# Dilemma of international community

Sociology, Community

The US prevention strategies against internationalterrorismhave come a long way since the mid-1990s. The disciplined, centralized organization that conducted the September 11 is diminished because most of the group's senior and midlevel leaders are either incarcerated or dead, while the majority of those still at large are on the run and focused at least as much on survival as on offensive operations. However, Al Qaeda still has the potential to impose lethal threat.

From the critical standpoint, the key challenges for contemporary counterterrorism efforts are not as much Al Qaeda or any other terrorist organizations as what will follow them. The emerging primary terrorist threat includes the global network of mostly Sunni Islamic extremists, which extends beyond members of Al Qaeda. The foundations of these extremist sources remain very much alive and in some cases are growing deeper. Practically, they contain the interconnected economic and political systems of the Muslim world.

In addition to " Muslim" factor, there is a widespread opposition toward U. S. policies within and toward the Muslim world, especially the U. S. political position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and, which is more important, the invasion and occupation of Iraq (Byman, 2003: 61). Considering the mentioned trends and reasons, the counterterrorism challenges after the liquidation of Al Qaeda may very well be even more complex than they were before.

Decentralization and secretive nature of terrorist plots as well as indeterminate nature of the final target imposes extreme challenges on the intelligence. While the mission of intelligence in counterterrorism is to

monitor and prevent terrorist activity, practically it may become vain due to its inability to identify terrorist groups and individuals. However, even a decentralized terrorist threat has some connections that can be discovered, and this will constitute the core of intelligence counterterrorist efforts.

From the practical standpoint, although almost every extremist can be connected at least indirectly to the network of Sunni Islamic terrorists, the majority of linkages includes only casual contacts and do not involve preparations for terrorist operations directed against the United States. No intelligence service possesses the resources to monitor all of these linkages, to construct the life history of every terrorist, or to compile comprehensive sociograms of the radical Islamist scene (Rothkopf, 2005: 34).

International community's willingness to assist in the struggle against terrorist organizations to the major degree has depended on Al Qaeda's record and menacing capabilities. However, from the contemporary point of view, foreign cooperation becomes more problematic as the issue moves beyond Al Qaeda. Mentioned difficulties that the United States has already encountered in dealing with Lebanese Hizballah depict some of the problems in more generally enlisting foreign help against terrorist groups (Byman, 2003: 63).

An underlying limitation to the willingness of international community to collaborate with the United States on antiterrorist efforts is the skepticism among foreign political elite that the most powerful country in the world needs to be preoccupied with small groups of radicals. Critically, the skepticism of foreign community can be considered in terms of fact that the

U. S. preoccupation is no longer with the group that carried out the terrorist attacks on September 11 (Nash, 2004: 56).

However, the most significant challenge to the U. S. counterterrorist efforts that may emerge along with a more decentralized terrorist threat is the ability to uphold the nation's own commitment to struggle it. Surprisingly, the American society has revealed that its determination to fight counterterrorism can be just as inconstant as that of foreign publics. During the past quarter century, the U. S. public and government has given different and contradictive attention, priority, and resources to U. S. counterterrorist programs, with interest and efforts increasing in the aftermath of a major terrorist incident and declining as time passes without an attack.

International Threats of Terrorism From the critical standpoint, it is clear that even being the world's onlysuperpowerthe United States can no longer sustain a war on terrorism. Due to inability of the US to provide detection, monitoring and elimination of 100 percent of international terrorist groups, international cooperation in this area seems to be a promising solution. Moreover, terrorist organizations are now acting across the domestic borders of hosting states, jeopardizing security of entire international community and recent terrorist acts in London's subway became an evident support for this statement.

Brian Jenkins underlines that the success of terrorism has much to do with the perception of a nation's capability to deal with such crises, proposing that " public perceptions of government standing and competence in combatting terrorism are based not on overall performance, but rather on performance in a few dramatic hostage incidents, where the government, of

course, suffers disadvantages from the outset" ((Jenkins, 1983: 10). Indeed, the public sees the government only in crisis, demonstrably unable to provide security for its citizens, sometimes yielding to terrorists to save lives, unable to bring its enemies to justice.

Practically, a rescue attempt or successful prevention of an attack adds immeasurably to a nation's image of military prowess, while an attempt that fails does incalculable damage. Many statistics exist to quantify the activities, numbers, types, locations and targets of international terrorists. It was reported in 1986 that " incidents of terrorism - those involving citizens or territory of more than one country - have doubled in number since 1975, to slightly over 800 last year [1985]" (Hanley, 1986: 3).

Notwithstanding the bombings in August 1998 in Kenya and Tanzania, there are analysts who believe terrorism has been in decline in recent years. " Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1997", published by the American State Department, reported that there were a total of 304 acts of international terrorism, one of the lowest annual totals since 1971 (US Department of State, 1997). According to Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1998, the number of acts of international terrorism dropped to 273 attacks. However, in 1998 there was a record high toll of 741 people killed and 5, 952 injured in terrorist attacks (US Department of State, 1998).

In 2000, there were 423 terrorist acts, an increase of eight percent from the 392 attacks in 1999. The death toll for 2000 was 405, and 791 were wounded (US Department of State, 1999, 2000). The year 2001 witnessed a dramatic increase due to the audacious attacks on 11 September of that year. Many commentators agree that terroristviolenceis, and will likely

remain, an integral part of international relations. As Scotland Yard's counterterrorist specialist George Churchill-Coleman stated, " Terrorism is with us now, whether you like it or not. You've got to adjust your way of life to that" (Hanley, 1986: 3).

