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W7 Executive Protection Pre-mission Considerations



W7 recently contracted and conducted an executive protection (EP) contract for an American Businessman traveling to Asia. The purpose of the trip was to specifically close business with a customer vendor who surprisingly became verbally aggressive during the previous encounter. Due to the current situation in the world in general and the Asian business boom; W7 believes the needs for this type of service will undoubtedly increase as the need for business to expand into new markets around the world, some in hostile or denied areas (re: supporting article from the ASIS Newsletter dated 7 June, 2011 where AON expands on the need for careful consideration when operating overseas <http://www.postonline.co.uk/post/news/2076568/aon-threat-political-unrest-equal-terrorism> so we, here at W7, would like to share some of the pre-mission planning considerations we used for this mission with you and hear some feedback from for discussion with others in the business.

W7 was contacted by associate and trusted friend about a phone call we would receive in the near future; the friend asked me to take it seriously. Shortly thereafter I was contacted by the Florida businessman, and a meeting was set-up shortly thereafter in the Washington, DC area for face to face talks since he was apprehensive about talking openly on the phone. This piqued my interest since his concern for OPSEC was high and his cryptic conversation increased my imagination for cloak & dagger operations.

The initial interview consisted of the five *W's* (*who, what, where, when and why*). The accuracy of this information is critical, so take a little time and think about the questions to ask your potential client in order to obtain the information needed to build the OPLAN. Just as important is learn to listen to what the client is saying and their body language that accompanies the answers. Analyzing those two points can provide you much information, including the fact the client might be covering up something that could involve you in something criminal. In this case, there was no suspicion on my part of the client's legitimate need to dissolve the current business deal. Be prepared to modify your questions to help see the whole picture and look below the surface of the story. You have two ears; two eyes and one month; use them proportionately. Listening to the client will also help you understand their intent. **Note:** *The information you derive from the interview and subsequent research will help you to determine the threat level to your client and yourself.*

Understanding the client's intent will permit you, the operator, to use your creativity to achieve that desired intent, as long as no security principles are broken, that might expose you or your client. This is where you'll separate the operator from the functionary hired to carry a weapon or to interdict a potential threat to your client. If the interview achieves its desired result, the client should gain confidence in your ability to protect their physical well being and business interest. Be professional at all times, your client's confidence in you will mitigate the client's urge to micromanage the security operations and concentrate on their business. This will ensure repeat business.

General research for potential threats of the area of operations should include the following 6 points:

Existence: Determine if a threat from a group or groups exist in the Area of Operations (AO).

Capabilities: Have a good understanding in realistic and objective terms of the group[s] capabilities.

Intention: Most terrorist groups are motivated by an extreme belief system or ideology. Criminal groups are motivated by profit. In this case, former business associates, although less likely to be lethal, could be problematic nonetheless. All groups should be considered, although this was business was not related, bin Laden was killed the day my client arrived.

History: Separate the detailed historical study of each group of each group; it is of great importance to you.

Targeting: Look closely at the historical pattern of target selection and timing. Consider events that might trigger that particular pattern.

Security Environment: The security environment study must be accomplished in view of other assessment factors, i.e. group[s] history, strengths and abilities which lead to security vulnerabilities.

There are multiple methods and specific points to consider when you are trying to protect someone or something in a hostile or denied area. It is up to you, the professional security agent, to determine what's best for your client, then to consult with them to develop the plan.

After conducting our research using the 6 paragraphs above, it became apparent that time would be a factor preventing W7 from utilizing all the tools at our disposal. Therefore, alternative plans were devised for the execution of the client's security plan. As always the KISS principle was applied. W7, a member of ASIS, went on the ASIS International website and researched assets already operating in the AO. We selected 10 security specialists in the AO and a board member for the local chapter to help us vet the candidates for the contract.

