

## Should America Suffer a Beslan (Beslan – Russian School Siege)

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There has been more than enough written about the Russian school siege at Beslan by experts, non-experts, and of course uninformed commenter's. This paper is for American law enforcement and National Guard personnel who may have to react to a crisis of this nature. First, the rules as we have determined them from the past twenty-four years of terrorist acts of hijacking, suicide bombings, hostage takings, and of course the incident at Belsan follow.

The rules will be (whether we like them or not):

- The group or groups that are the perpetrators are there with the objective to die as martyrs and to take as many hostages with them as possible.
- The hostages, both adults and children will be wired with explosives that at the least will have dead man switches, and possibly anti tamper, or capacitance initiators.
- The hostages will be placed in locations to act as obstacles to friendly fire and maneuver.
- The wiring up of the explosives and the consolidation of the terrorists position will take approximately an hour to an hour and forty-five minutes give or take a little (depends on terrorist training, equipment, and hostage consolidation procedures).
- Adult males and problem hostages will be shot immediately to get rid of them and make a point to security forces.
- Responding police forces will either use active shooter techniques or contain, try to stabilize the situation, try to open negotiations, and have responding tactical teams start preparing a deliberate assault at a time and place of their choosing (Both which will play into the terrorists ultimate plan on how the incident will end, this being with all of them dead and as many hostages as possible dead).

With the above in mind a few facts on the Belsan siege:

- The siege lasted two plus days, ending chaotically on the third day (that was the end plan of the terrorists, what day it took place is irrelevant for our purposes)
- Depending on who you talk to 334 civilians were killed 186 of them children, hundreds were wounded a large number severely. 700 injured seems to be agreed on by most. 27 hostage takers were killed, I have heard up to 31 this is irrelevant, the size of a group 27 strong puts our police into a fast moving, planned, critical tactical situation that they are terribly unprepared to handle quickly and with tactical expertise.
- The negotiations (which failed) were used by the terrorists to further strengthen their position, and plan the defense of their chosen areas.
- None of the security forces in attendance had prepared for an incident of this nature (neither have we).

Now before everyone starts chest beating and hollering that I am being detrimental to our police forces and their capabilities (this is normal when we have no answers for major problems that may destroy our way of life) lets make a few things crystal clear. Since Columbine police SWAT and patrol officers have been seriously engaged in active shooter response and their abilities to deal with school shooters, or shooter has been greatly enhanced and they are on the right track. SWAT teams, which I have been training for twenty years with numerous other highly qualified instructional personnel and institutions around the nation, are more than capable of dealing with violent felons, gang bangers, crazies, and the myriad number of subjects they have to deal with on an almost daily basis including the active school shooter. They are excellent, dedicated, tactically capable and getting better at it every day.

Saying the above is one thing, those same teams dealing with multiple trained terrorists with automatic weapons, explosives, and the possibility of shoulder fired anti armor weapons, who have hundreds of hostages (Maybe some of them the children of the responding officers) and are here with the ultimate plan of being martyred and to die at the end of the incident is a whole different animal, there are no police teams or units civil or federal who will do well here, they don't know what they don't know. And, I may add from my forty four years of tactical military and police experience without prior notice rehearsals and preparation we have very few military units that will do well here either. What will cause them to fail or do poorly is quick reaction without preparation, first time situation circumstances, and the terrorists having time to consolidate and strengthen their position, wire hostages with explosives and develop interlocking fields of fire in to approaches to their location and the interior hallways and stairways of the structure. I can say without reservation that an incident or multiple incidents of this nature are in our future (Why wouldn't they be after the terrorist success at Belsan). Anyone thinking the terrorists were not successful only needs to fly to Belsan and have a fireside talk with the survivors. To deal with this type of incident we are not going to get away with ratcheting training up a click or two like we did after Columbine, we are going to have to kick it up to light speed and more clicks than anyone wants to even discuss, think about, or try to fund. We as a community are going to have to do this at patrol division level and at SWAT team level or our Belsan is going to be something we do not want to contemplate. Due to the fact that this document will probably make it into the public domain I will not go into detail on specifics of the how's and whys of what type training needs to be conducted. I will say we need to start thinking immediate action by trained patrol/SWAT mixed teams depending who is on duty at the time. It may not be a structure, there is evidence it may be multiple school buses this is irrelevant as the same clock will be ticking, but if it's a school bus it will be ticking faster (Less time to wire up explosives), we need to address this at tactical level, we need to bite the bullet and do the training, equipping,

and preparation. If we do not we better get ready for scenes we are never going to forget and a change in our national policy on everything that deals with security that no citizen will ever be able to accept. Remember the terror and barricade mentality that the DC snipers Malvo and Mohammed forced on a large part of this countries population. Compound that a thousand fold with hundreds or thousands of dead children and their teachers and you have some what of an idea where we may be heading.

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**De Inimico Non Loquaris Male Sed Cogites  
(Do Not Think Ill of Your Enemies, Plan It)**

