

**Table 7.2 ► Elements of a Major Terrorist Attack**

Activity	Comments
Broad target selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>↓ Strategic guidance provided by senior al-Qa'ida leaders, which may be provided through media statements.</li><li>↓ Individual cells may develop lists.</li></ul>
Intelligence gathering and surveillance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>↓ Sophistication varies.</li><li>↓ Increasingly use the Internet for data collection.</li><li>↓ Activities may resemble suspicious incidents (elicitation, observation, photography) often reported by industry, but more sophisticated efforts may not be apparent.</li><li>↓ Represent potential opportunity to interdict cell/planners.</li></ul>
Specific target selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>↓ Political factors may mandate senior leadership approval.</li><li>↓ Affiliates may choose targets based on operational considerations (hardening of some targets may dissuade them).</li></ul>
Pre-attack surveillance and planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>↓ Terrorists build attack plan, identify operators, and finalize data collection.</li><li>↓ Potential opportunity to identify/interdict.</li><li>↓ Activities may resemble suspicious incidents (elicitation, observation, photography) often reported by industry, but more sophisticated efforts may not be apparent.</li></ul>
Attack rehearsal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>↓ Used to test security or attack methodology.</li><li>↓ Difficult to discern from actual attack.</li><li>↓ Potential opportunity to identify/interdict.</li></ul>
Attack execution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>↓ Variety of factors influence tactics, such as nature of target and size and equipment of attacking force.</li></ul>
Escape and exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>↓ Escape routes may be factored into attack planning.</li><li>↓ Attack may be videotaped or photographed for later exploitation.</li><li>↓ Not a factor for suicide attackers.</li></ul>