



Force Protection in the Modern War Zone

By Mr. Gregory Ferguson

Bagram flight line

As I write this article, in the wee hours of a sunny February morning in Afghanistan, the roar of rotor blades from three Marine CH-53s, laden with international security armed forces, draws my attention beyond my room's makeshift Plexiglas® window. The noise level peaks as two AH-64s lift off the tarmac, following the same flight path of their much larger brethren, making me thankful that I am on the right side of this war.

Two weeks before this particular morning, I had jumped onto a C-17 for a short flight south to join my parent unit's—the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry)—Combined Joint Task Force Mountain that had taken up residence in the ruins of an old Afghan hangar at Bagram Air Base. My mission was to help enhance the 10th's force protection plan by reviewing the current plans and procedures and giving the commander input about the base's defense, force protection, emergency services, and security profile. I had done this sort of thing before in Uzbekistan. My commanding general had brought me into the war on terrorism by sending me there to assist Logistics Task Force 507.

You will note as you read this article that this was not an MP-specific mission. It has been my experience, in both Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, that the senior chain of command looks to the MP representatives to pull everything together into a viable force protection plan. More than likely, your chain of command will want quick results. You will be able to provide a force protection plan but, without the proper time and energy, not one that has been coordinated and staffed properly. To have an effective force protection plan, all players must be involved in the development process (especially the emergency service personnel). Everyone must understand the concepts, their roles and the roles of others, and how everything interacts. The intent of this article is to share

my experiences in the “modern” war zone and provide my fellow force protection and physical security officers with a list of proven, viable planning and implementation documents.

Suggested Procedures

The following are some force protection policies and procedures that I have developed from my own experiences. Most of these may be implemented in a base camp with few modifications. The items are not listed in any particular order and are not intended to serve as a 190-Ferguson concept—adapt the list as needed. **Note:** *Remember to stay flexible when using these policies and procedures. The base camp you are responsible for will change daily during the deployment with populations and missions fluctuating constantly.*

To expedite matters and remove obstacles before they start, one person must be in charge—the designated (on orders) theater of operations force protection officer. One force protection officer at each base camp is also needed. Unlike the continental United States garrison environment, force protection, intelligence, security, and emergency services must be tied into and controlled by one entity—the base security operations center (BSOC) or the base camp S3 tactical operations center (TOC). If a BSOC is not available, then a force protection battle captain, armed with a copy of the force protection plan and checklists, located in the TOC will suffice.

Before proceeding with the initial assessment, look for a recent force-protection-vulnerability assessment from higher headquarters. This document is a good starting point and will help you develop solutions to those vulnerabilities already identified. Also, if you are not the first force protection individual at the location, find the existing force protection plan and update it accordingly. It is easier to modify the existing plan than it is to bring in a whole new process that people have to relearn. However, you will need to ensure it includes all force protection and security requirements.

To ensure that procedures and policies are genuine and implemented properly, use the simple **crawl, walk, run** concept:

- **Crawl** means walking around and talking to the players while researching, writing, and coordinating plans.
- **Walk** means exercising and modifying plans through after-action reviews.
- **Run** means routinely enacting the plans in a coordinated and professional manner.

Start your analysis in the base defense mode and adapt, according to intelligence, for base security. If warranted, switch to the base security mode, but always have a plan for reverting expeditiously back to base defense. Begin coordinating the emergency services. Depending on your circumstances, the plan will require several risk assessments before you reach the final product. You should develop the following plans:

- Base defense
- Barrier requirements and placement
- Consequence management
- Giant-voice response
- Airfield operation, fire response, and flight-line security
- Camp security-badge system
- BSOC/the operations of the TOC
- Weapons of mass destruction response
- Emergency service and incident command response—ensure that fire stations are positioned to meet these response requirements:
 - *Five minutes for structural fire
 - *Three minutes for unannounced aircraft-crash rescue
 - *One minute for announced aircraft-crash rescue—check for an adequate supply of foam for aircraft and fuel berms. Ensure that streets are named, signage is in place, and tents are numbered. Fire extinguishers should be placed on a picket outside each tent. Use air horns as fire alert alarms for tents. Purchase smoke and carbon monoxide alarms for tents and administrative areas. Because telephones will probably

not be plentiful, consider using strategically placed call boxes (add rotating lights for instant nighttime recognition if force protection conditions allow).

