

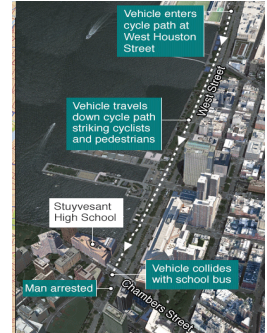


WATCHLINE



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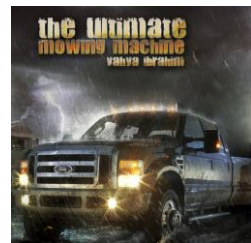
Truck Ramming Kills 8 in Deadliest Terror Attack in NYC since 9/11 – A 29-year-old Uzbekistan national living in N.J. drove into a busy bike path along West Street in Manhattan with his rented flatbed truck and proceeded to mow down cyclists and pedestrians for three-quarters of a mile, killing eight and injuring 12. The vehicle rampage, which began on West Houston Street, ended when the truck exited the Hudson River Greenway and crashed into an occupied school bus at Chambers Street in Tribeca. The terrorist then exited the vehicle holding firearms (later identified as pellet and paintball guns) while yelling “allahu akbar,” and was quickly shot and wounded by police. Though at least two others are being investigated, it appears that the man acted alone as an ISIS sympathizer, as indicated by a handwritten note found in the truck.



Assessment: This latest ramming follows a disturbing trend in terrorist vehicle attacks over the last few years, such as the incidents in Nice, Berlin, London, and Barcelona. Jihadist propaganda has been encouraging ramming attacks since at least 2010. Members should reinforce security basics, such as 360-degree scene surveys, remaining alert for secondary attacks on responders, and securing emergency vehicles/apparatus. Also, consider one-vehicle accidents with mass pedestrian casualties, especially those off designated roadways, as possible acts of terrorism. Patient care can be complicated at ramming incidents as victims may be spread out over a large distance. The NYC Marathon is this Sunday, and the Thanksgiving Day Parade is later this month, which attract millions, respectively, in a heightened security environment.

CIA Releases 470,000 Bin Laden Files Confiscated in 2011 Raid – Hundreds of thousands of documents and computer files captured in the May 2011 raid on Osama bin Laden’s compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, when the al Qaeda leader was killed by U.S. forces, are being electronically released by the CIA after years of pressure by advocate groups, such as [FDD’s Long War Journal](#). According to the media and advocacy company, “it will take years for experts and researchers to comb through this treasure trove of information.” However, some preliminary findings include details of al Qaeda’s relationship with Iran, along with evidence that bin Laden was more in control of al Qaeda’s global activities than previously thought, and more updated images of OBL’s son Hamza (more than previously available), who is being touted as the heir apparent to his father’s terror empire.

Assessment: Already many internet sites are offering headlines about OBL’s curious choices for entertainment and activity during his relative isolation in the Pakistan compound. The net result of these comical, attention-grabbing headlines, may be to dilute the seriousness of OBL’s existence, but on the other hand, if used properly, such insights might be used as effective counter-messaging—highlighting unflattering materials and those contradictory to his messaging to followers. It is important that these intelligence documents not be downplayed because several years have passed since his death and their recovery. Al Qaeda and their affiliates have proven their long, patient, and tireless outlook in global jihad (thus the title, *Long War Journal*).



Global Jihad Inspiration Harnesses Hate and Hopelessness – The Tribeca terrorist followed a 2010 prescription by al Qaeda, and more recently, tactics “[right out of the ISIS playbook](#),” to conduct a ramming attack. The homegrown jihadist was the latest, but certainly not the last in [a succession](#) of militant Islamists using vehicles to target defenseless pedestrians in crowded and/or significant urban areas. The [second issue](#) (fall 2010) of AQAP’s online English-language magazine, *Inspire*, featured do-it-yourself “Open Source Jihad” instructions titled, “The Ultimate Mowing Machine,” which suggested the use of a heavy-duty (4WD) pick-up truck in narrow places offering “less chance for people to run away.” The article also urged avoidance of “locations where other vehicles may intercept you,” ability to “pick up as much speed” as possible, “preferably ‘pedestrian only locations that exist in some downtown (city center) areas,’” and to “keep on fighting until you achieve martyrdom.” This followed the now infamous “Make a Bomb in the Kitchen of your Mom,” found under “Open Source Jihad” in the [fledgling issue](#) of *Inspire*.



