

Schools at Risk!

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I would suggest to all that our schools and children are at mortal risk based on conversations I've had recently with the foremost experts in active shooter incidents and school safety in the United States. First and foremost, there is no other event that galvanizes, horrifies, and scars a community like a mass casualty event involving children or students. Unfortunately, we live in an era of mass media coverage and weakened values where psychopaths and cold blooded murders like Harris and Klebold and more recently, Sueng-Hui Cho, are looked upon as a benchmark for planning and executing a mass casualty event, and even worshipped as heroes, by the disenfranchised youth of today. However, because of these heinous acts, our schools, first responders, and SRTs have become better prepared to handle active shooter scenarios, and train for them accordingly. Obviously, there is more work to be done, especially by the school and university administrators. Most are still reluctant to even consider such an event could transpire, and therefore, continue to hide their heads in the sand hoping nothing of this caliber will ever occur at their respective academic institutions. The truly enlightened school administrator has recognized the phenomenon and initiated strategies with the experts and the community to combat them.

Unfortunately, the worst is yet to come, based upon my conversations, and I daresay, we are unprepared and the US will suffer if we do not act now. Intelligence suggests that there were multiple Chechen rebels that escaped from the Beslan School Massacre. These rebels have been recruited by al-Qaeda and formed into separate cells, actively planning a full scale coordinated attack on US soil against children and our schools. I have stated that we are better prepared for an active shooter scenario, but we are woefully ill prepared for such a coordinated terrorist attack. Equally frightening is the fact that there has not been an attack on US soil for over seven years, and our troop withdrawal from overseas is perceived as American weakness and promotes the opportunity to take the fight to our territory. The challenge is apparent. The gauntlet has been hurled. We have been warned and all must rise to the challenge; not only our valiant first responders, but entire communities: parents, educators, businesses, everybody. Large scale inter-agency exercises must be planned and coordinated NOW, not for a lone gunman, but for multiple terrorists laying siege and killing hostages in our schools. Our schools and children are at risk. Proactive training and development is the only answer to prepare for the struggle to come.