

November 2015

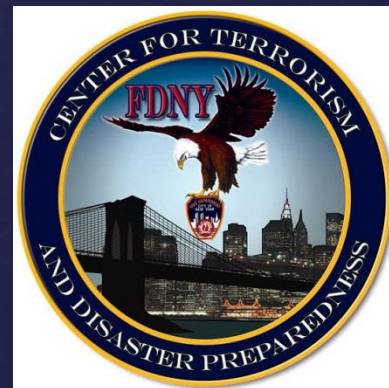
# Paris Terror Attack

Fireguard



FDNY Center for Terrorism and Disaster Preparedness

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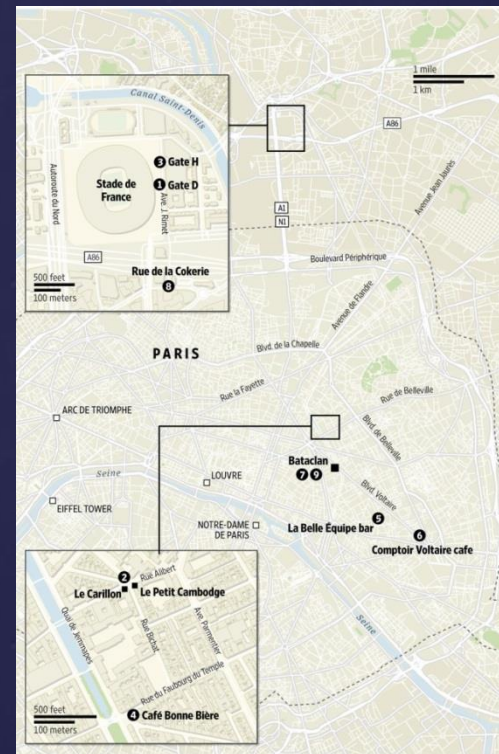


# November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015: Paris

## Islamic State (ISIS) Militants

### Conduct Complex Terror Attack

- Coordinated attacks at seven different locations
- Three distinct areas of attack:
  - 1) Stade de France
  - 2) Cafés/streets near theater
  - 3) Bataclan theater
- Weapons: gunfire and explosives
- 130 killed, over 350 injured



- 1 9:20 p.m.** The first explosion from a suicide bomber takes place near Gate D of Stade de France. One passerby is killed.
- 2 9:25 p.m.** Gunmen in a black SEAT car attack Le Carillon and Le Petit Cambodge restaurants. Fifteen people are killed and 10 left in critical condition as of Saturday evening.
- 3 9:30 p.m.** A second explosion from a suicide bomber hits near Gate H of Stade de France.
- 4 9:32 p.m.** Gunmen in a black SEAT car shoot at the Café Bonne Bière bar. Five people are killed and eight left seriously injured as of Saturday night.
- 5 9:36 p.m.** Gunmen in a black SEAT car shoot at La Belle Equipe bar. Nineteen people are dead and nine seriously injured.
- 6 9:40 p.m.** An explosion from a suicide bomber hits at the Comptoir Voltaire cafe.
- 7 9:40 p.m.** Three gunmen emerge from a black Volkswagen Polo outside the Bataclan concert venue and enter the theater. Gunmen say they are acting in retaliation for French airstrikes in Syria and Iraq.
- 8 9:53 p.m.** An explosion from another suicide bomber hits 440 yards from Stade de France on Rue de la Cokerie.
- 9 12:20 a.m.** French police launch an assault to free hostages at Bataclan. Within the venue, 89 people are killed and many more injured.

# Stade de France

*Significant potential impact  
but failed in execution\**

*Strategy: Drive panicked spectators  
towards bombers*



9:20pm: First bomber detonates outside stadium after attempted (ticketed) entry—security detects vest

9:30pm: Second bomber detonates outside stadium near another gate

9:53pm: Third bomber detonates away from stadium opposite second bomber

\*Total fatalities (other than suicide bombers): 1





# Stade de France: Devastation Averted

*Shelter in place was key to mitigation of deadlier attack*

- French President Francois Hollande in attendance
- Decision made to continue game and keep crowd in stadium
- Quietly put stadium on lockdown before halftime—prior to third suicide bomber detonation
- Result: Terrorists failed to gain desired bloodshed and media coverage