This mentality has now reached the American scene as the head of the Office of Homeland Security, Tom Ridge, noted, " We need to accept that the possibility of terrorism is a permanent condition for the foreseeable future. " He stated, " We just have to accept it" (Calabresi & Ratnesar, 21). At airports there is a " get on with the job" attitude and in daily living one must accept the need to be on guard, like steering clear of suspicious packages and reporting them to the local police. One columnist wrote, " By not surrounding the (terrorist) incident with hysterical posturing, we cut it down to size.

We make it seem a nuisance rather than a cataclysm. We stifle its capacity to instill terror. We decline to be afraid" (McCabe, 1996a: 4). In that regard, Great Britain is one of the few nations which is intimately familiar with terrorism and its impact. Lacking any other alternative, the British have essentially learned to live with the threats and the bombings. Moreover, the British have learned to live with intrusive surveillance cameras, the cost of bomb insurance (3. 2 billion dollars a year), as well as a higher awareness of the threat that has been assimilated into the society over the years, particularly since the late 1960s.

Even despite the recent terrorist attacks in London's subway, " the British approach to terrorism, developed over many years, seems natural in aculturethat places great store on a ' stiff upper lip'" (McCabe, 1996b: 8). The prognosis becomes ever more frightening as terrorists seek out softer

targets, as witnessed in the 1998 bombings of the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. This is because international police and security agencies will, for the most part, strengthen the defenses of consulates, embassies and residences, and will provide other forms of personal security for the more likely terrorist targets.

Therefore, terrorist attacks will probably become more indiscriminate. The bombing campaigns in Paris during the summers of 1986 and 1995, aimed at government buildings, restaurants and cafes, the bombings in London during the spring of 1992 of commuter train stations and the financial district, and the use of sarin in the subway in Japan by the Aum Shinrikyo in 1995, and the February 2001 reported discovery by the British police of a terrorist plot to release sarin into the London underground system as well as thesuicidehijacking of four airliners in September 2001 are examples of what we may expect.

(Other examples of indiscriminate terrorism are the strikes at airports such as those in December 1985, in Rome and Vienna. ) Furthermore, targets abound in highly developed industrialized societies and analysts anticipate that terrorist groups will begin targeting vital points such as " computer systems, power grids and other key links of industrial societies" (Hanley, 1986b: 2). Reports underline that terrorists are expanding their interests in nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons as well as information warfare.

Some of these concerns were highlighted in December 1999 when the Solicitor General of Canada, Lawrence MacAulay, told the House of Commons that Canada needed to strengthen the government's capacity to address the threat of a nuclear, biological or chemical attack by terrorists. Although the

possibility of such an attack happening was low, Mr. MacAulay felt all levels of government must be prepared to deal with such eventualities (Evenson, 2001: 2).

His concerns followed warnings by scientists of theHealthProtection Branch that a release of the deadly anthrax bacteria in a major Canadian population center could kill upwards of 35, 000 and cost 6. 5 billion to the health care system, underlining the fact that medical facilities were not prepared to deal with such an incident (Evenson, 2001: 2). In the fall of 2001, a series of letters containing the anthrax virus were mailed to media centers in New York City.

The letters were sent to ABC, NBC and CBS, and were orchestrated to attain the maximum amount of media coverage, while concomitantly stirring up popular fear andanxietyabout these and other possible attacks. Another issue that relates to this is that of nuclear scientists who represent a valuable resource to those nations developing nuclear programs, such as modern Iran. Potential Responses to Terrorism: International Scope The evolution and deployment in the 1970s of elite counterterrorist teams in Israel and West Germany was in response, partly, to the frustrations of employing a series of so-called " non-force" methods against terrorists.

Livingstone has argued that " governments have employed a variety of nonforce strategies in their efforts to resist terrorism, including diplomacy, negotiation, concessions, and cooptation. Occasionally such methods have worked, but more often than not they have failed or only provided a temporary prophylaxis to an endemic problem" (Livingstone, 1982: 176).

Now it is widely recognized that, under most circumstances, making concessions to terrorists only invites further acts of terrorism.

This fact, combined with thefailureof the U. N. to take concerted action to develop effective remedies to the problem of international terrorism, has resulted in a growing tendency on the part of national governments to resort to unilateral military action against terrorism in the belief that, if it is not possible to make terrorists answerable to the law, then they must be answerable to the gun. It is apparent from recent twentieth-century history in Western countries that theresponsibilityfor combating terrorism has been, for the most part, that of law enforcement authorities.

On occasion, army units were tasked and, for the most part, were found to be operationally wanting in a number of areas such as strategy, methodology and structure. Conventional military forces and tactics have not met the challenge of terrorism: " Not only are contemporary weapons and tactics far too destructive to be employed in heavily populated urban regions, but also the deployment of large numbers of soldiers against terrorists simply increases the number of targets at which they can strike" (Livingstone, 1982: 176).

General George Grivas, the famous Cypriot terrorist leader, noted that the level of terrorist operations is much lower than that of conventional military operations. Counterterrorist operations demand specially adapted and trained soldiers, tactics and strategy. He noted the " only hope of finding us was to play cat and mouse: to use tiny, expertly trained groups, who could work with cunning and patience and strike rapidly when we least expected" (Taber, 1977: 118).

In short, one must use those same weapons and tactics belonging to the terrorists' inventory -psychology, stealth, speed, surprise and cunning - against the terrorists themselves. Moreover, candidates for such units must havemotivationand determination, physical and mental stamina, initiative and self-discipline, be capable of operating in small groups during long-term isolated operations, and they must have the aptitude to assimilate a wide range of skills and think laterally. This type of military operation demands a different type of soldier, namely one who can develop a broad spectrum of skills.

Practically, contemporary counterterrorism demands highly trained and motivated commandos, operating in small groups; skilled in electronics, communications, demolitions, marksmanship, deception, silent killing; and familiar with terrorist tactics and behavior.

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