- Preaccident aviation
- Ground accident
- Notification matrixes
- Ammunition supply point (ASP)
- Lifesaver drill
- Nuclear, biological, and chemical response
- Perimeter security—incorporate different modern technologies ranging from a combination of base defense systems (such as the Q36 counterbattery radar system and Sentinel[®] aircraft tracking system) and base security systems (such as the wide-area-surveillance thermal imager and Tactical Automated Security System). Cheaper and simpler systems are available (LK-100HD/ LK-150HD outdoor infrared [IR] beam detectors, concertina wire, passive IR and thermal imagery cameras, and household motion sensors) and, depending on the intent of their use, make acceptable detection alternatives. In this environment, do not limit yourself to any category or costs. Your job is to provide options and recommendations.
- Spill response—make sure that the firefighters are trained in hazardous-material containment and have the required equipment and spill kits.
- Radio—this is a very critical element. Determine and coordinate the signal requirements (programming software; cables for programming; encryption loader; and cables for XTS 3000, Sabre I and IIIs, and ASTRO mobiles) and design **one** system to meet all activities' requirements. Determine the number of primary and alternate channels, and obtain the frequencies from the responsible C6 or Signal Command. At a minimum, the plan should incorporate emergency service agencies, base command, BSOC/TOC, and security personnel.
- Random-antiterrorism-measures plan (RAMP)—advise the camp units of the upcoming week's RAMP at your weekly force protection meeting.
- Detainee diversion—this concerns the housing of enemy prisoners of war or detainees that may be diverted to your location. A tactical hangar, located as close to the airfield as possible, is a great solution. Remember, the less movement, the better.
- Army and Air Force Exchange Service security—there will probably be a post exchange/base exchange (in a tent or a building) anywhere that there is a camp. Review its location, funds handling procedures, and duress procedures.

Additional Advice

Plan the camp layout.

Develop a building standard for tent placement to minimize the spread of fire. There should be a minimum of 6 feet (12 feet is preferred) between tents—side to side—and 15-foot-wide fire lanes. Proper spacing is imperative—it also lessens soldier casualties during direct and indirect attacks. Initially there will be a push to get the tents up and overlook spacing. You will have to push this aggressively unless spacing restrictions say otherwise. After a risk assessment is completed, the commander may decide to accept the risk of closer tents. In an environment where there is a large amount of dirt and potential mud, plan on contracting for gravel. This will not only ensure that emergency vehicles will not get stuck in the mud, but it will also make for a safer, healthier, and more pleasant living environment.

Determine where the ASP, or temporary ammunition holding area; observation posts; entry-control points; overwatch positions; quick-reaction force; fire; and MP stations will be located. Ensure that survivability and defensive positions are also strategically placed. Make firing-position range cards.

Unify emergency services. Align law enforcement, fire, intelligence, physical security, and medical/ambulance personnel; foreign national soldiers; security (MP and infantry); and interpreters into one entity. There may be some hesitation, but regardless of their branch of service, if the task force unit has operational control over them, develop them into a unified emergency service response capability.

Establish a force protection committee. By involving unit representatives, you can quickly distribute information and ask them to buy into the plan and provide input and intelligence about what is happening in the camp area. This group is not to be confused with the force protection working group consisting of the force protection officer and representatives from the Public Affairs Office, Directorate of Emergency Services, intelligence (G2 and installation security office), operations (G3 and Directorate of Plans, Training, and



Mr. Ferguson at the Taliban mortar pits

Mobilization/readiness business centers), and information technology.

Read the appropriate country handbook. In this case, you need to read DOD-2630-AFG-001-02, *Afghanistan*. This is a great way to become familiar with your new assignment area, the local region, and the customs of the indigenous people. It is also a good idea to have, and read, a book on soviet weapons and their specifications. These graphic training aids (GTAs) are also helpful tools for setting up base defense:

- GTA 05-08-001, *Survivability Positions*
- GTA 07-06-001, *Fighting Position Construction-Infantry Leader's Reference Card*

Obtain maps of the area of responsibility to include satellite overviews. Your S2 can help with this.

Use aircraft as much as possible. Have the tower request that returning aircraft do a base flyover and report observed movement or anything unusual on the installation or its perimeter. If there is intelligence about a possible strike on your location, arrange to have a designated, armed quick-response aircraft.

Identify mission-essential vulnerable areas and high-risk targets. Identify the safe haven and extraction

point (such as a temporary helipad) for the high-risk personnel (HRP). Examples of tactical safe havens are—

- An earth-bermed tactical hangar.
- A trench.
- An armored HMMWV that can also move HRP to a preestablished extraction point.

