

## **WHY TOFFLER ASSOCIATES CONDUCTED THIS STUDY**

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-Toffler Associates  
Engagement Leader

## **Toffler Associates Facilitates International Effort to Counter IED Attacks**

Since the start of the Iraq War, the term IED has entered the international lexicon and is better known by its acronym than its full name: improvised explosive device. While these bombs are relatively simple—primarily consisting of explosive material and a detonator—counteracting them is anything but. “IEDs are the terrorist weapons of choice for the present and the future,” explained the Toffler Associates Engagement Leader. “We need to understand them in intricate detail, as well as the terrorists who make and deploy them, because countries will be dealing with IEDs long into the future.”

### **WHY TOFFLER ASSOCIATES?**

The U.S. put together a team of experts from a variety of multinational military and national agencies—from the Marines and FBI to DHS and NATO—to study the technical construction and tactical deployment of the bombs. The goal was to establish a documented process for dealing with and countering IEDs. But the group of experts had never worked together before and the information they gathered came from hundreds of sources. Managing the initiative was becoming unwieldy, so they asked Toffler Associates to coordinate the effort. “Toffler Associates has a proven reputation for dealing with highly technical security issues,” said the Engagement Leader. “For decades, and especially since 9/11, we have worked on many sensitive projects involving the military and intelligence agencies, and have forged a network of experts within these areas whose expertise we can draw on when needed. They also needed a consulting firm that had a focus on the future because this project was going to evolve over a long period of time, so we were a natural choice for the IED project.”

One of the first tasks Toffler Associates coordinated was creating a glossary of terms. Each of the many different agencies involved in the IED project was using different language to describe the same things, so a common language had to be developed. "It was a collaborative undertaking that produced a 55-page glossary that is being used around the world today by soldiers in Afghanistan and civilians in the U.S.," noted the Engagement Leader. "It's an invaluable tool that describes everything from the technical characteristics of IEDs to tactical designs and intended outcomes. The glossary literally puts everyone on the same page and prevents confusion or miscommunication that could lead to harmful consequences."

#### **BASELINE PROCESSES HELP DETER ATTACKS**

The biggest part of the IED project consisted of analyzing the baseline processes associated with the planning, creating, deploying and detonating of IEDs by terrorists. Next, on the military and intelligence side of the equation, processes—from how information was being gathered in the field to how it would be categorized and stored—had to be identified and organized so the different groups involved were not duplicating efforts, contaminating evidence or misplacing information. Finally, the IED team needed to create ways to share information between military branches, civilian agencies and international organizations. "One of the IED project group's major goals was to 'get ahead of the boom,'" stated the Engagement Leader. "They needed processes in place that could, if possible, determine the names of the terrorists who placed the bombs, the bomb makers themselves, and other crucial information that might help stop an IED from being exploded in the future."

Multiple teams and agencies play key roles in these processes. For instance, the FBI, world renowned for its expertise in fingerprint analysis, is the repository for fingerprints found on the remains of explosive devices. "Toffler Associates helped the IED team describe the sequential processes involved in logging data about a blast and then analyzing and sharing the results," said the Engagement Leader. "It's a complicated trail that starts when an Army or Marine squad first arrives on the bomb scene to gather evidence, to forensic work, analysis and the final test results."

### **NEW SYMBOLS FOR BATTLEFIELD DISPLAYS**

One result of the IED project was the creation of a set of electronic IED symbols for use on tactical computer displays used by all military services on the battlefield. The symbols are associated with metadata that, at a glance, tells a warrior information such as how many IEDs have been exploded in the area he is now entering, the longitude and latitude of each explosion, the size of the IEDs, etcetera. "Electronic displays are part of the military's command and control system," said the Engagement Leader. "When planning a mission, military planners can call up a history of IED explosions in the area of operation to see if they can detect a pattern or predict how many IEDs soldiers may expect to encounter during the mission. The symbols help save lives."

The IED team is developing a forensic approach to analyzing bomb remnants and is constantly updating the glossary, symbols and baseline documents. "As the bad guys change tactics, we have to change our processes as well," continued the Engagement Leader. "Another facet of this project is that we are working to institutionalize the work we are doing because the



capabilities—on and off that battlefield—that we are formulating will be needed by the U.S. and other countries in the future. Unfortunately, IEDs are so easy to make and deploy that we will be confronting them for many years to come. The good news is that efforts such as the IED project are addressing the problem with creative solutions that are paying off on the battlefield.”