The threat

Before any reasonable security precau-
tions can be taken, the risk must be
assessed. Terrorism basically involves
criminal-type acts such as bombings or
kidnappings which are committed for
political motives, often against inno-
cent non-combatants.

Explosive bombings are the most
common terrorist incidents in all areas
of the world. Other types of terrorist
acts are more common in some
regions than others. Kidnapping is the
second most common incident in Latin
America but follows incendiary bomb-
ings and armed attack in Western
Europe and the Middle East. Western
Europe has seen more terrorist assas-
sinations than any other area in the
last decade.

Terrorists may act alone or in small
groups. They may support a variety of
extreme causes at either end of the
political spectrum. Some are extreme
nationalists or separatists. Others seek
the overthrow of a particular
government.

Terrorist targets often include inno-
cent bystanders. Both government and
private establishments associated with
the terrorists' overall target can be
attacked. But in most cases, the terror-
ist seeks a target which will either
attract attention to the terrorist cause,
force a government to change its poli-
cies, or produce arms or funds for the
terrorist cause.

Ask yourself some questions:

— Would the local authorities have
problems preventing bombings or
kidnappings?

— Do violence-prone groups exist
where you are?

— Would an attack against you
receive wide media coverage?

— Does your company appear
sufficiently affluent to afford large
ransom payments?

If one or more answers are "yes", you
may need to improve your security pre-
cautions in the office, en route and in
the home.