

**12TH ICCRTS
“Adapting C2 to the 21st Century”**

Counterterrorism Tactics: A Model of Cell Dynamics

Tracks 2, 3, 5

AUTHORS: Kathleen Giebel (STUDENT)
ENS, US Navy

COAUTHORS:
Karl Pfeiffer
LTCol, US Air Force

Tara Leweling
MAJ, US Air Force

Kathleen Giebel
Naval Postgraduate School
584 C Michelson Rd
Monterey, CA 93940
831-233-8876
kagiebel@nps.edu

Organizational contingency theory, deriving from open systems theory, suggests that regardless of size, orientation or mission, terrorist organizations operate within the confines of their environment and resources. Combined with Tilley's observations about repertoires of contention, it follows that the feasible space of terrorist organizations' actions and behaviors is bounded, and selection of tactics limited. Through analysis of selected case studies of thwarted terrorist attacks, this paper identifies common behaviors and tactics within the planning of such attacks, abstracting them into a general model of the conception, planning, and execution phases. By extending this model into the counterterrorism domain, counterterrorism specialists can consider how to more optimally interrupt future terrorist activities based on a more cogent understanding of how the planning for terrorist attacks unfolds.