats we face. If we choose to only pay attention, to the threat of the week, we do so at great risk. If we try to tackle every threat with 100% resource dedication, stretched thin wouldn't even begin to describe our security posture.

Many would like us to believe that the solutions to these problems fit within a sound bite. They don't. Dedicated, prolonged and focused efforts are necessary to stack the odds in our favor. Even then, there is no such thing as 100% secure. Similar efforts are needed on the mitigation front in order to prepare us for that inevitable day.

The Tactics/Targeting section contains a listing of various tactics that may be employed by al-Qaeda as well as some of the target classes against which these tactics may be utilized. In each case, notes are provided as to whether or not al-Qaeda or its affiliated organizations have already employed/discussed that tactic or threatened/attacked members of the target class. Information is also contained as to whether or not other groups have carried out such attacks in the past or discussed the possibility of doing so. The overview is by no means comprehensive.

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## **“NO SPECIFIC, CREDIBLE THREAT”**

A note on the absence of a “specific, credible threat”:

From a security or threat assessment point of view, two things to keep in mind:

- 1) The absence of a “specific, credible threat” does not equate to the absence of a threat. According to unclassified reporting, there was no “specific, credible threat” prior to the first World Trade Center Bombing, Oklahoma City Bombing, East Africa Embassy Bombing, Khobar Towers Bombing, USS Cole Bombing and 9-11. It’s unlikely we will have one prior to the next successful attack.
- 2) We build banks with extensive security systems, place armed guards inside and train tellers on how to react to a wide variety of different robbery scenarios. We do all of this in the absence of knowing that bank X will be robbed at 5:15 pm on 10 May 2002 by Joe Smith. We do it because we know people rob banks. In much the same vein, many types of terrorist attacks have either occurred in other places around the world or we have information that they are training to conduct such attacks, but yet we routinely run up against “there is no specific credible threat.” If only bank robbers were so fortunate.

## **AYMAN AL-ZAWAHIRI TARGETING EXCERPT**

The following is an excerpt from Chapter 11 of Ayman al-Zawahiri's book "Knights Under the Prophet's Banner." The excerpt was published in al-Sharq al-Awsat on 12 Dec. 2001. The translation was done by FBIS. In its translation note FBIS said, "In the 11th chapter of his memoir, which is considered his "last will", al-Zawahiri explores future horizons. It seems that the Egyptian Al-Jihad Group leader wrote this chapter shortly before the September 11 events."

Choosing the Targets and Concentrating on the Martyrdom Operations

L. Changing the method of strikes:

The mujahid Islamic movement must escalate its methods of strikes and tools of resisting the enemies to keep up with the tremendous increase in the number of its enemies, the quality of their weapons, their destructive powers, their disregard for all taboos, and disrespect for the customs of wars and conflicts. In this regard, we concentrate on

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the following:

1. The need to inflict the maximum casualties against the opponent, for this is the language understood by the west, no matter how much time and effort such operations take.
2. The need to concentrate on the method of martyrdom operations as the most successful way of inflicting damage against the opponent and the least costly to the mujahidin in terms of casualties.
3. The targets as well as the type and method of weapons used must be chosen to have an impact on the structure of the enemy and deter it enough to stop its brutality, arrogance, and disregard for all taboos and customs. It must restore the struggle to its real size.
4. To reemphasize what we have already explained, we reiterate that focusing on the domestic [US presence overseas] enemy alone will not be feasible at this stage.

## **SPECIAL OPERATIONS**

According to an al-Qaeda training manual the importance of Special Operations (assassination, bombing, kidnapping, etc.) are:

- 1 - Boosting Islamic morale and lowering that of the enemy.
- 2 - Preparing and training new members for future tasks.
- 3 - A form of necessary punishment.
- 4 - Mocking the regime's admiration among the population.
- 5 - Removing the personalities that stand in the way of the [Islamic] Da'wa [Call].
- 6 - Agitating [the population] regarding publicized matters.
- 7 - Rejecting compliance with and submission to the regime's practices.
- 8 - Giving legitimacy to the Jama'a [Islamic Group].
- 9 - Spreading fear and terror through the regime's ranks.
- 10 - Bringing new members to the Organization's ranks.

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## **MISC. NOTES:**

- Official US government facilities/personnel, financial institutions and symbols of the West have consistently ranked the highest in terms of priority in al-Qaeda communiqués, threats and videos.
- Terrorist groups study both the present and past actions of other groups regardless of their ideological or religious position. Lessons learned are then implemented in training and operations.
- Terrorists will, if they so choose, hit targets that have already been hit. There is no immunity gained from having made it through one attack. In some cases, such as on Jaffa St. in Israel, it's done to prove that they can.
- Once a tactic is employed it does not preclude it from ever being used again. The threat of hijacked planes being used as projectiles did not evaporate simply because they've already done it once. In fact, 9-11 proved the successfulness of the tactic to both al-Qaeda and other groups.

