

Strategic counterterrorism plan essay example

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The USA faces permanent threat of terrorist attacks at the hands of ideological radical zealots driven by dictatorial masterminds like any peacemaking nation that will not have people mistreated or human rights abused, whatever criminal opposition. To eliminate the possibility of the USA citizens' welfare being affected by radical perpetrators America has counterterrorism system performing protective functions. Being the set of deterrent tools and measures, the system mentioned does misfire. The 2011 saw bin Laden eliminated; however, far from being eliminated, terrorist organization Al Qaeda seems to still be showing unhealthy signs of life, which may call for some unorthodox, unconventional measures to be brought forward and included into a repackaged counterterrorism system. Now it is time to see whether current system is capable of efficiently countering terrorism.

With every new serious threat on the horizon, the USA gets its defense system repackaged. The strategy of 2011 succeeded that of 2006 while there has appeared the newest strategy propounded and construed by Barack Obama himself at a conference this past spring, possibly in response to Boston bombing. Whatever the reason, the 2011 strategy was anything but inefficient. Besides, there is no saying the 2013 plan is sure to be irreproachable.

According to " Fact Sheet: National Strategy for Counterterrorism" (n. p.), the national counterterrorism plan is to be concentrated on eliminating Al-Qaeda, its affiliates, groups that aligns themselves with the terrorist organization, such as AQAP and Yemen-based Al-Qaeda cell, whose efforts of blowing a plane bound for Detroit back in 2009. The strategy also targets Al-

Qaeda's followers who seek inspiration in its activity, share its ideology, such as those who are responsible for committing a 2009 Fort Hood shootout. The scope of preventive activities covers Iran, Syria, Lebanon-based Hezbollah and Palestinian HAMAS. Destroying Al-Qaeda and its governing body in the Afghanistan-Pakistan area is defined as the ultimate goal. Speaking of general transitional and less global objectives, the 2011 strategy acknowledges the vital necessity of decreasing vulnerabilities and upgrading the existing system of defense and terrorism prevention, deterring terrorists from acquiring and letting the weaponry of mass destruction proliferate, obliterating the so-called " safe-havens" of Al-Qaeda, disrupting links between the mentioned organization and its affiliates, refuting its ideology and its attempts to find justification for violence, knocking logistical and financial ground out of Al-Qaeda's feet as well as sabotaging online communication (Fact Sheet: National Strategy for Counterterrorism n. p.). Fighting terrorism revolves around adhering to basic American values of privacy, civil liberties and rights, applying every tool needed to defeat terrorism, such as military and homeland security, intelligence, law enforcement, creating and strengthening working partnerships with other world institution to ensure terrorism decimation through cooperation and interaction, differentiating between various tools to be applied, depending on the type of social and political environment, making the American nation resilient and ready to take a blow and recover quickly to fight back, should an attack be carried out. The 2011 strategy brags having eliminated half of Al-Qaeda top management in quick succession, with the ranks of top-echelon leaders thinning out, to say nothing of the organization recruitment being

intercepted on a regular basis. In his “ On a Path of Defeat” speech, President Obama noted that counterterrorism strategy caused bin Laden’s allies and affiliates to doubt Al-Qaeda viability, the efficiency of their efforts to make the US look warring with Islam. Besides, terrorist leaders were said to be realizing they had lost the better part of followers, possibly due to Al-Qaeda killing so many innocent Muslims, when trying to assault Americans (Fact Sheet: National Strategy for Counterterrorism n. p.).