W7 put together a general form introduction letter explaining our intent to the selected ASIS security agents; and, with the help of the ASIS local chapter narrowed the field from 10 candidates down to 2. NCNDA's were included with the introduction letter as well. Request for proposals (RFP's) were sent describing the scope of work and estimated time frames for the operation to be conducted. We did not expose full details of the operation purposely in order to exercise operational security (OPSEC) for both

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the client's and W7's safety. Anyone who has traveled to that part of the world can appreciate the extensive time traveled and the need for things to be ready to go when you hit the ground. So W7 decided to scrub and forward the first 2 days to the in country assets hired to provide security for the client under W7's supervision.

A simple operational schedule was drawn for the duration of the trip to coordinate our movements and ensure operational intent was covered. It also helped my client understand exactly what I was trying to do and how I would to meet his intent. Since my background is US Army I pulled up an Excel spreadsheet I already had formatted for the schedule. *(If you are interested in a blank copy of the operation schedule contact W7 through the website with contact information.)*

Another method for creating the operational schedule is to just use Microsoft Outlook's Calendar. It's easy to use, you can disseminate it electronically to those who have a need to know with secure passwords, provided from our website provider, and you can see an hour by hour breakdown of the task, sub-task, and implied task. Another advantage using Outlook for the operations schedule is that special instruction can be inserted into the note area provided underneath the Subject, Location and date time group, to fill in the blanks. I have in the past, used it for billing or time sheet records as well.

During the planning phase, be cognizant of your position and status. A characteristic of many in this field is to take charge of the situation and begin to issue orders or directives to those you are contracted to protect or those around the Principle. Not a bad thing, but you will need to remember one important fact; you are a contractor with little or no authority over the employees of that company. Forgetting this fact can alienate you, get you fired and or reduce your chances for repeat business. So it's a fine line we, as independent security experts, walk when trying to protect the client. Even when you are cognizant of the limits of your position and authority level, but are too forceful in the way you fulfill the important role of protecting the client, you may become ostracized by their staff, thus rendering efforts, however well intentioned, to become ineffective. Not a good position for someone in our business, so don't get caught up in the internal politics or personal agendas of the staff and employees.

Finally, you'll need to take care of the administrative necessities for traveling downrange for this type of work. Visas will need to be acquired in enough time to ensure you will receive it on time to enter the country legally. Remember, you're not traveling to the USA where all you need do is cross the border just about anywhere and immediately be eligible for Social Security. Some countries will actually put you in jail and leave you there. Just ask the two hikers that wondered into Iran 2 ½ years ago. Other countries, like the one we went to on this operation, will just put you on a return flight immediately at your own expense thus leaving your client exposed.

Insurances; emergency medical/evacuation, kidnap and ransom (*K&R*), life and dismemberment, etc. Be sure your shot records are up to date if the vacation spot you are going to features yellow fever or rabies as a part of life in the AO. Reliable ground transportation and lodging (*western standards*) arrangements can be taken care of by the in country support cell you recruit and hire. Be sure to look into the food source and standards, you don't want to get deathly sick while there, your client needs

your expertise. Be sure to develop your equipment list for all equipment needed to execute the job and inventory.

If you are bring sensitive items, i.e. weapons, ammo, radios, body armor etc, be sure they are inventoried and that the weapons are registered with US Customs or you won't get them back in the USA. You will need Host Nation Authorization to bring those weapons into their country and authorization to use deadly force if necessary. Now that isn't granted by what you feel is necessary, so you need to develop Rules of Engagements (*ROE*) for approval by the host nation. In addition to that you'll need to develop Escalation of Force guidelines. By the way, the cost for your insurance has just left the planet, so if there's a way to do the job safely without weapons, then by all means pursue it, but not always feasible.

In closing remember, routines kill, OPSEC is imperative, speed with execution is essential since you don't want anyone setting up on you, and probably most importantly for professionals like us is your billing. Don't under price for what is needed in order to get the contract. Your lives could depend on it.

Be safe and we welcome your comments and input.

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