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## **TACTICS/TARGETING**

The below points are written with a US domestic focus but are clearly relevant beyond the continental US (CONUS). None of the below lists are comprehensive in any manner. They are designed to provide an overview of a wide range of tactics and target classes while stimulating thought as to other possibilities.

Countermeasures are not discussed due to security considerations and various portions of the report lack specificity due to the sensitive nature of the material covered.

## **TACTICS**

(Assassination, Biological, Bombing, Chemical, Cyber-Based Strike, Hijacking, Hostage Taking, Kidnapping, Nuclear, Radiological, Sabotage, Shooting, Suicide Bombing, Vehicular Bombing)

## **ASSASSINATION**

Targeting of mid-to-high-profile government or corporate personalities, primarily political and military leaders. Bombings and shootings are the most commonly deployed methods, although other techniques such as poisoning and sabotage are possible. Execution may be aggressive or subtle depending upon circumstances and planner's style.

### **Al-Qaeda Experience:**

- Dealt with extensively in al-Qaeda training materials
- Guidance provided to members on conducting assassinations with explosives, firearms, poisons and other implements
- Listed as one of the missions of the Military Organization: "Assassinating enemy personnel as well as foreign tourists."
- Assassination training has been provided to al-Qaeda members. In training videos, trainees are shown studying a map of a western-style traffic intersection, then carrying out an apparent military-style assassination attack on a motorcade. In another scene, an assassination plan is put into practice at a fictional golf tournament, when caddies pull guns from golf bags and conduct a mass execution of national leaders. Other assassination styles shown in training videos include drive-by shootings and the use of grenades.

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- Al-Qaeda operatives are believed to be responsible for the assassination of Northern Alliance leader Ahmed Shah Massoud. He was killed on 9 Sep. 2001 by two suicide bombers.

- Al-Qaeda training manual: "An assassination using explosives doesn't leave any evidence or traces at the operation site. In addition, explosives strike the enemy with sheer terror and fright."

**Other Groups:**

- Widely used tactic utilized by both religious and ideologically motivated groups
- Used by: 17 November, Basque Homeland and Freedom (ETA), Red Brigade, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), New People's Army (NPA)

**Execution:**

- May be executed in conjunction with other similar/different simultaneous/near-simultaneous attacks or independently

**Target Classes Applied Against:**

- Government Officials, High-Profile Individuals

## **BIOLOGICAL**

The use of a biological agent against a population center or large gathering.

**Al-Qaeda Experience:**

- Confirmed R&D, Osama bin Laden has stated it's a holy duty to obtain biological weapons
- al-Muhajiroun leader Sheikh Omar Bakri Mohammed has issued fatwa stating it was permissible to use biological weapons in a defensive jihad.

**Other Groups:**

- Utilized by other groups to varying effect
- Used by: Aum Shinrikyo

**Execution:**

- May be executed in conjunction with other similar/different simultaneous/near-simultaneous attacks or independently

**Target Classes Applied Against:**

Airports, Civilian Airliners, Cruise Ships, Government Offices, High-Profile Corporations, Large Events/Gatherings, Rail Targets (Subways and Railroad lines/stations), Water Facilities

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## **BOMBINGS (Excluding Vehicular Bombings & Suicide Bombings)**

The use of improvised explosive devices or military munitions to cause a mass casualty event or destroy a specific facility. Devices may utilize remote triggers, various sensors or timers.

### **Al-Qaeda Experience:**

- Extensive experience in training and field use
- Covered in al-Qaeda training material
- Listed as one of the missions of the Military Organization: “Blasting and destroying the places of amusement, immorality and sin; not a vital target. Blasting and destroying the embassies and attacking vital economic centers. Blasting and destroying bridges leading into and out of the cities.”
- Al-Qaeda training manual: “Explosives are believed to be the safest weapon for the Mujahideen [Using explosives] allows them to get away from enemy personnel and to avoid being arrested. An assassination using explosives doesn’t leave any evidence or traces at the operation site. In addition, explosives strike the enemy with sheer terror and fright.”

### **Other Groups:**

- Widely used tactic
- Used by: 17 November, Armed Islamic Group (GIA), Basque Homeland and Freedom (ETA), Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad

### **Execution:**

- May be executed in conjunction with other similar/different simultaneous/near-simultaneous attacks or independently

### **Target Classes Applied Against:**

Airports, Apartment Buildings, Bridges/Tunnels, Buses and Stations, Chemical Plants, Civilian Airliners, Critical Infrastructure, Cruise Ships, Cultural Icons, Dams, Financial Institutions, Government Offices, Government Officials, High-Profile Corporations, High-Profile Individuals, Large Events/Gatherings, Military Bases, Nuclear Reactors/Related Facilities, Rail Targets (Subways and Railroad Lines/Stations), Shopping Malls/High Density Locations, Water Facilities

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## **CHEMICAL**

The use of a chemical agent against a population center or large gathering. Attacks could also include the utilization of industrial chemicals which would be readily accessible. These chemicals could be obtained through theft or hijacking of vehicles transporting them around the country.