Efficient though it may be called, Barack Obama decided in favor of a new strategy that was aired in 2013. According to Moore and Poling (n. p.), some strategy steps to be made are new while others seem to be backward-looking, resurrecting the pre 9/11 strategy values. Foreign policy consensus vs. isolationism counterbalance is the focal point or the core of the new plan. What Obama has finally done is sideline hindering political leftist and rightist non-intervention advocates’ eloquence, which was long overdue. The president authorized counterterrorism activities directed against Al-Qaeda and described them as being morally acceptable and legal. Obama once again stressed the importance of the major pillar of the US counterterrorism program that will continue determining its priorities, the pillars being the application of “ all elements of national power”, dominance in a “ battle of ideas”. President Obama did vow to lend support to “ democratic transitions” of the Arab Spring as the opposition to extremists that should be critically marginalized by the US foreign aid. Obama italicized that there will be no retreating from “ challenging regions” that dangers might not mount as a result. One of the strategy key items implies the significance of active foreign diplomacy following the death of US Ambassador Christopher

Stevens in Benghazi in 2012 (Moore& Poling).

The strategy has already garnered decent amount of criticism for its returning to the pre 9/11 counterterrorism mentality. Moore and Poling (n. p.) claim that president has diminished the possibility of Al-Qaeda causing mass losses, which was countered by Congressmen, with CIA Director John Brennan commenting on Al-Qaeda unfolding its much increased activities in Yemen and other areas. Obama's strategic plan focuses on foreign targets and radical individuals in America. The strategy also requires that 9, 000 soldiers should be left in Afghanistan on a counterterrorism mission as well as for drilling the Afghan Security Forces; however experts' assessment conclude that the military presence of up to 30, 000 soldiers is required, which means Obama's strategy is not quite realistic. International cooperation is in question since Yemen, for example, undergoes a transition to democracy that still allows vast territories to be controlled by Al-Qaeda. Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi has had at least 20 Yemeni Armed Forces brigades revolt against him. In enhancing the number of attacks by unmanned aerial vehicles, otherwise known as drones, Obama puts valuable intelligence at risk as well as alienating local population stressed and terrorized by fear producing drone attacks. Finally, president Obama failed to make any reference to one of the cornerstones of American strategy in weapon of mass destruction nonproliferation, which is strange, considering what quick a pace of WMD manufacturing North Korea has acquired lately and how close to nuclear weaponry producing capability Iran has come (Moore and Poling n. p.).

Counterterrorism strategy is a formal guidance; however arch-important is

the cooperation and contribution of every single law enforcement agency. The Department of Justice's objective is to prevent terrorist attacks from being carried out on American soil, encourage national security, conduct investigations and legally prosecute individuals who have committed the act of terrorism or are about to do it. The Department of Justice embraces the FBI, DEA, the ATF (the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives), and the USMS (the US Marshals Service). The FBI is tasked with protection and prevention as well as terrorism elimination priorities. FBI's Legal Attaché or LEGAT offices are based abroad, which makes it possible for joint international counterterrorism activities to take place (Combating terrorism 7). The DEA's paramount concern is drug trafficking to the USA that is thwarted through tight international cooperation that the DEA cultivates, with all suspects detained and brought to justice. For the record, the DEA numbers 696 officials in 63 different countries. The ATF activity is all about putting limits to the flow of weaponry in order that terrorists and psychologically unstable and handicapped individuals should not enjoy free access to dangerous items. The ATF plays a crucial role in helping conduct post-blast examinations, ballistic analysis and tracing guns and bombs history and origins. The US marshals, in turn, are responsible for tracking down, detaining, and extraditing fugitives both within and outside the US. Federal judicial officers, such as judges, attorney, and jurors are said to be under their guardianship (Combating terrorism 7).

The Department of Homeland Security's activity is focused on spotting and preventing terrorist attacks and decreasing national exposure to them as well as securing the country's border safety. To implement the US

