



# SECURING SUPER-RICH TARGETS

BY AMOTZ BRANDES

With the increasing incidences of violence around the globe, HNWI's are advised to give their security arrangements a closer look.

**S**ometimes, it is not easy being rich. Billionaires whose last names alone identify them – Buffet, Gates, Jianlin, Ellison, Bloomberg and Ambani – are all targets.

They are all potential victims of internal threats, kidnapping, terrorist plots, espionage and other criminal attacks. Last year Al Qaeda made yet another public threat against many billionaires, calling for nothing less than their assassination. It is increasingly evident that if capitalists are seen as the enemy, then visible financial heavyweights become prime targets for terrorists.

## Global Threat

The 14th edition of *Inspire* magazine published by Al Qaeda of the Arabian Peninsula included an article entitled

'Assassinations – Field Tactics' and gave a list of assassination targets selected to "bring instability to the American economy". The magazine intends to serve as a one-stop-shop for terrorists seeking instruction on topics ranging from target selection to execution. *Inspire* may even live up to its name as it provokes, incites and educates lone wolf terrorists. Asia is plagued with its share of terrorist organizations, and when malevolent individuals with terror or criminal intent have this kind of information and support available to them, the overall threat is undoubtedly elevated.

As recently as this February, kidnappers demanded S\$350,000 for the release of two Singaporean brothers seized on a business trip to Penang. Law enforcement succeeded in extricating

the men after several days but it was a harrowing experience for all involved. Even in a remarkably safe city like Singapore, those living at a certain level – whether they are celebrities or simply wealthy – are in a select class that has to ensure security not only for themselves, but their businesses and families too.

## Cost Of Safety

In order to do this, it is imperative to move from being a soft, easy target to an undesirable one.

The cost of this level of security can range from hundreds of thousands to well north of a million dollars per year. For high net worth individuals (HNWI), there are multiple residences to secure, large staffs that need to be properly vetted, concern for safe transit between locations,



*An effective security system would include everything from CCTV to access control working in concert to support a threat-oriented security standard operating procedure*

security at corporate headquarters, and frequent international travel with its own set of complications. Armoured SUVs such as those owned by rapper Kanye West can cost a cool US\$1 million, while a four-person rotating security team may cost more than US\$20,000 per week. These combined with other facets such as the construction of a safe room add up to significant expenses.

However, for many Fortune 100 companies, top level CEOs are worth the budget line item spent securing them. These executives not only manage but also represent the company brand and as such, their safety is linked to the reputation and stability of the business as a whole. Wherever an individual may be on the high profile continuum – a globe-trotting billionaire or simply a HNWI with assets and family to protect, investing in security is an appropriate proactive move.

### **Navigating The Industry**

There are plenty of security and executive protection companies out there hungry for this lucrative work. In particular, the Chinese market for VIP security has burgeoned right in step with China's growth over the last decade. But buyers beware – haphazardly throwing money at a potential problem guarantees nothing. It takes just one incident of pie throwing (à la

Bill Gates), or an unruly celebrity fan or a disgruntled ex-employee to prompt HNWIs and prominent celebrities to take a closer look at their existing protective screens.

Regardless of the budget, the fundamentals for success are the same.

Potential clients are advised to hire a reputable company with excellent references and make sure they get a thorough initial threat and risk assessment that is regularly re-examined. All elements of a security system from CCTV to access control should work in concert to support a threat-oriented security standard operating procedure (SOP). It is also critical to vet all employees and vendors as expensive access control systems are useless when the perpetrator is already inside their home. If the bodyguards are armed, they would need to be highly trained in advanced shooting skills. Finally, the whole security system needs to be 'red-teamed' with simulated tests to look for weaknesses or loopholes to ensure functionality in the case of an attack or emergency.

Some people employ a body guard as a status symbol that complements an upscale lifestyle. But security is about far more than accessorizing. It is serious business in a world where threats are on the rise across the globe. Effective security is something no one regrets having in place. 🌐



### **About The Writer**

Amotz Brandes is Managing Partner of Chameleon Associates, a cutting edge training and consulting service that aims to aid threat mitigation solutions by delivering training, security engineering and consulting that help organizations and individuals. Brandes began his career in an Israeli Defence Forces elite reconnaissance unit and worked at El Al Airlines as a security profiler upon discharge. He later joined Chameleon and opened its training and consulting arm, helping it grow into a global enterprise with satellite offices in Amsterdam, Sydney and Singapore.

*Text and images courtesy of Chameleon Associates. For more information on their upcoming Security Model Executive Seminar, please visit <http://chameleonassociates.com/israeli-security>*