### **Al-Qaeda Experience:**

- Confirmed R&D
- Osama bin Laden has stated it's a holy duty to obtain chemical weapons
- Tested on animals in Afghanistan

### **Other Groups:**

- Utilized by other groups to varying effect
- Reported attempts by some groups fighting against Israel to combine chemicals with improvised explosive devices in order to increase casualties
- Used by: Aum Shinrikyo

### **Execution:**

- May be executed in conjunction with other similar/different simultaneous/near-simultaneous attacks or independently

### **Target Classes Applied Against:**

Airports, Buses and Stations, Large Events/Gatherings, Rail Targets (Subways and Railroad lines/stations), Water Facilities

## **CYBER-BASED STRIKES**

The use of cyber-based strikes against critical infrastructure targets. Attacks may seek to shut down systems, plant false information or maliciously manipulate systems.

### **Al-Qaeda Experience:**

- Exploring techniques
- Affiliated organizations have called for "cyber jihad"

### **Other Groups:**

- Not widely used beyond high-level nuisance attacks, but actively being explored
- First cyber conflict between Israeli and Palestinian supporters during late 2000 significantly evolved thinking in this direction for Islamic extremist groups

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- When Hezbollah was asked about cyber modes of attack, it responded by saying it would use whatever means are available

**Execution:**

- May be executed in conjunction with other similar/different simultaneous/near-simultaneous attacks or independently

**Target Classes Applied Against:**

Airports, Chemical Plants, Civilian Airliners, Critical Infrastructure, Cruise Ships, Dams, Financial Institutions, Government Offices, High-Profile Corporations, Military Bases, Nuclear Reactors/Related Facilities, Rail Targets (Subways and Railroad Lines/Stations), Water Facilities

## HIJACKING

The forceful taking over of a plane, cruise ship or other large craft. The objective could be to obtain hostages in a mobile environment or as in 9-11 use the craft as a projectile in a suicide operation. In the event of the suicide mode of attack, private jets or chartered aircraft may also be used. Explosives would likely be utilized to offset the lower fuel load capability of the smaller aircraft.

**Al-Qaeda Experience:**

- Utilized to great effect on 9-11  
- In the attack earlier this year on a mosque in Djerba, Tunisia a fuel truck was taken and driven into the mosque

**Other Groups:**

- Widely utilized for hostage taking, attempts/planning made for suicide operations but unsuccessful  
- Abu Nidal Group, Hezbollah, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)

**Execution:**

- May be executed in conjunction with other similar/different simultaneous/near-simultaneous attacks or independently

**Target Classes Applied Against:**

Buses, Civilian Airliners, Cruise Ships, Trucks



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## **HOSTAGE TAKING**

The forceful taking of an individual or group of people by one or more terrorists. The event may occur as part of a hijacking or at any gathering of people which provides a suitable atmosphere for the terrorist(s). Hostages may be taken as part of an attempt to have specific demands met or simply as a manner of attracting maximum media coverage before killing the hostages by detonating an explosive device or through other means.

### **Al-Qaeda Experience:**

- Al-Qaeda training videos reveal extensive training of fighters in hostage-taking procedures.
- Al-Qaeda training manual: “Guidelines for Beating and Killing Hostages: Religious scholars have permitted beating... In this tradition, we find permission to interrogate the hostage for the purpose of obtaining information. It is permitted to strike the nonbeliever who has no covenant until he reveals the news, information, and secrets of his people. The religious scholars have also permitted the killing of a hostage if he insists on withholding information from Muslims. They permitted his killing so that he would not inform his people of what he learned about the Muslim condition, number, and secrets... The scholars have also permitted the exchange of hostages for money, services, and expertise, as well as secrets of the enemy’s army, plans, and numbers.”

### **Other Groups:**

- Common tactic employed by both religious and ideologically based groups
- Used by: al-Faran, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)

### **Execution:**

- May be executed in conjunction with other similar/different simultaneous/near-simultaneous attacks or independently

### **Target Classes Applied Against:**

Airports, Buses and Stations, Civilian Airliners, Cruise Ships, Cultural Icons, Financial Institutions, Government Offices, High-Profile Corporations, Rail Targets (Subways and Railroad Lines/Stations), Shopping Malls/High Density Locations

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## **KIDNAPPING**

The abduction of an individual or group of individuals in an attempt to have specific demands met or simply to maximize the terror impact of the operation before killing the abductee as in the case of Daniel Pearl. Operations require a significant support infrastructure.

### **Al-Qaeda Experience:**

- Listed as one of the missions of the Military Organization: “Kidnapping enemy personnel, documents, secrets, and arms.”
- Portions of training manual dedicated to kidnapping operations
- Al-Qaeda training manual: “Guidelines for Beating and Killing Hostages: Religious scholars have permitted beating... In this tradition, we find permission to interrogate the hostage for the purpose of obtaining information. It is permitted to strike the nonbeliever who has no covenant until he reveals the news, information, and secrets of his people. The religious scholars have also permitted the killing of a hostage if he insists on withholding information from Muslims. They permitted his killing so that he would not inform his people of what he learned about the Muslim condition, number, and secrets... The scholars have also permitted the exchange of hostages for money, services, and expertise, as well as secrets of the enemy’s army, plans, and numbers.”

