

CAPT TSANTES

Situation: Greek terrorists killed US Navy Captain George Tsantes with a pistol attack in traffic. MSG Robert Judd survived an attack because he was alert.

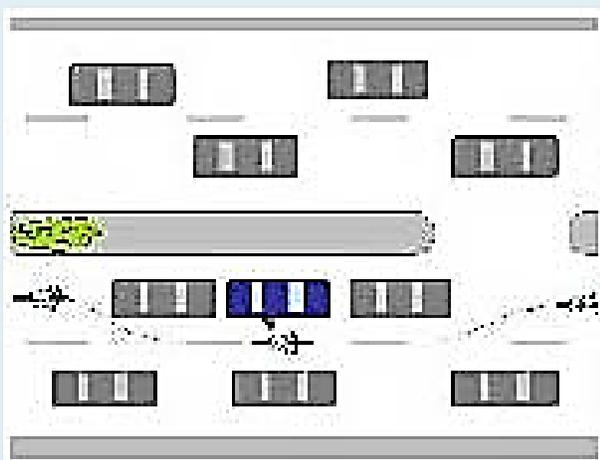
On November 15, 1983, terrorists of the November 17 Organization on a motorcycle overtook CAPT George Tsantes in his US Embassy sedan and shot him. This attack on a US Security Assistance Officer signaled a new terror campaign against US military bases in Greece. His daily routines made him a susceptible target. Another service member in the US Embassy, MSG Robert Judd, was briefed on the attack and five months later, when he saw the rear passenger on a motorcycle pull a pistol, he drove across a median into on-coming traffic to escape. The terrorist fired and Judd was seriously injured, but his alertness and quick action saved his life.



Routines such as regular departure times from your residence and predictable routes of travel make terrorist planning easier.

Terrorists used over-run tactics in traffic to kill CAPT Tsantes. MSG Judd learned from the tragic loss of CAPT Tsantes, and was alert to threatening actions of a motorcyclist in Athens.

Try to learn from the experience of others. Study the tactics of terrorists and consider how you can recognize them and react. Alertness can save lives.



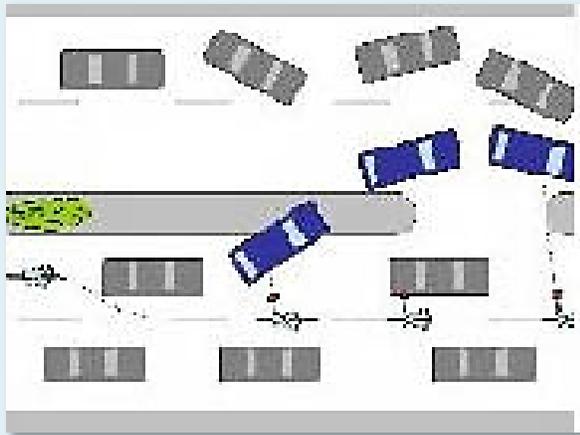
George Tsantes was born in NYC and was highly decorated in Vietnam. The son of Greek immigrants, he was eager to be Navy Section Chief in the Joint US Military Aid Group-Greece (JUSMAGG). The JUSMAGG managed military aid programs and some Greeks believed it worked with the CIA. In early November 1983, leftist newspapers claimed Tsantes was a CIA agent, but the US Embassy denied the report.

Daily at 7:00 AM, Tsantes got in the rear seat of a black, US Embassy sedan in Kifissia for a 30-minute ride to his office. On November 15,

two men on a light-blue Vespa motor scooter followed. When Tsantes stopped at a light, the rear rider fired seven shots from a .45-caliber pistol. Tsantes died instantly and his 62-year-old Greek driver died later.

The N-17 viewed CAPT Tsantes as an important symbolic target. Claims in leftist newspapers that he was a CIA agent preceded the attack. Since the N-17 was seeking to influence public opinion, this accusation was an important indication that Tsantes was being targeted.

If you have any reason to believe you are targeted, take immediate action to discourage terrorist planning. Change your routines frequently, let observers see you are taking extra precautions, and be extra alert for surveillance.



US Army MSG Robert Judd was the JUSMAGG NCOIC and knew of the attack on Tsantes 5 months before. At 4:30 PM on April 3, 1984, as he drove from the JUSMAGG to the US Air Force base in Hellenikon, two riders on a red Honda motorcycle approached from the rear. He noticed they stopped behind his jeep rather than cut through traffic as he expected. He then saw the rear rider draw a pistol from his jacket.

He immediately turned left across the median and into oncoming traffic. The gunman fired five shots, seriously wounding him with two.

Despite his wounds, he drove eight miles to the Air Force base hospital. Even though the attack was not successful, the N-17 claimed responsibility to protest the US presence on four military bases in Greece.

MSG Judd was saved by his alertness to threatening actions in his surroundings. Aware of the attack on CAPT Tsantes in traffic, he watched the actions of a motorcyclist through his rear view mirror and took aggressive action to escape the attack.

Adjust your awareness to the specific threats in your environment. Anticipate the immediate actions you can take to escape an attack.

CAPT Tsantes was the first American killed in political violence in Greece since December 1975 when CIA Station Chief Richard Welch was shot outside his home with a .45-caliber pistol. Ballistics showed the same handgun was used against Welch, Tsantes, and Judd. The N-17 took responsibility because they viewed these officials as symbols of US policy. They claimed the JUSMAGG was guilty of crimes against the Greek people and an instrument of US imperialism. In each attack, they chose targets with predictable patterns and used simple tactics.



Read about the attack on CAPT William Nordeen in 1988 to see how the N-17 adapted tactics when the US Embassy changed to armored cars.

Consider how terrorists might view you as a symbol of US policy even if you do not consider your personal role to be important. Leftist sources claimed Tsantes was a CIA operative before attacking him. It did not matter if they were wrong; their claim justified the attack in the mind of the terrorists. MSG Judd performed a seemingly benign task, mail delivery. But, the terrorists considered him a suitable symbolic target.

Be conscious of specific terrorist tactics used in your locale and your best countermeasures.