Richard Marcinko on â€œTerrorist Tacticsâ€•

Description

It has been 13 years since Richard Marcinkoâ€™s autobiography, Rogue Warrior was published. He was the first commander of SEAL TEAM SIX, back when it didnâ€™t exist, and was the Navyâ€™s first full time counter terrorist organization. It would be wise to review his findings (hint: READ HIS BOOK!)

I read it with great interest many years ago, and as I listened to the discussions about the errant pilot in a Cessna 150 that flew too close to the White House and Capitol buildings today, a piece of Richardâ€™s story came back to me.

Close to the end of Rogue Warrior, Richard Marcinko describes how his unit, SEAL Team 6, was tasked to conduct a terrorist attack on a Naval Base in Southern California. I donâ€™t recall if it was Pt. Mugu Naval Air Station, or the Naval Weapons Systems Engineering Station at Port Hueneme, but in either case, they were bases with perimeter fences, and the general public did not have access to the base.

default watermark

What has stuck with me all these years was Richardâ€™s description of his tactics. He had a two week window for the exercise. His could attack at any time during this period. Start with the premise that we have not manned our bases to have a person physically present at every point of a a perimeter, but we have elected to place guarded access points (gates), and then use physical structures, most usually, cyclone type fencing topped with barbed or concertina wire.

The base to be attacked knew they had to put out vehicle and foot patrols to protect against the impending attack. If youâ€™re the bad guys, what do you do? Well, for a bunch of SEALs (remember, they were playing terrorist roles) with two weeks to just get in and show they could, the answer was easy. Prep your gear, do your scouting, then itâ€™s party time for almost all the rest of the two week window.

Why would they do that, besides the fact that most every sailor wonâ€™t turn down paid â€œliberty â€• time, when they had a mission to complete?

Simple: The base security had to guard every approach, all the time. Because they were not manned to do this under regular operating conditions, it meant they would have to suck it up and put a much more intense watch schedule into effect. Over time, itâ€™s easy to figure out that before long, the defenders would be dog tired, trying to cover everywhere, all the time.

What happens when you get tired? Complacency and lack of attention to detail. Both, in a combat environment, will kill you or the others you are with or protecting.

The SEALs partied it up in San Diego, then headed up within a few days of the end of the time frame for the exercise, made their final checks and coordination, and they successfully (and easily) made it into the base.

We have been in that set of circumstances since well before the morning of 9/11/2001. We have made conscious, money related decisions, even back a number of years, to acknowledge that â€œweâ€• cannot defend against any kind of attack everywhere and all the time.

The inevitable finger pointing will come, most likely as early as tonight, saying things were chaos, there was no plan, no one knew what to do, yadda, yadda, yadda, blah, blah, blah. The result was a slow, small aircraft, with a very tiny radar â€œpaintâ€• (return signature) was detected and people were alerted and sent away from the possible target (in a worst case scenario), or directed to shelter. Not only did the White House get the message, but so did at least the Capitol and the Supreme Court buildings. I heard they had people cleared out in about 4 minutes. Pretty good response time, Iâ€™d say, given itâ€™s not a ship full of trained sailors being called to General Quarters. Actually, in light of that, 4 minutes to herd a whole bunch of civilians, both in and out of the Federal Govermentâ€™s employ, that quickly is remarkable.

I for one am pleased at the response.

Consider what Richard Marcinko taught us back in the 1980â€™s, and told about in 1992. It applies to the circumstances of today, but the â€œadversariesâ€• arenâ€™t going to just embarass the base commander and his security departmentâ€¦

default watermark

Category

1. Geo-Political
2. History
3. Military
4. Navy
5. Political

Date Created
May 11, 2005
Author
admin