### **Other Groups:**

- Widely used tactic
- Used by: Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, National Liberation Army (ELN), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)

### **Execution:**

- May be executed in conjunction with other similar/different simultaneous/near-simultaneous attacks or independently

### **Target Classes Applied Against:**

Government Officials, High-Profile Individuals

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## **NUCLEAR**

The use of a tactical or larger nuclear weapon against a population center or other key target. An attack would be designed to create a mass casualty incident and extensive direct and collateral damage to the government, critical infrastructure, financial institutions, military and corporate institutions.

### **Al-Qaeda Experience:**

- Confirmed R&D
- Osama bin Laden has stated it's a holy duty to obtain nuclear weapons.
- al-Muhajiroun leader Sheikh Omar Bakri Mohammed has issued fatwa stating it was permissible to use nuclear weapons in a defensive jihad.
- In an interview with a Pakistani newspaper, Osama bin Laden reportedly stated, "wish to declare that if America uses chemical or nuclear weapons against us, then we may retort with chemical and nuclear weapons." Bin Laden allegedly said that al-Qaeda acquired these weapons as a deterrent, but would not comment on where he got them.
- US soldiers in Afghanistan found discarded documents in the abandoned house of an alleged al-Qaeda operative. These documents included a 25-page document filled with information about nuclear weapons including a design for a nuclear weapon.

### **Other Groups:**

- Explored but never executed

### **Execution:**

- May be executed in conjunction with other similar/different simultaneous/near-simultaneous attacks or independently

### **Target Classes Applied Against:**

Cities, Large Events/Gatherings, Military Bases



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## **RADIOLOGICAL**

The use of radioactive material in an improvised explosive device (IED) or disseminated through another means in order to cause mass panic, severe financial disruption, area denial and extensive casualties over an extended period of time as a result of increased cancer rates. An attack against a nuclear facility may be designed to cause a radioactive release.

### **Al-Qaeda Experience:**

- Made efforts to obtain radioactive materials
- Affiliated organizations have explored building a dirty device
- US intelligence sources reportedly told CNN in Dec. 2001 that during a meeting of senior al-Qaeda leaders in Afghanistan within the last year, a member of the terrorist network displayed a cylinder and said it contained radiological material that could be used in a "dirty bomb."

### **Other Groups:**

- According to a report from ITAR-TASS, 50 kg of caesium 137 isotope was found on the site of the former No. 38 school in Grozny. Chechen rebel commander Shamil Basayev reportedly used the site to fill mortar shells with radioactive material. According to the report, the maximum radioactive background in the grounds of the ruined school building reaches 100 roentgen.

### **Execution:**

- May be executed in conjunction with other similar/different simultaneous/near-simultaneous attacks or independently

### **Target Classes Applied Against:**

Buses and Stations, Cultural Icons, Financial Institutions, Government Offices, High-Profile Corporations, Large Events/Gatherings, Military Bases, Nuclear Reactors/Related Facilities, Rail Targets (Subways and Railroad Lines/Stations), Shopping Mall/High Density Locations, Water Facilities

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## **SABOTAGE**

The tampering or destruction of critical components of transportation systems, power plants or other systems which would result in a mass casualty incident or severe disruption of services. Sabotage may be carried out through physical or cyber means.

### **Al-Qaeda Experience:**

- Exploring various means

### **Other Groups:**

- Unknown

### **Execution:**

- May be executed in conjunction with other similar/different simultaneous/near-simultaneous attacks or independently

### **Target Classes Applied Against:**

Chemical Plants, Civilian Airliners, Critical Infrastructure, Cruise Ships, Dams, Financial Institutions, Large Events/Gatherings, Military Bases, Nuclear Reactors/Related Facilities, Rail Targets (Subways and Railroad Lines/Stations), Water Facilities

## **SHOOTING**

An individual or group opening fire on a gathering of people in order to kill as many as possible before being killed or reaching the end of the window of opportunity at which point flight is necessary.

### **Al-Qaeda Experience:**

- Utilized tactic by affiliated groups, enough experience to execute with ease

### **Other Groups:**

- Extensively used by Islamic extremist groups and others in both suicide and non-suicide operations
- Occurred in the US when an Islamic extremist opened fire on employees pulling into the headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in Virginia
- Armed Islamic Group (GIA)

### **Execution:**

- May be executed in conjunction with other similar/different simultaneous/near-simultaneous attacks or independently

### **Target Classes Applied Against:**

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## **SUICIDE BOMBING**

An individual wearing or carrying an explosive device into a crowded area or other key target. The attack is designed to inflict as many casualties as possible. Suicide bombers may also take part in car/truck bombings as in the 1998 East Africa Embassy Bombings.

