




THE TRAINING

Government officials receive new training to detect threats.

By Michael Laff



The old joke about the lonely security officer patrolling an empty corridor is long past. Today that same officer is watching your every move and the movements of others without being noticed.

As security procedures grow more aggressive, at times even confrontational, training regimens are changing to reflect this pattern. Security personnel are trained to be constantly alert, yet they must also be subtle enough not to tip off an attacker or intrude upon employees passing through a building or travelers clearing a security checkpoint.

This kind of unseen, stealth-like intelligence gathering is part of the new government training regimen provided to security personnel in airports, law enforcement agencies, and public buildings. Mixed in with the heightened alert is a greater need for personal interaction. Security officials need to make quick judgments about who is and who is not a threat without offending innocent bystanders.

ED EYE



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"I was a police officer, and I don't know what a suspicious person is, but I know what suspicious activity is," says Rich Cordivari, national training director for Pennsylvania-based AlliedBarton Security Services.

Because U.S. law enforcement lacks a history of training to prevent terrorist attacks, many government agencies and airport authorities have sought out Israeli counterterrorism experts to retrain security officials on how to recognize and respond to potential terrorist threats. Such training represents a paradigm shift for most agencies that sharpened their focus on preventing a recurrence of terrorist attacks.

Checkpoint

//Airport security is the most obvious field where procedures have changed in the past five years. Every individual working along the air travel continuum receives training to increase awareness. More personnel attend classes and more law enforcement officials undergo aggressive training regimens. All major airports now have their own training facility for screeners, according to Amy Kudwa, a spokeswoman for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

Even though passengers understand why security is in-

creased, an element of customer service training is necessary for TSA employees.

"We're the most public-facing agency," Kudwa says. "Employees are dealing with people who are not happy with the process. The training is meant to equip people to be able to defuse a situation rather than escalate it."

Airport officials are taught to take note of out-of-the-ordinary travel patterns, such as purchasing a last-minute ticket, paying in cash, or buying a one-way ticket. Any individual of any description could fit this pattern and thus trigger additional scrutiny.

Joe Brescia, branch manager for New York-based U.S. Security Associates, says he is often questioned by his own staff members at airports because he has to purchase tickets at the last minute. He recognizes that the officials are just being thorough.

U.S. Security Associates is one company that handles training for the second layer of trained professionals who conduct follow-up inspections and question "selectees," a term that refers to travelers whose profile or travel patterns triggers suspicion. Like their TSA peers, contract security personnel stationed near the gate who conduct secondary searches even receive public relations training, specifically to prepare them for passengers who may object loudly to searches.

Employees receive TSA-approved training, which requires completion of a test to demonstrate proficiency in addition to receiving a one-week training session in document verification to distinguish valid forms of identification from forgeries. Every six months TSA audits the training curriculum.

Every screening protocol requires some form of formal instruction. The contractors receive training on how to properly use the wand—the hand-held electronic devices that screeners use to scan passengers who pass through the checkpoint. The procedure differs depending upon whether the individual is male or female. When conducting luggage searches, the staff is instructed to use gloves and search thoroughly without ransacking the baggage.

"We train them to be sensitive to people's possessions without letting anything suspicious get on the airplane," Brescia explains.

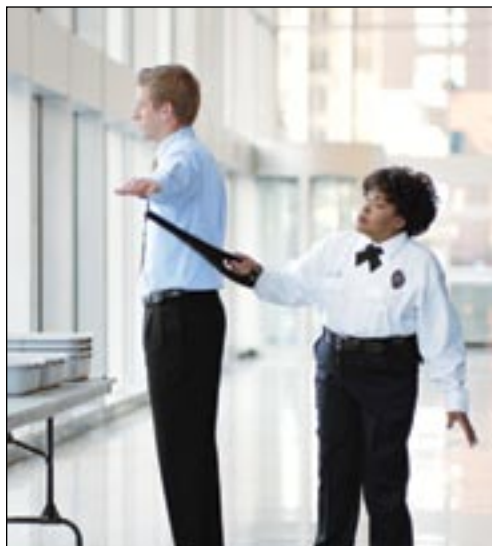
Counterstrike

//What the hijackings of 2001 taught security professionals was the need to train personnel to see an airport the way a potential attacker would view it. Aaron Cohen, a tactical trainer with Los Angeles-based IMS Security, who lived in Israel and served with Israeli counterterrorism units, now leads teams that are preparing for possible terrorist attacks. The methods he teaches include aggressive tactics required to thwart an actual or potential threat.

