

Violence is Universal and It's Not Just Guns

On Tuesday 01/08/2019, Jia, a 49-year-old man, attacked and injured 20 children with a hammer inside a Beijing primary school. He was apprehended at the scene. Jia was employed through a labor service company to perform daily maintenance work at the school. His contract was set to expire this month and had not been renewed. It is believed the attack was motivated by anger at having his employment terminated.

Everyone remembers the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting on 12/14/2012, in Newtown, Connecticut. Adam Lanza, age 20, fatally shot 20 children between 6 and 7 years old, as well as 6 adult staff members. Earlier that morning, he shot and killed his mother at their Newtown home. However, how many of us know that on this same day a 36-year-old man struck at a Chinese elementary school with a knife? Min Yingjun, a local villager said to be suffering from a mental disorder, wounded 22 children and an 85-year-old woman in Chenpeng village in the southern province of Guangxi. He was eventually subdued by security guards posted at the Chenpeng school.

China has suffered a series of knife attacks against students since 2010. Nearly 20 children were killed in knife attacks outside school gates during 2010 alone. Below is a link to a ***New York Times*** article of 05/13/2010, entitled "***Fifth Deadly Attack on a School Haunts China.***" The article chronicles the beginning of China's battle to understand and deal with the problem of violence against its young people and schools. ***"...But whether the problem is weak diagnosis and treatment of mental illness, lackluster security and little money for schools, too much media attention to spectacular crimes or too little public debate about social inequality, the killings have presented an unusual political and security challenge to the ruling Communist Party. And in the frenzied speculation about why people might want to mimic horrific attacks on children at schools, causing problems for the powerful is believed to be one possible motive."***

<https://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/13/world/asia/13china.html?module=inline>



Parents armed with sticks patrolled around a school in Jinjiang, in southeast China, this week after a series of attacks on students. Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

A few examples of incidents in China are provided below as we seek to illustrate that violence in schools, outdoor areas, public transportation hubs, etc., is not a phenomenon unique to America.

On 03/01/2014, 31 people were killed and 140 were wounded during an attack which occurred inside the Kunming Railway Station in Kunming, Yunnan, China. A group of 8 knife-wielding men and women attacked passengers at the city's railway station. Both male and female attackers pulled out long-bladed knives and stabbed and slashed passengers. Police killed 4 assailants and captured 1 injured female. Three additional attackers were subsequently arrested.

On 06/15/2017, a bombing at a kindergarten in Feng County, Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province, east China, killed at least 8 people and injured 65 others. The perpetrator, 22-year-old Xu Taoran, died in the blast. Subsequent investigation revealed that Xu was mentally ill and obsessed with death and destruction. The blast occurred at the entrance of the kindergarten, while children were leaving school. Two people died on the spot, and 5 succumbed to injuries at the hospital. Nine remained in critical condition in the aftermath. Over 60 people were injured as a result of shrapnel and needed medical attention.



2017 Xuzhou Kindergarten Bombing

On 04/27/2018, 9 students were killed in a knife attack at a middle school in Shaanxi province by a Zhao, a 28-year-old man. The incident took place as students were being dismissed at the Mizhi County No. 3 Middle School in Shaanxi Province, about 500 miles southwest of Beijing. Zhao was a graduate of the middle school and had told the police he was seeking revenge because he was bullied when he was a student there.

On 09/12/2018, 15 people were killed and 44 injured after Yang Zanyun, age 54, intentionally drove his car into a crowded pedestrian square in Hengyang City, Hunan Province, China. He then exited the vehicle and started hacking at pedestrians with a hammer and shovel. It was reported that Yang had previously served time in prison and had wanted ***“revenge on society”*** when he carried out the attack.

On 10/26/2018, one day before the Tree of Life Synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a 39-year-old knife-wielding woman entered the playground of a kindergarten in Chongqing, southwest China.

She slashed 14 children as they were finishing their morning exercises, before she was wrestled to the ground by others at the scene.

Like in America, experts have pointed to a lack of high-quality mental health care in China and anxieties caused by social unrest, alienation from society, revenge and persistent economic inequality in explaining the attacks. As a result of the number of incidents in 2010, the government tightened security at schools by installing gates and cameras and training security guards to fend off attackers. Knives are the weapon of choice in China, where guns and other weapons are strictly regulated. Yet vehicles and explosive devices have also been employed to carry out the violence.

SUMMARY

Violence is a common denominator across the globe. Guns, sharpened edged/blunt instruments, explosive devices, vehicles, etc., can devastate people in a matter of moments prior to anyone being able to take action to avoid the onslaught. Edged weapons, within close quarters, can be just as deadly as firearms. The assailant doesn't ever have to pause to reload or clear a malfunction. Here it's crucial to put space between you and an attacker.

We can, however, be prepared for the aftermath of any critical incident and be ready to treat those who are injured while waiting for a higher level of medical care. Victim sustainability training and access to public bleeding control stations and trauma products is essential. While we cannot necessarily prevent violent people from gaining access to our schools and work place or assaulting us in our streets, we can provide our people with the best chance for survival.