### **Al-Qaeda Experience:**

- Extensive experience in suicide operations at a sophistication level beyond what is seen in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; has not made as extensive use, however, of the type of low-level suicide bombings regularly seen in Israel
- Listed as one of the missions of the Military Organization: “Blasting and destroying the places of amusement, immorality and sin; not a vital target. Blasting and destroying the embassies and attacking vital economic centers. Blasting and destroying bridges leading into and out of the cities.”

### **Other Groups:**

- Extensively used by Islamic extremist groups and others
- Used by: al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigade, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)

### **Execution:**

- May be executed in conjunction with other similar/different simultaneous/near-simultaneous attacks or independently

### **Target Classes Applied Against:**

Airports, Buses and Stations, Civilian Airliners, Cruise Ships, Cultural Icons, Financial Institutions, Government Offices, High-Profile Corporations, Shopping Malls/High Density Locations, Large Events/Gatherings, Military Bases, Rail Targets (Subways and Railroad Lines/Stations)

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## **VEHICULAR BOMBING**

The use of a car or truck in order to position enough explosives to destroy large structures or hardened targets. Attacks may or may not utilize a suicide bomber. Efforts in the past to combine chemical or radiological agents with the device as a force multiplier have been attempted, albeit unsuccessfully.

### **Al-Qaeda Experience:**

- Extensive experience in training and field use
- Capable of conducting simultaneous multiple attacks in multiple countries
- Affiliates are accused of the truck bombing of the World Trade Center on 26 Feb. 1993, killing six people and injuring 1,000
- Responsible for the 7 Aug. 1998 suicide truck bombings of the US embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in which 224 people were killed
- On 12 Oct. 2000, al-Qaeda rammed a rubber raft into the USS Cole, killing 17 sailors and injuring 39
- Listed as one of the missions of the Military Organization: "Blasting and destroying the places of amusement, immorality and sin; not a vital target. Blasting and destroying the embassies and attacking vital economic centers. Blasting and destroying bridges leading into and out of the cities."
- Al-Qaeda training manual: "Explosives are believed to be the safest weapon for the Mujahideen [Using explosives] allows them to get away from enemy personnel and to avoid being arrested. An assassination using explosives doesn't leave any evidence or traces at the operation site. In addition, explosives strike the enemy with sheer terror and fright."

### **Other Groups:**

- Used in the 13 Nov. 1995 car bombing of a Saudi National Guard building in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in which five US military members were killed
- Used in the 25 Jun. 1996 truck bombing at Khobar Towers, in Dahrhan, Saudi Arabi, which killed 19 service members and injured 400.
- Widely used tactic
- Used by: Basque Homeland and Freedom (ETA), Hezbollah, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Real IRA, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)

### **Execution:**

- May be executed in conjunction with other similar/different simultaneous/near-simultaneous attacks or independently

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**Target Classes Applied Against:**

Apartment Buildings, Bridges/Tunnels, Buses and Stations, Chemical Plants, Critical Infrastructure, Cultural Icons, Dams, Financial Institutions, Government Offices, High-Profile Corporations, Large Events/Gatherings, Military Bases, Nuclear Reactors/Related Facilities, Rail Targets (Subways and Railroad Lines/Stations), Water Facilities

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# IntelCenter

## **TARGET CLASSES**

(Airports, Apartment Buildings, Bridges/Tunnels, Buses and Stations, Chemical Plants, Civilian Airliners, Critical Infrastructure, Cruise Ships, Cultural Icons, Dams, Financial Institutions, Government Offices, Government Officials, High-Profile Corporations, High-Profile Individuals, Large Events/Gatherings, Military, Nuclear Reactors/Related Facilities, Rail Targets (Subways & Rail Lines/Stations), Shopping Malls/High Density Locations, Water Facilities)

## **AIRPORTS**

Airports may be targeted in order to interfere with flights or to kill people gathering at the airport. Targets include all mission critical systems as well as key congregation areas including evacuation points. Both physical and cyber means may be utilized. Airports also provide an effective dissemination point for chemical and biological agents.

## **Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- On 22 Aug. 1998, Osama bin Laden issued a threat through the International Islamic Front (IIF), the organization he formed in Feb. 1998, against the US and Israel. The threats were sent via faxes from Peshawar, Pakistan to the London base of the fundamentalist group al-Muhajiroun (mouthpiece of the IIF). It said the IIF was mobilizing against the US and Israel to: bring down their aircraft; prevent the safe passage of their ships; orchestrate occupation of their embassies; force closure of American and Israeli companies and banks. The group warned that the actions would be "pitiless and violent."