Remember the entry control point. Carefully consider the following so that the entry points are as safe as possible:

- Mission-appropriate lighting—when practicable, get a white light (metal halide) that allows guards to see under vehicles with mirrors. If force protection conditions do not allow this, night-vision devices may be your only option.
- Explosive-detecting military working dogs
- Redundant communication (secure radios, TA-312 telephones, and/or FM ASIPS)
- Ingress protection (road fangs/dragon teeth)
- Badge system
- Environmentally controlled guard shacks.
- Guard orders and rules of engagement on laminated index cards
- Barrier systems
- Vehicle search area designed with blast mitigation material
- Serpentine approaches—when jersey barriers are not available, look for large, solid items such as old aircraft engines or large pieces of bombed out buildings.
- Handheld metal detectors
- Personnel gates
- Up-armored, weapon-fitted HMMWVs that have adequate reaction time and clear fields of fire
- Vehicle searches of non-U.S. military vehicles
- A location for local-national identification badging—the first entrance checkpoint should also have an interpreter on 24-hour duty. Further, due to the large number of local vendors who may be contracted to build and supply the base, the contracting personnel should be located near, or adjacent to, this checkpoint. Depending on the threat, a group of borrowed military manpower may be used to act as escorts for the local-national vendors or employees. It is always recommended that the local nationals be escorted, at least initially, while they are anywhere on the base.

Design a drawing for jersey bounces, or other barriers, that may be fabricated or purchased locally.

You need to be able to provide local national contractors with a simplistic drawing, in metric. Remember, the simpler, the better.

Coordinate with the counterintelligence unit about the employed local nationals' background investigations. The background checks are usually done by the host nation. Make sure that the requirement for background investigations has been specified in the local vendors contracts.

Other Force Protection Measures

Force protection measures come in tangible and intangible forms. For instance, some of our protective measures resulted from agreements that we made with the Northern Alliance and the Afghan government. Several of their generals announced that the Americans were under their protection; therefore, if an American was injured or had died as a result of their action, the responsible individual and his family would die.

Intelligence discovered another intangible measure. There were severe droughts during the Taliban regime, but once the American and allied forces arrived, it rained and snowed. It was reported that the Afghan people saw this as a sign from Allah, blessing the relationship between their new government and the coalition forces.

The most obvious measure was that the coalition governments and their personnel were pouring money into Afghanistan and rebuilding it. The government also wanted to remain a viable entity to the world.

A Final Thought

Make sure that you get the plan out to personnel through the “shared” files section of the Secure Internet Protocol Router Network system, or print and disseminate it. It cannot be stressed enough, especially in a war zone, that everyone has to be involved in base force protection.

Once you have validated your force protection plan, forward it to your higher headquarters for global use. There is no sense reinventing the wheel; having a starting point greatly assists others when they hit the ground running, especially in a potentially hostile environment. They only need to review the plan and modify the existing procedures to fit their situation and location.

If you would like to obtain a copy of my force protection plan, e-mail me at fergusong@drum.army.mil, or call DSN 772-5721/1077 or (315) 772-5721/1077.

Typical Force Protection Plan Format and Annexes

Annex A. Task Organization

Annex B. Joint Services Directorate, Central Command, Vulnerability Assessment

Annex C. Operations

- Appendix 1.* Contingency Plan Lifesaver with Battle-Drill Schematic
- Appendix 2.* Force-Protection-Condition Measures
- Appendix 3.* Fire Protection Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)
- Appendix 4.* WMD Planning
- Appendix 5.* EOC Operations

- Appendix 6.* Aerial Support
- Appendix 7.* Access Control
- Appendix 8.* Predeployment Training
- Appendix 9.* Destructive Weather
- Appendix 10.* Postal Operations
- Appendix 11.* Force Protection Working Group
- Appendix 12.* Explosive Ordnance Disposal Operations (includes unexploded ordnance reporting and bomb threats)

Annex D. Threat Analysis

Annex E. Rules of Engagement

- Appendix 1.* Status of Forces Agreement

Annex F. Engineer Force Protection Plan

Annex G. MEVA List

- Appendix 1.* Airfield Security Plan
- Appendix 2.* ASP Guard Orders

- Appendix 3.* Entry-Control-Point SOPs

Annex H. Signal Annex

- Appendix 1.* Emergency Mass Notification Plan

Annex I. Service Support Medical SOP

- Appendix 1.* Mass-Casualty-Response Plan

- Appendix 2.* Force Health Protection Plan

Annex J. NBC Plan

- Appendix 1.* NBC Response Checklist
- Appendix 2.* Test Kit Locations
- Appendix 3.* Decontamination Container/Equipment

- Appendix 4.* Decontamination Site
- Appendix 5.* Master Events Synchronization List of Locations

Annex K. Provost Marshal

- Appendix 1.* Law Enforcement Reporting Matrix
- Appendix 2.* Law Enforcement Baseline Operations
- Appendix 3.* Accident Response Checklist

- Appendix 4.* Hostage Response
- Appendix 5.* HRP
- Appendix 6.* Notification Matrix

Annex L. RAMP Measures

Annex M. Antiterrorism Plan

Annex N. Aircraft Scramble Plan

Annex O. Operations Security

- Appendix 1.* Information Management

Annex P. Host-Nation Liaison

Annex Q. Public Affairs

Annex R. Glossary

Annex S. References