Assessment: It was revealed that the driver of the rented truck had planned his attack for up to a year, but his plans were faulty as he expected much greater pedestrian traffic due to the Halloween holiday. He also intended to continue the carnage towards the Brooklyn Bridge, but was interrupted by a collision with a school bus. Previous ramming attacks have been enhanced by the use of knives or guns by drivers (and passengers in some cases) when the ramming comes to a stop. And although his guns were not lethal, he may have successfully carjacked a passerby and continued his rampage, but for the quick take-down by First Precinct police. Less than 24 hours after the horrific attack, an armed murder suspect, who is homeless and an ISIS adherent, [was captured](#) at the Port Authority Bus Terminal in midtown. Like the Tribeca terrorist, he was proud and defiant.

DoD to Host Massive Blackout Drill – The Department of Defense will be [conducting](#) a “communications interoperability” training exercise simulating a near total nationwide blackout due to a solar superstorm, running from November 4th-6th. “This exercise will begin with a national massive coronal mass ejection event which will impact the national power grid as well as all forms of traditional communication, including landline telephone, cellphone, satellite, and internet connectivity,” said the U.S. Army’s [MARS](#) manager. The military will be working very closely with the civilian-run American Radio Relay League ([ARRL](#)), and the wider amateur radio community (ham operators, etc.). No communications will actually be shut down for the exercise.

Assessment: With Puerto Rico experiencing virtually total failure of its electric grid, as well as land and cellular phone services, in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, emergency managers had to rely on older, more robust communication technologies, namely ham radios. These civilian volunteers affiliated with the ARRL, who are licensed with the FCC, are qualified to communicate verbally on shortwave radios, and some even know Morse Code. After he was able to cut through trees blocking his road, one operator in Puerto Rico packed up his radio gear and [headed straight](#) for the nearest American Red Cross (ARC) station, where he was able to plug in and communicate regionally with other operators, relaying information on patient care and other essential services. The ham operators even provided direct support to responders. Lastly, The DoD exercise is being conducted [amid fears](#) of a nuclear/EMP attack by North Korea.

Despite Tragedy, New York Turning the Tide on Terrorism – Tuesday’s terror attack was the deadliest in NYC since 9/11. In fact, most would be hard-pressed to even recall other terror-related fatalities in NYC in the last 16 years (responder remember the politically-motivated assassinations of NYPD detectives [Rafael Ramos](#), [Wenjian Liu](#), and [Miosotis Familia](#)). As NYC continues as the top target of (jihadist) terrorism, the lack of such deadly attacks is a testament to counterterrorism efforts at every level. Although there is a sense of defenselessness associated with the type of attack that occurred this week—lone jihadist and low tech—there is something to be said for the absence of a 9/11 or a 2/26/(93) “spectacular” event.



Greenwich Village Halloween Revelers

Assessment: The Halloween afternoon ramming attack along the peaceful West Street pedestrian path resulted in more deaths than the 1993 WTC bombing. Though fresh and painful, the passing of time will prove that despite the death toll, the perception and impact of the attack is diminished. One theory put forth by [RAND Corp.](#) is “[Terrorism Fatigue](#),” which holds that ISIS’s ‘kitchen sink approach’ to claiming attacks large and small will actually reduce the feeling of being terrorized—a normalization or numbing effect. But in NYC, it is more than that. A decision was quickly made to continue on with the NYC Village Halloween Parade, which drew thousands of spectators just hours after and blocks away from the tragic attack, and over 50,000 will run in the NYC Marathon on Sunday, November 5th. New York’s governor and NYC’s mayor made it a point to join with the crowds in a display of strength. Both men, in discussing the attack, said that New Yorkers would not be cowered, that New Yorkers should go on with their lives, and repeatedly referred to the attacker as “depraved” and “a coward.” The objective of terror is to terrorize, and many lone/homegrown jihadists may be seeking notoriety, in addition to martyrdom. In these ways, the tide is turning.

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