## **Other Groups:**

- Has been in the past a common target of groups for shootings and bombings

## **Tactics Applied Against:**

Biological, Bombing, Chemical, Cyber-Based Strikes, Hijacking, Hostage Taking, Kidnapping, Nuclear, Radiological, Sabotage, Shooting, Suicide Bombing, Vehicular Bombing

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## **APARTMENT BUILDINGS**

Hi-rise apartment buildings regardless of the occupancy demographics. The targeting of apartment bombings is relatively easy to execute due to the lack of security present and the extreme number of possible targets. Attacks would be designed to strike fear in people's very homes, resulting in a much more personal strike than even 9-11. For al-Qaeda, it would likely be characterized as a retaliatory attack for the perceived slaughter of countless civilian Arabs in Afghanistan and elsewhere

### **Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Discussed targeting
- Affiliated groups carried out Russian apartment building bombings

### **Other Groups:**

- Unknown

### **Tactics Applied Against:**

Bombings, Vehicular Bombing

### **Notes:**

- In Sep. 1999 in Russia a series of four apartment bombings during a 12-day period killed roughly 300 people and injured many more. The bombings targeted buildings in areas where there would be a high occupancy of military personnel residing within as well as in working class neighborhoods of Moscow. Both truck bombs and devices placed within the building were utilized.



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## **BRIDGES/TUNNELS**

Bridges and tunnels providing access to large metropolitan areas have been targeted in the past and will continue to be.

### **Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Listed as one of the missions of the Military Organization: “Blasting and destroying bridges leading into and out of the cities”
- Affiliated organization has targeted bridges and tunnels leading into New York City
- Trains members on various methods of blowing up bridges

### **Other Groups:**

- Unknown

### **Tactics Applied Against:**

Bombing, Sabotage, Shooting, Suicide Bombing, Vehicular Bombing

## **BUSES AND STATIONS**

Both public transportation buses and those used in tour groups may be targeted as well as their stations and pick-up/drop-off points.

### **Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Unknown

### **Other Groups:**

- Frequently targeted by extremist groups in Israel

### **Tactics Applied Against:**

Biological, Chemical, Hijacking, Hostage Taking, Radiological, Shooting, Suicide Bombing, Sabotage

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## **CHEMICAL PLANTS**

Chemical plants and industrial facilities that make use of large amounts of chemicals may be targeted for theft or direct attack due to the potential contamination hazard they pose to the surrounding community.

### **Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Unknown

### **Other Groups:**

- Unknown

### **Tactics Applied Against:**

Bombing, Cyber-Based Strike, Sabotage, Vehicular Bombing

## **CIVILIAN AIRLINERS**

Domestic and international flights of civilian air carriers have and will continue to be targeted. In addition to major civilian carriers, charter planes, private aircraft and shipping company aircraft may also be targeted.

### **Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Experience in targeting airlines for destruction and utilization as a projectile  
- Affiliated organizations have additional hijacking experience  
- On 22 Aug. 1998, Osama bin Laden issued a threat through the International Islamic Front (IIF), the organization he formed in Feb. 1998, against the US and Israel. The threats were sent via faxes from Peshawar, Pakistan to the London base of the fundamentalist group al-Muhajiroun (mouthpiece of the IIF). It said the IIF was mobilizing against the US and Israel to: bring down their aircraft; prevent the safe passage of their ships; orchestrate occupation of their embassies; force closure of American and Israeli companies and banks. The group warned that the actions would be "pitiless and violent."

### **Other Groups:**

- Hijacking aircraft for the purpose of taking hostages or destruction has been used by a large number of organizations

### **Tactics Applied Against:**

Hijacking, Hostage Taking, Suicide Bombing, Sabotage

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## **CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

The critical infrastructure which keeps the country running to include but not limited to electrical grid, telecommunications networks, gas network, and key transportation nodes. Attacks may be of the physical or cyber variety. Some targets carry value for both their disruption impact and the potential for a mass casualty incident. Much of the infrastructure is dangerously exposed to simple attacks which require little or no planning/resources.

### **Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Conducted surveillance of various critical infrastructure targets

### **Other Groups:**

- Critical infrastructure nodes are routinely attacked by groups such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in Colombia and the Maoists in Nepal

### **Tactics Applied Against:**

Biological, Bombings, Chemical, Cyber-Based Strikes, Sabotage, Shooting, Suicide Bombing, Vehicular Bombing

## **CRUISE SHIPS**

Civilian cruise ships may be targeted for hostage taking or destruction.

### **Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Experience in launching attacks against large ships
- On 22 Aug. 1998, Osama bin Laden issued a threat through the International Islamic Front (IIF), the organization he formed in Feb. 1998, against the US and Israel. The threats were sent via faxes from Peshawar, Pakistan to the London base of the fundamentalist group al-Muhajiroun (mouthpiece of the IIF). It said the IIF was mobilizing against the US and Israel to: bring down their aircraft; prevent the safe passage of their ships; orchestrate occupation of their embassies; force closure of American and Israeli companies and banks. The group warned that the actions would be "pitiless and violent."

