Criminal investigators spend years studying criminal behavior to better understand and counter crime. The field of terrorism is no different. It is a specialized subject that requires serious study, and requires that those in the front line of defense be as knowledgeable as possible. Today’s police officers, security managers, and customs officers have received most of their terrorism education in short briefings, or simply via magazines or television. In the coming years, security professionals may receive more specialized training and education on terrorism—or they may not. This book is intended as a resource for those who realize that they need to begin their own terrorism education today.

The most difficult and critical component of terrorism education is learning how to recognize and predict an attack. Those responsible for homeland security need to be well versed in terrorist attack preincident indicators (TAPIs). TAPIs are behaviors; they are actions terrorists must take before they can carry out an attack. In the law enforcement and intelligence communities, some TAPIs may be referred to as behavioral science or “profiling.” For example, Secret Service teams are trained to watch individuals’ behaviors—as well as their race, age, sex, or appearance, which are secondary indicators. The Israeli airline El Al has used this behavior-recognition approach for decades and is generally successful at stopping potential terrorists from skyjacking its airliners.

Until recently the United States has had a much less diligent attitude toward security—and terrorism in particular—than many other countries in the world, but we have since learned. Why even more diligence? First, America is a huge nation with a higher level of domestic freedom than domestic security; and second, the United States is a declared target of future terrorist attacks. The devastation caused on 9/11 may, tragically, only inspire others to continue the trend.
All members of the anti- and counterterrorism community need to seek answers to these questions:

- Who represents a threat?
- What options do those people have for carrying out harm?
- How might they carry out an attack?
- Most importantly, what behaviors can be observed when they are preparing or ready to act?

These questions will eventually lead to observable behaviors and actions of terrorists and their supporters.

For example, if terrorists want to disperse a chemical weapon, they must first acquire and move the chemicals, locate and stock a safe location, select a target and observe it, deploy a delivery team and support it, and create a dispersal system and move it to the target. All of these actions are detectable to the trained observer. Before we can detect terrorist activity, however, we must first change our perceptions about who terrorists might be.

**ADOPT AN INTELLIGENCE-BASED APPROACH TO ANTITERRORISM**

Understanding and countering terrorism requires adjustment in perspective. Security professionals need to respect and understand terrorists, recognize the preincident indicators of terrorist activities, and competently analyze intelligence information. Even in this day of increasing “lone wolf” operators, terrorist attacks require planning, and planning can lead to red flags and indicators—opportunities to thwart such attacks.

1. **One must learn to respect the terrorist’s capabilities:**
   You don’t have to agree with terrorists in order to recognize their abilities and understand them. Terrorism as a political tool may be abhorrent; however, you need to identify and recognize the grievances of a particular terrorist group and—for lack of a better word—respect the intelligence and tenacity they use to perform terrible deeds. Why were they motivated to take up their cause? How effective are their tactics? If you disregard a demonstrated capability—or dismiss their ability to analyze weak spots and work around them because you think terrorists are inferior, you may create a blind spot in your security. To get an edge on terrorists, you must learn to see the world from behind their mask.
2. **Observe street-level behaviors:**

   Learn the terrorist attack preincident indicators of a terrorist operation in the works. No matter how clever terrorists may be, they’re not ghosts. Terrorists and their support personnel must perform certain behaviors in order to carry out their plans. They have specific roles and duties, many of which are observable to the trained eye.

3. **Analyze source information:**

   Basic analysis must be applied to any data or evidence collected by integrating intelligence assets, using computerized analytical programs, or just asking the right questions. Clearly, as we learned in the September 11 attacks, without cross checking the data and applying common sense the analytical process breaks down.

   Field officers must make every effort to match the observed or suspected criminal behaviors with terrorist intelligence. Analysis does not have to be a long, drawn-out process. Even the simplest key word associations comparing known intelligence to known capability can find potential TAPIs. Prior to September 11, the words *Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda,* and *pilot training* in the same sentence should have spelled out suicide skyjacking to most people who worked the al-Qaeda mission. All of these words were found in one FBI agent’s report prior to the attack. Al-Qaeda’s global capabilities, matched with bin Laden’s personal animosity toward America and a previous skyjacking for this purpose by a group associated with al-Qaeda (the skyjacking of an Air France airliner by the Algerian GIA [Groupe Islamique Armee] in 1994) should have made even the coolest intelligence analyst spill his coffee and issue a dire warning. Several did just that.

   These key steps—respect, observe, and analyze—represent an intelligence-based approach to predicting terrorist actions. With a few exceptions, the intelligence-based approach is surprisingly new to many law enforcement agencies; stereotypes and heavy reliance on technology still dominate our security perspective to a great degree.

**AVOID A STEREOTYPE-BASED APPROACH TO ANTITERRORISM**

Why do we stereotype terrorists? Let’s look at a basic fact: America is new to terrorism. We have a hard time understanding who would
carry out such acts, so, to answer our own questions, we create stereotypes of “the terrorist” in the absence of facts. Some people see terrorists as incompetent cowards who can’t stand up to us; others consider them brilliant but suicidal bogeymen who can’t be stopped. Until September 11, the predominant image of a terrorist in many people’s minds was a cartoon character carrying a big bomb with a lit fuse.

In educating members of the armed forces and law enforcement, I often hear terrorists referred to as “crazy rag-heads” or “camel jockeys.” One senior member of the US House of Representatives, in an oblique reference to al-Qaeda, recommended arresting people with “diapers on their heads.” These attitudes may have contributed to our intelligence community’s focus on finding the stereotypical terrorist while the atypical ones operated with complete impunity within our borders.

But there is another damaging stereotype at work: that of the current counterterrorism effort. Some inflamed political rhetoric has created an inaccurate stereotype of how fast and effective the “war on terrorism” has been. Americans now believe that we can stop terrorism by sending out our military forces to get terrorists, “dead or alive.” That may be true to some extent, but not entirely. Terrorism cannot be defeated in a grand war. Trying preemptively to hunt down every person in the world who might carry out or participate in an act of terrorism is akin to trying to hunt and catch a few specific ants in Texas: a nearly impossible task.

Terrorism against America can only be defeated through careful intelligence collection, surveillance, and cooperative efforts among law enforcement and intelligence agencies. One thing is certain: We may not get every operative, but we can stop key people at critical junctures before an attack occurs. This book will assist you in this effort.

**DEFENSIVE ACTION: THE DETECT, DETER, DEFEND (3D) DOCTRINE**

Your role in stopping terrorism is to learn how to use the information presented in this manual to see terrorists, make terrorists stop their planning, and/or stop terrorists as they attack. The US government’s force-protection doctrine is based on the “3D” concept of “detect, deter, and defend.” It is a highly effective concept that can be applied to the homeland security community as well.

You, as a professional, will detect the terrorist act in its planning stages through intelligence collection and use the intelligence-based
approach of analysis by taking aggressive action to deter an attack before the terrorists leave their safe house. These are the funda-
mentals necessary to defend our nation from attack.

But before we can truly use this process, it helps to know a few things about the terrorists themselves.