"After 9/11, government agencies were forced to look at new training methods," he says. "This government never had to deal with this kind of terrorist threat."

Cohen trains SWAT teams to amass what he calls a "predictive profile," a checklist of details that arouse suspicion. An older man who is dressed too casually or a younger man dressed in an expensive suit are two possible tip-offs. He emphasizes that such signs are only parts of a larger puzzle that enable security officials to maintain awareness.

"We're looking for clothes that don't match or the white knuckle guy who won't let go of a bag," he says. "We look for





someone who wants to stay away from security.”

Security officials need to be trained to look for anything out of the ordinary and build a mental database of gestures and behavior. As such, Cohen trains security personnel to watch for cars parked in front of a terminal for long periods or individuals who, at first glance, appear to blend with a group only to be independent from the same group upon closer inspection because of their age or gender. A well-trained security official is one who continually processes information and is exhausted at the end of a shift, he says.

When training a tactical team at Los Angeles LAX Airport recently, Cohen began with a survey of the restaurant area in the international terminal that overlooks the check-in area. The location of the restaurants, resting above the screening area, provides an ideal spot for any potential attacker to gather intelligence. Anyone is permitted to enter the area.

Once the theoretical training is complete, Cohen sets up

a simulated airport hostage scenario with 40 to 50 targets, including attackers and hostages. The intent is to teach SWAT teams what Cohen calls an “Israeli-style” method of shooting into a large crowd, something that U.S.-based tactical teams traditionally do not do for fear of casualties.

“Every second wasted means another person will be killed,” Cohen says.

The objective is to transform a tactical response team into a counterterrorism unit. All of the intensive training represents a major shift in thinking for most security officials.

“U.S. law enforcement is liability savvy,” Cohen says. “They tend to wait it out and attempt to negotiate. In a terrorist situation, the longer you wait, the more people you lose. We teach them to move, move, move.”

The counterterrorist methods Cohen teaches can be applied to other hostage taking scenarios, such as school shootings, because the mindset of the attackers is similar. In contrast to an armed robber who is

shooting to facilitate an escape, the attacker at an airport or school will shoot until he dies.

Cohen helped train SWAT team officials in Houston and Montgomery, Alabama; BART in San Francisco; and a Delaware school district. In order to simulate a hostage situation, BART officials donated a railcar that was used during training. The specific details regarding how officials recover the hostages are classified, but Cohen describes the methods as “aggressive but selective.” The Delaware school district donated buses for a simulated hostage rescue scenario.

“We give them as many realistic scenarios as possible,” Cohen says. “We want them to feel cocky at the end of the training so they can carry out their motions without thinking about it.”

Another recent training project was completed for a nuclear facility in Michigan, where Cohen led a combined force of FBI and Department of Homeland Security officials, county and state police, and a private security contractor. A tryout was held that led to the creation of

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a special forces unit of about 50 individuals.

The unit, dubbed “project viper,” was designed to counter a potential attack on a nuclear facility. The project is slated to be replicated at seven nuclear sites across the United States. Nuclear sites are complicated because of the number of 90-degree corridors that lead to dead corners, which must be checked but often prevent security forces from being able to survey an entire area, Cohen says. The tactical unit was taught how to move through the facility quickly and accurately despite encountering numerous obstacles to a clear view.

Profiling versus prevention

// By far the most controversial issue in security is profiling. Critics say that airport and law enforcement officials target individuals of Middle Eastern descent or other minority groups unfairly without sufficient evidence. Yet security trainers insist that profiling or taking measure of any individual requires making educated guesses about someone’s dress along with their mannerisms and most impor-

tantly, their reason for being in a particular place.

“There is a level of profiling we all do,” says Mark Fair, managing director of Virginia-based Vance Executive Protection, who conducts security training seminars for federal government agencies and other security clients. “Race doesn’t matter. It’s based on behavior.”

As Fair explains, every attacker displays some element of what he describes as “pre-attack” behavior. The attacker often displays sporadic eye movement, nervous hand gestures, or may focus too much attention on the individual or an individual’s protective unit.

Another misunderstood element of security, particularly at airports, is the use of what Fair calls “push pin” behavior—tactics designed to ignite a reaction. Whether an officer asks for additional forms of identification or asks about an intended destination, officials with TSA and elsewhere are taught to see if their actions trigger some kind of unusual behavior, such as excessive sweating or nervous responses.

People who conduct training on effective profiling often

become unwitting suspects themselves. As an Israeli who consults federal intelligence agencies, Offer Baruch recognizes the racial sensitivity in the United States, but says that a few minutes of inconvenience under questioning is outweighed by the need to defuse a potential security threat.