### **Other Groups:**

- On 7 Oct. 1985 the Achille Lauro cruise ship was hijacked

### **Tactics Applied Against:**

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Bombing, Hijacking, Hostage Taking, Suicide Bombing, Sabotage

## **CULTURAL ICONS**

Cultural icons such as high-profile theme parks, fast food restaurants and landmarks such as the Statue of Liberty and others may be targeted regardless of whether or not they present an opportunity for a mass casualty incident because of what they represent. The impact of such an attack reaches beyond the actual physical destruction and loss of life carrying great symbolic meaning.

### **Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Apparently discussed targeting

### **Other Groups:**

- Have been attacked by extremist groups in the past

### **Tactics Applied Against:**

Biological, Bombing, Chemical, Cyber-Based Strike, Hostage Taking, Radiological, Shooting, Suicide Bombing, Vehicular Bombing

## **DAMS**

Dams may be targeted in order cause a mass casualty incident from the resulting flooding and severely impact electrical generation in the serviced area.

### **Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Unknown

### **Other Groups:**

- Threatened by various domestic militia groups

### **Tactics Applied Against:**

Bombing, Cyber-Based Strike, Sabotage, Suicide Bombing, Vehicular Bombing

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## **FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

Large corporate headquarters of financial institutions, major stock exchanges and banks such as the Federal Reserve are high-value targets due to the casualties that would result from an attack on such a structure in addition to the far-reaching economic impact in both the near and long-term. In addition, smaller bank branches and other areas could be targeted but these attacks would be more in line with low-level suicide bombings which would also target shopping malls and buses.

### **Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Considered a high-value target by al-Qaeda
- Has issued threats against such targets and conducted attacks against them
- In a Osama bin Laden tape, of which portions were aired on MBC and al-Jazeera, he discusses the economic damage caused to the US by the 9-11 attacks. Specifically, Bin Laden states: "By their own admission, the (Americans') losses on Wall Street reached 16 percent (of the market's value), an unprecedented figure since the market opened more than 230 years ago. This is equivalent to Sudan's budget for 640 years." Bin Laden further stated "Some American studies have said that about 70 percent of the American people are suffering from depression and psychological diseases after the events of the collapsed two towers and the damage at the Pentagon."
- On 22 Aug. 1998, Osama bin Laden issued a threat through the International Islamic Front (IIF), the organization he formed in Feb. 1998, against the US and Israel. The threats were sent via faxes from Peshawar, Pakistan to the London base of the fundamentalist group al-Muhajiroun. It said the IIF was mobilizing against the US and Israel to: bring down their aircraft; prevent the safe passage of their ships; orchestrate occupation of their embassies; force closure of American and Israeli companies and banks. The group warned that the actions would be "pitiless and violent."

### **Other Groups:**

- Attacked by other groups for the purpose of disrupting economies

### **Tactics Applied Against:**

Biological, Bombing, Cyber-Based Strike, Hostage Taking, Radiological, Sabotage, Shooting, Suicide Bombing, Vehicular Bombing

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## **GOVERNMENT OFFICES**

Government offices and related structures rank high in targeting value because of their ability to impact the functioning of the government, cause mass casualties and send a symbolic message.

### **Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Considered a high-value target by al-Qaeda
- Has issued threats against such targets and conducted attacks against them
- On 22 Aug. 1998, Osama bin Laden issued a threat through the International Islamic Front (IIF), the organization he formed in Feb. 1998, against the US and Israel. The threats were sent via faxes from Peshawar, Pakistan to the London base of the fundamentalist group al-Muhajiroun. It said the IIF was mobilizing against the US and Israel to: bring down their aircraft; prevent the safe passage of their ships; orchestrate occupation of their embassies; force closure of American and Israeli companies and banks. The group warned that the actions would be "pitiless and violent."

### **Other Groups:**

- Routinely attacked by other groups

### **Tactics Applied Against:**

Biological, Bombing, Cyber-Based Strike, Hostage Taking, Nuclear, Radiological, Sabotage, Shooting, Suicide Bombing, Vehicular Bombing

## **GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS**

Government officials rank high in targeting value because of the impact their removal may have on the functioning of the government and the symbolic message it sends. Assassinations or kidnappings may target both mid- and high-level officials.

### **Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Has issued threats against such targets and conducted attacks against them

### **Other Groups:**

- Assassinations against mid-to-high level officials routinely carried out

### **Tactics Applied Against:**

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# IntelCenter

Assassination, Biological, Bombing, Chemical, Kidnapping, Sabotage, Shooting, Suicide Bombing, Vehicular Bombing

## **HIGH-PROFILE CORPORATIONS**

High-profile corporations that are either viewed as representative of the West or those who if attacked would carry far-reaching economic results may be targeted. Attacks may be aimed at their facilities and personnel.

### **Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Has issued threats against such targets and conducted attacks against them
- On 22 Aug. 1998, Osama bin Laden issued a threat through the International Islamic Front (IIF), the organization he formed in Feb. 1998, against the US and Israel. The threats were sent via faxes from Peshawar, Pakistan to the London base of the fundamentalist group al-Muhajiroun. It said the IIF was mobilizing against the US and Israel to: bring down their aircraft; prevent the safe passage of their ships; orchestrate occupation of their embassies; force closure of American and Israeli companies and banks. The group warned that the actions would be "pitiless and violent."

