

EXPATRIATE SURVIVAL TACTICS

Learning How To Cope

Countermeasures against terrorism have largely concentrated on police methods for preventing and coping with incidents. In addition, certain high-risk persons -- such as military and diplomatic officers -- have been taught to recognize the signs of an impending attack and to take evasive action. But little has been done, particularly for expatriate business people, to teach possible victims how to survive if they were ever hijacked or kidnapped.

After years of experience with all kinds of terrorist acts, a way has now been found to instruct the average person on the essential techniques of surviving if he or she were ever seized. This method does not attempt to provide a catalog of responses to every possible situation - there are far too many variables. Rather, the potential victim is taught the basic dynamics of terrorist kidnapping and how others have dealt effectively with it.

The victim who understands the mind-set, methods, and objectives of the assailant need not try to remember precise instructions on what to do or not do. Even in a state of acute anxiety and shock after being seized and held at gunpoint, the victim can recall the principles he or she has learned and act intelligently to minimize the danger and discomfort of being a pawn in someone else's desperate game.

Where To Start: Be Wary

So what can you, as a resident abroad, do to protect yourself from professional terrorists and criminals? You must first recognize that if you are seized by an armed assailant, you will probably undergo the most horrendous experience of your life. You should also know, that you have a good chance of survival if you don't do anything foolish.

Beyond that understanding, an ability to act intelligently and with self-control while in captivity will assure that, when you are ultimately released,

you will be able to return to normal life with a minimum of psychological distress.

You may be taken hostage in three ways: skyjacking, criminal seizure, kidnap hostage.

Assessing The Victim's Role

The basic difference among these classic situations is obvious. In the skyjacking, you have become a pawn in a carefully planned operation. The general danger is obviously great, although the record of survival in such cases is very high. Your personal peril is increased if you are 1) a man, 2) in the prime of life, and 3) an American or another nationality perceived as a special enemy by the hijackers.

In the criminal seizure, you are a mere tool of convenience. Your captor is interested in one thing: escape. He has no reason to abuse you and may well become friendly if the siege lasts long. He is likely to be rational and knows he can only make things worse for himself if he hurts you.

The kidnap hostage situation differs significantly from the other types of assault. It almost always involves long captivity, running from a few weeks to a year or more. Survival rates are high, but the psychological effects of isolation and prolonged anxiety can be severe if you have not been told what to expect and how to deal with it.

KIDNAPPING

Safeguards At Home

Executives should take at least routine precautions to protect their homes, where both political and criminal kidnapers have been known to seize their victims.

Cultivate close relations with your neighbors.

Be alert if a car happens to break down outside. It can be an excuse for someone to take pictures or make leisurely close-up observations of the house. Don't let the driver in to use the telephone. Take note of any strangers hanging around the

By Brooks McClure

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