“I’m dark-skinned and I get stopped in airports for questioning,” he says. “My response is that this guy is just doing his job.”

Culture clash

// Baruch, a consultant with Houston-based Infrastruct Security, is teaching the FBI and the Pentagon about cultural mores that are essential for understanding the Muslim community, knowledge that many U.S.-based intelligence agencies lacked in the past.

During presentations, Baruch, a former director of security for the Israeli airliner El-Al, emphasizes the importance Arabs place upon treating someone with honor and respect. It is important for security officers to conduct questioning and screening discreetly. Among Arabs, he says, it is highly of-



fensive to conduct searches of someone's person or their possessions in full view of colleagues or family.

"When I worked in airports, I always made sure to have a small room where I could question someone, make x-rays, and search for chemicals," Baruch said. "After the search, I told them they were free to fly."

During a recent meeting with Chicago-based FBI detectives, one detective told Baruch how she visited the home of an Arab family after receiving reports of domestic abuse. A family member reported that one room in the house was under lock and key and off limits to all family members except the father. Baruch recognized an anomaly.

"Americans have private space where they don't let anybody in," he says. "Arabs don't have that. If they do, it might be for a reason."

Upon hearing his analysis, the FBI detective said she would make another attempt to visit the residence and gain access to the room.

In training security officials for work in airports and public buildings, Baruch teaches security officers how to distinguish people who are there for a specific purpose, such as travel, versus people who may be gathering intelligence about the site. Most of the training involves teaching officers how to survey an area with a critical eye. Individuals arriving at an airport, for example, walk with a purpose or are engaged in activity, whereas a person gathering intelligence is standing, looking around, or viewing monitors. One cannot gather intelligence without stopping to look around, which provides the first clue, he says.

"You have to ask yourself, 'Where would I go to obtain information?'" Baruch says. "It could be at the entrance or in a parking garage. You take a position where nobody can see you.



You need to position yourself as a terrorist would."

Likewise, individuals who enter secure buildings but appear out of the ordinary should be asked specific questions about their identity, who they work for, and whom they intend to see. It is important for security officials to escort the visitor to the floor and not just provide immediate access, Baruch says.

A lot of surveillance requires sharp observation regarding the timing and likelihood of an individual's presence. Baruch advises trainees to analyze an individual's dress, the suitability of their location, and how much time they spend in a particular spot. The entire calculation lasts only seconds but can be crucial to determining a person's motivation.

The instincts necessary for patrolling a building resemble the tactics needed for securing an airport. AlliedBarton trains security officers to work in government buildings, such as the International Monetary Fund in Washington, DC, and New York City's Department of Administrative Services.

Cordivari says the company's security officials are trained to look for anything out of the ordinary. Officers learn to recognize the building's routine, such as the arrival and departure of regular staff and the timing of deliveries.

Suspicious activity that guards are trained to be aware

of could include vehicles that are parked near the building for long periods. Any unmarked or unoccupied vehicles should prompt scrutiny. Likewise, guards are taught to notice any vehicles that appear to carry excessive weight on the tires or emit an odd odor.

Officers in training begin with eight hours of basic training, then receive 16 hours of onsite training. New officers receive a handbook for self-study. During their first year, a security officer will receive 30 to 40 hours of training. As they progress on the job, officers can achieve a master's level of security certification with additional training.

"Classroom training is just the start," Cordivari says. "We view it as a training process, not a training event."

Emergency preparedness requires working smoothly with multiple agencies in a short time frame. To that end, Cordivari says Allied Barton hosts regular terrorism awareness seminars with officials from Homeland Security, local police, and emergency technicians. Building security officials are typically the first on the scene and must be prepared to assist law enforcement and emergency personnel. Improving communication across multiple agencies is crucial.

"Whether it is terrorism or a natural disaster, the principles are the same," he says. "We build awareness of every function so everyone knows their role. It is a team building exercise. During a terrorist incident there is a lot of activity, and the priority is to move people safely from danger without panic."

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MOST OF THE TRAINING INVOLVES TEACHING OFFICERS HOW TO SURVEY AN AREA WITH A CRITICAL EYE. INDIVIDUALS ARRIVING AT AN AIRPORT, FOR EXAMPLE, WALK WITH A PURPOSE OR ARE ENGAGED IN ACTIVITY, WHEREAS A PERSON GATHERING INTELLIGENCE IS STANDING, LOOKING AROUND, OR VIEWING MONITORS.//