### **Other Groups:**

- Routinely target Western corporations

### **Tactics Applied Against:**

Assassination, Biological, Bombing, Chemical, Cyber-Based Strike, Hostage Taking, Kidnapping, Radiological, Sabotage, Shooting, Suicide Bombing, Vehicular Bombing

## **HIGH-PROFILE INDIVIDUALS**

High-profile individuals tied to large corporations, media outlets or seen as representative of American society may be targets for assassination or kidnapping.

### **Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Suspected affiliated organizations have issued threats against such targets and carried out attacks

### **Other Groups:**

- Assassinations and kidnappings of high-profile individuals routinely carried out

### **Tactics Applied Against:**

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Assassination, Bombing, Kidnapping, Shooting, Suicide Bombing, Vehicular Bombing

## **LARGE EVENTS/GATHERINGS**

Large events and gatherings are high-value targets due to their ability to generate mass casualty incidents, strike a symbolic chord and kill high-profile individuals. Depending upon the event, an economic impact will also be felt. Large events and gatherings also present a prime opportunity for the release of a chemical or biological agent.

### **Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Suspected affiliated organizations have issued threats against such targets

### **Other Groups:**

- Targeted by other groups

### **Tactics Applied Against:**

Biological, Bombing, Chemical, Hostage Taking, Nuclear, Radiological, Sabotage, Shooting, Suicide Bombing, Vehicular Bombing

## **MILITARY**

Military facilities and personnel are targeted because of the military's role in conflicts in Afghanistan, Somalia and other countries around the world. Attacks also carry a highly symbolic message.

### **Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Has issued threats against such targets
- Carried out attack against the USS Cole
- On 22 Aug. 1998, Osama bin Laden issued a threat through the International Islamic Front (IIF), the organization he formed in Feb. 1998, against the US and Israel. The threats were sent via faxes from Peshawar, Pakistan to the London base of the fundamentalist group al-Muhajiroun. It said the IIF was mobilizing against the US and Israel to: bring down their aircraft; prevent the safe passage of their ships; orchestrate occupation of their embassies; force closure of American and Israeli companies and banks. The group warned that the actions would be "pitiless and violent."

### **Other Groups:**

- Routinely targeted by various groups around the world

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**Tactics Applied Against:**

Biological, Bombing, Chemical, Cyber-Based Strike, Hijacking, Hostage Taking, Kidnapping, Nuclear, Radiological, Sabotage, Shooting, Suicide Bombing, Vehicular Bombing

**NUCLEAR REACTORS/RELATED FACILITIES**

Nuclear reactors and related facilities may be targeted in order to cause a radioactive release while also causing a disruption in power generation and causing a high-fear factor. A high-level radioactive release would result in casualties over an extended period of time as a result of increased cancer levels.

**Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Reportedly explored attack such targets

**Other Groups:**

- Unknown

**Tactics Applied Against:**

Bombing, Cyber-Based Strike, Hijacking, Sabotage, Suicide Bombing, Vehicular Bombing

**RAIL TARGETS (SUBWAYS & RAIL LINES/STATIONS)**

Rail and subway system lines and their associated stations may be targeted due to their high density of people and the disruption impact on transportation. Both networks also provide ideal dissemination points for chemical and biological attacks.

**Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Reportedly explored attacking such targets

**Other Groups:**

- Attacked by Aum Shinrikyo

**Tactics Applied Against:**

Biological, Bombing, Chemical, Cyber-Based Strike, Hijacking, Hostage Taking, Radiological, Sabotage, Shooting, Suicide Bombing, Vehicular Bombing

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## **SHOPPING MALLS/HIGH DENSITY LOCATIONS**

Shopping malls and other location that frequently contain a high density of people may be targeted for attacks designed to cause mass casualties. In some cases various targets may also hold symbolic value or carry a farther reaching impact on the economy if successfully attacked.

### **Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Reportedly explored attacking such targets

### **Other Groups:**

- Such targets are routinely attacked by groups such as the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, Hamas, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad

### **Tactics Applied Against:**

Biological, Bombing, Chemical, Hostage Taking, Radiological, Shooting, Suicide Bombing, Vehicular Bombing

## **WATER FACILITIES**

Water facilities and critical components of the network which supply water to cities may be targeted for contamination, destruction or disruption.

### **Al-Qaeda Targeting:**

- Unknown

### **Other Groups:**

- An incident in July 2001 in Tel Aviv, Israel resulted in the disruption of water to people in the metropolitan area for two days. Public accounts claimed the contaminant was fertilizer and was accidental.

### **Tactics Applied Against:**

Biological, Bombing, Chemical, Cyber-Based Strike, Radiological, Sabotage, Vehicular Bombing

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