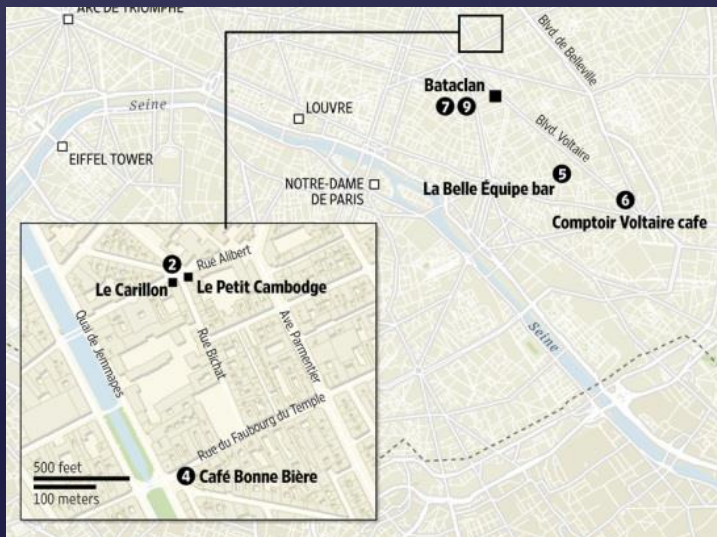


# Cafés – On Path to Theater



Increased carnage and chaos between main events

- 9:25 pm: Gunmen hit two restaurants on either side of street; 15 dead
- 9:32 pm: Gunmen shoot at café; 5 dead
- 9:36 pm: Gunmen shoot up bar; 19 dead
- 9:40 pm: Suicide bomber detonates at café; 0 dead
- 9:40 pm: Gunmen arrive at and enter Bataclan Theater





# Bataclan Theater

9:40 pm: Three gunmen with suicide belts enter theater and open fire on crowded American rock concert

- Gather survivors as “hostages”
- Three hour siege begins

12:20 am: Police storm theater

- 1 attacker killed by police
- 2 attackers detonate suicide vests
- 89 dead



# Key Takeaways

- 1) Complex attack modality
- 2) Doomed captives – not “Hostages”
- 3) Suicide bomber as secondary device
- 4) Potential role of fire and smoke
- 5) Coordinated medical response

# Complex Attack Modality

*The new “spectacular” standard – now conducted in the West*

Attacks are well-planned to maximize bloodshed and terror

- **Coordinated attacks**
  - Can involve multiple teams of attackers
  - Attacks at multiple locations
  - Attacks are timed to overwhelm resources
- **Hybrid attacks**
  - Several weapon types/attack types combined
  - Gunfire, explosives, suicide bombing, fire and smoke, etc.





# “Paris-style” = “Mumbai-style”

*Tactics were similar to the 2008 Mumbai attacks*

## Mumbai 2008

- **Target Selection:** Initial crowded venue, street-based shooting/grenades, final standoff venue
- Fedayeen\*/Suicide operatives: 10 working in small teams and regrouping for finale
- Doomed “hostages”: Jewish center and hotels
- Fire & Smoke as a Weapon: Intentional burning of Taj Hotel

## Paris 2015

- **Target Selection:** stadium, street, final standoff venue
- Fedayeen\*/Suicide operatives: 8 in teams, then regroup
- Doomed “hostages”: Bataclan
- Fire and smoke not used as a weapon

\***Fedayeen** (Arabic: فدائيين *fidā'īyīn*, "those who sacrifice themselves")<sup>1</sup>

1. Derives from the word فداء *fidā'*, which means redemption. Literally, someone who redeems himself by risking or sacrificing his life

# Doomed Captives - Not “Hostages”

## hostage

*noun* hostage \ˈhäs-tij\ : a person who is captured by someone who demands that certain things be done before the captured person is freed.



