

Body Cavity Bombers: The New Martyrs

A Terrorism Research Center Book

Bunker RJ, Flaherty CJ. *Body Cavity Bombers: The New Martyrs: A Terrorism Research Center Book*. Bloomington, IN: iUniverse LLC, 2013. Paperback: 350 pages. ISBN 978-1-4917-0310-3.

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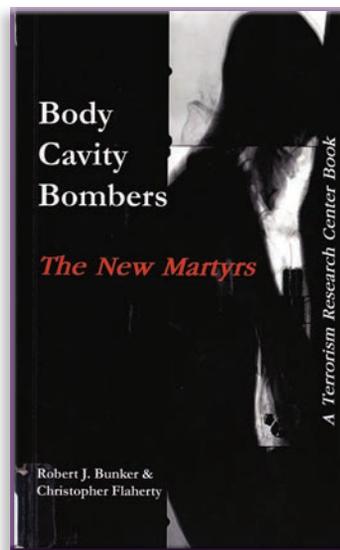
Upon first seeing a copy of this book, one immediately thinks of several different science fiction movies like Denzel Washington's 2004 *Man on Fire*, the 2008 Batman movie *The Dark Knight*, or the Star Trek television episode *Reunion*. Someone is just exercising a hyperactive imagination. But not so fast! Turn to page 46.

There you will find the August 2009 account of a BCB ("Body Cavity Bomb") used against Prince Mohammed bin Nayef of Saudi Arabia who is now famous because of his involvement in the more recent Saudi Embassy journalist murder in Jordan. In 2009, a Yemeni Al Qaeda operative with a rectally carried BCB attacked him. The bomber, the brother of Al Qaeda and the Arabian Peninsula's chief bomb maker, was killed. The Saudi prince was only slightly wounded. Clearly, this is a weapon for high-value targets.

Terrorists are inserting BCBs into body cavities, such as the rectum, stomach, vagina, or possibly uterus. These BCBs must be differentiated from SIIEDs ("surgically implanted improvised explosive devices"), which are surgically implanted into a body cavity, usually the abdominal cavity, or into breast augmentations. Also, do not rule out the use of animals as a BCB and/or SIIED host.

It appears that Al Qaeda was first interested in SIIEDs, not BCBs, due to higher explosive load capability but encountered many "design issues." These included the need for complicated

medical/surgical procedures by trained surgical personnel in a sophisticated medical facility with medical logistical support, extended postoperative recuperation periods, surgical complications including death, and postoperative breach of the explosive container resulting in toxicity. Another difficulty was a reliable triggering device, usually chemical in nature.



All these SIIED preparation and use difficulties seem to have led the terrorists to the usually smaller BCBs, as a simpler path to success. Detonation could be via a radio frequency device that is much simpler than the firing devices required for surgically implanted devices.

Detection issues with both types of bombs are a large topic of interest in the counterterrorism community. Some of the existent airport security scanning methods may detect BCBs but not SIIEDs (such as metal detectors), while others will not. Future detection strategies may be able to detect BCB firing devices. Nothing seems to detect SIIEDs accurately.

This book is the only resource for data on BCB and SIIED construction, deployment, and detection. It is very well referenced. It extensively discusses current research on detection strategies and does not rule out chemical or radiological BCBs or SIIEDs. It also discusses shoe bombers, suicide underwear, bra bombers, gel bra bombers, dog bombs, corpse bombs, and other "clandestine weapons."



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