

## **Soft Targets are Especially Attractive to Terrorists Seeking High Body Counts**

*Mineta Transportation Institute security experts Brian Michael Jenkins and Jean-Francois Clair explain.*

**San Jose, Calif., June 13, 2016** -- The terrorist attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015, which left 130 dead, and in Brussels on March 22, 2016, in which another 35 people were killed, underscore the heightened terrorist threat Europe faces as those who left European countries to join the ranks of the Islamic State or other jihadist fronts in the Middle East return home. Some come back disillusioned, others traumatized by their experience, but some return determined to bring the war home. Their goal is slaughter. Their targets vary—concert venues, sports stadiums, churches, restaurants, trains, airport terminals—all public places where people gather. That coincides with a long-term trend identified in previous MTI research—public surface transportation is especially attractive to terrorists seeking high body counts. [Mineta Transportation Institute](#) (MTI) security experts Brian Michael Jenkins and Jean-Francois Clair examine this troubling trend in [Trains, Concert Halls, Airports, and Restaurants—All Soft Targets: What the Terrorist Campaign in France and Belgium Tells Us about the Future of Jihadist Terrorism in Europe](#).

For the past two decades, MTI has monitored and analyzed terrorist attacks directed against surface transportation, which are often part of broader terrorist campaigns. Previous reporting, for example, has examined in detail the Irish Republican Army's bombing campaign against British transport; terrorist plots in Spain, Italy, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, and; long-term trends in attacks on surface transportation in Europe and North America. In this new report, MTI researchers answer three questions:

1. What do these most recent attacks in Europe tell us about the current and future terrorist threat?
2. What do the most recent attacks say about the ability of European authorities to uncover and prevent further attacks?
3. What implications does the terrorist activity in Europe have for the United States?

Counterterrorism expert Mr. Jenkins notes “Media coverage too often gives us a disconnected view of events. But we believe that it is important to see these individual attacks as part of a broader, continuing campaign”

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### **ABOUT BRIAN MICHAEL JENKINS**

Brian Michael Jenkins is an international authority on terrorism and sophisticated crime. He directs the Mineta Transportation Institute's National Transportation Safety and Security Center, which focuses on research into protecting surface transportation against terrorist attacks. He is also a senior advisor to the president of RAND. From 1989-98, Mr. Jenkins was deputy chairman of Kroll Associates, an international investigative and consulting firm. Before that, he was chairman of RAND's Political Science Department, where he also directed research on political violence. He has authored several books, chapters, and articles on counterterrorism, including *International Terrorism: A New Mode of Conflict* and *Will Terrorists Go Nuclear?* Most recently, he published *When Armies Divide*, a discussion about nuclear arms in the hands of rebelling armies. He also has been principal investigator for many peer-reviewed security-focused research reports for MTI.

### **ABOUT JEAN-FRANCOIS CLAIR**

Jean-Francois Clair is a former Inspector General of Police. He served 35 years in France's Security Service, the Directorate of Territorial Security (Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire) (DST), the country's internal intelligence system with responsibilities similar to those of the FBI in the United States and MI-5 in the United Kingdom. From 1983 to 1997, he was the head of DST's Anti-Terrorist Branch. In 1998, he was promoted to deputy director of DST, a position he held until his retirement in

2007. Dr. Clair received a PhD in Public Law from the University of Paris in 1969 and graduated from the Institute for Higher Studies for National Defense (Institut des haute études de défense nationale) (IHEDN) in 1993.

**ABOUT THE MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE (MTI):**

MTI conducts research, education, and information transfer programs focusing on surface transportation policy and management issues, especially related to transit. MTI was established by Congress in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act and won national re-designation competitions in 2002, 2006 and 2011. The Institute is funded by Congress through the US DOT Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology, through the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and by public and private grants. In 2006 the US Department of Homeland Security selected MTI as a National Transportation Security Center of Excellence. The internationally respected members of the MTI Board of Trustees represent all major surface transportation modes. MTI is the lead institute for the Mineta National Transit Research Consortium, an affiliation of nine university transportation research centers. MTI's academic home is San Jose State University. Visit [transweb.sjsu.edu](http://transweb.sjsu.edu)

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