© Mirrorpix

- Media reported 60-100 hostages at the Bataclan
- No demands were made
  - A true hostage situation would have involved demands
- In reality, there were no “*hostages*” – only “*doomed captives*” whose only hope for survival hinged on escape or rescue
- Captives used to prolong attack, maximizing media coverage

***Attackers planned to kill captives from the start***

# Differing “Hostage” Tactics

## Barricade Hostages Sieges

- Hostages are held with clear demands made
- Groups try to instill fear, while attracting attention and striving for legitimacy
- Less prominent role due to evolving goals of extremist groups
- Examples:
  - Moscow theater (2002)
  - Beslan school (2004)

## “Doomed Captives” Sieges

- Captives are held with sole intent of execution
- Increasingly seen in extremist attacks
- Goal is to prolong incident, not have demands met
- Longer attacks = more media attention
- Examples:
  - Paris (2015)
  - Mumbai (2008)



# Suicide Bomber as Secondary Device

*Each attacker wore an explosive suicide belt.*

*Many detonated the belt, becoming a secondary device.*

*Suicide bomber ensures optimal timing for attacker*

- Target egress points for crowds
- Target arriving first responders

Used in two different ways in Paris

- 1) Stade de France
  - Targeted fleeing crowds (and responders)
- 2) Bataclan Theater
  - Targeted first responders



Photo: crowds leaving 2014 Super Bowl in NJ

# Secondary Devices – Stade de France

## Targeted fleeing crowds

- 1<sup>st</sup> bomber intended to detonate inside stadium
  - Would have created a frenzied evacuation
- 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bombers intended to be secondary devices
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> explosion was 10 min later, 3<sup>rd</sup> explosion was 23 min later
  - Likely target = fleeing crowds at egress points
  - Also a target = first responders arriving at scene
    - Responders would have arrived before secondary blasts



Photo: People leaving Stade de France

### Prior Incident: Soccer stadium bomb in Iraq (2010)

- At end of game, attackers drove a truck bomb onto the field and detonated it
- Several minutes later, two suicide bombers exploded at exits, targeting fleeing crowd
- Al Qaeda in Iraq was responsible – the group later became ISIS

# Secondary Devices – Bataclan Theater

## Targeted first responders

- Police storm theater, surviving 2 attackers detonate suicide belts
  - Target = first responders
  - Also sought to maximize carnage
  - No significant secondary effects of explosion
    - Structural collapse, structural fire were possible

### Prior Incident: School attack in Russia (2004)

- Islamist Chechen rebels took hostages at elementary school
- Hostages kept in auditorium rigged with explosives
- When police stormed building, explosives detonated
- Explosions caused fire, led to collapse of auditorium roof
- Over 150 hostages killed in fire/collapse



Photo: Memorial at Beslan school



# Potential Role of Fire and Smoke

*If employed as in Mumbai, fire and smoke as a weapon (FSW) would have greatly complicated the response scenario*

*Theater attack would have been greatly affected by fire*

- Detonated explosives could have caused fire and/or collapse
- Possible scenario: burning building with hundreds trapped inside

*Major concerns for FD operations*

- Time sensitive life threat
- Possible “Warm Zone” operations
  - Victim removal/medical care
  - Firefighting operations



Photo: Taj Hotel in 2008 Mumbai attack

**Prior incident:** Westgate Shopping Mall attack in Kenya (2013)

- Terrorist gunman attacked mall, killing dozens and trapping de facto “hostages”
- During standoff, military counteroffensive sparked fire, trapping remaining occupants inside

# Coordinated Medical Response

*Successful response due to hospital–responder coordination*

*Keys to success in Paris response = Preplanning and Drills*

**“White Plan” activation for crisis response at area hospitals.**

- Recalled staff and reallocated resources
- Coordinated response between hospitals
- Result: Hospitals had surge capacity

## Frequent active shooter drills

- Responders and hospitals drilled frequently
- There was a drill on the morning of the attack
- Drills prepared for a multi-location attack
- Responders did not over-commit to 1<sup>st</sup> incident
- Held resources in reserve



Photo: Recent FDNY/NYPD active shooter drill

# *It can happen here:*

## San Bernardino Terror Attack

- Active shooter attack in San Bernardino, CA
- 14 people killed at a soft target (Christmas party)
- Weapons: gunfire and explosives (not detonated)
- Attackers were self-radicalized Islamic extremists
- Not a suicide attack – terrorists left scene



***Responders were faced with multiple victims and an active terrorist attack***



# Prepared by the FDNY Center for Terrorism and Disaster Preparedness

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