counterterrorism policy, to secure safety, and to undertake efforts to fight terrorism by using all the tools available, such as law enforcement, economic potential, diplomacy, military power, and intelligence is the priority of the Department of State. Regional Security Officers, reporting to the State Department are in charge of overseeing embassy, diplomats and their families' security. Apart from these duties, officers investigate visa and passports frauds, assist local and federal agencies, survey terrorist activities and guarantee the safety of overseas officials (Combating terrorism 8-10). The aim of creating the National Security Council was to ameliorate and enhance the coordination between different agencies so that national security measures might be more effective. The department is headed by the president, with Vice-president, the Secretary of Defense, State and Treasury being in attendance to make sure this coordination is fruitful. Being launched in the wake of September 11-th attacks, the 9/11 Commission is yet another link in the US counterterrorism chain. Its function is to advise on how to improve the existing system as well as providing accounts of terrorist attacks for further analysis. Finally, the National Counterterrorism Center is a centralized body that coordinates all the tools, such as law enforcement. The department's functioning began with Congress passing the 2004 Act of Intelligence Reform, tasking the NCTC with developing counterterrorism strategic planning (Combating terrorism 11-12).

Though having strategy and respective departments to effectively implement it, the USA counterterrorism frame is somewhat far from being exemplary. It is time to see whether or not it is effective or requires immediate measures to be taken. According to adjunct professor at the

Center for Homeland Defense and Security, Paul Smith (n. p.), the USA of today is nothing short of a country that is plagued by terrorism. The reason for this to happen is that the USA is fighting too many nations, with local resistance growing exponentially. As of 2011, the USA was engaged in military operations in Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Libya and Somalia. With that in mind, national counterterrorism efforts to span over a decade cost the country incalculable expenditure and losses that it incurred in the course of campaigning against global terrorism. Beyond doubt, national preventing system makes America the world's biggest counterterrorism player; however, the ever-increasing spending that comes with this role causes the US citizens to bash the existing system, wanting it seriously changed (Smith n. p.). It would be a wise move to make cutting the national counterterrorism expenditure, without letting preventive efforts put strain on the national treasury and people's welfare.

Smith (n. p.) admits the national strategy has changed a great deal since notorious September 11-th attacks, but has not put the ultimate threat to rest. The country is said to face threat posed by its own citizens as the 2011 US National Strategy for Counterterrorism included an account of domestic danger and the ways of dealing with it. The reality of domestic threat is that the internet is becoming a comfortable harbor for terrorists in view of the fact that it abounds with ideological as well as training items from radical articles to bomb assemblage charts (Smith, n. p.). For the record, most recently Boston Bombing was conducted by Tsarnaevs who planted a number of bombs close to the Marathon finish line back in mid-April, 2013. Pressure cookers served as containers and detonators while erection

diagram was allegedly found on one of the radical websites. According to Smith (n. p.), Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula or AQAP is presumed to have launched a magazine of its own with do-it-yourself bomb assemblage tips and the now late Osama bin Laden. The idea is for American terrorists to adopt the overseas practices and implement them in the USA. With that in mind, it is a must-admit fact that Al-Qaeda has succeeded in radicalizing American youth, spreading its influence to the far outs of the country through propagandistic ideology Smith (n. p.). It is highly recommended that the US develop an “ overarching counterterrorism doctrine” that would employ the resources of Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies. Such lack of cooperation cannot but take its ultimate toll on the local police, which is, according to Smith (n. p.), “ a mixture of the good, the bad and the ugly”, as of right now. Ideology has always been and will ever be a formidable tool of manipulating society members. What the USA needs to do is win the war for teenagers’ minds, whose life dissatisfaction, rebel asocial nature as well as serious family issues that they face at such a young age may have them join radical organizations or start sharing their extreme ideology. The USA is still to get involved in the war of words or ideological debate that is sure to give it the upper hand, which, in fact, may be gained on the “ IT battlefield” where reversal ideology may win over thousands of hesitating young individuals. It is also worth letting American Government come into play and facilitating the struggle between “ the American Dream” and ruthless “ Jihad” that is said to be ravaging these days (Smith n. p.). Most importantly, the US counterterrorism frame sorely lacks interagency cooperation regardless of the NCTC coordinating efforts. In order for

cooperation lack to be terminated responsibilities and roles should be equally and proportionally shared, agencies' accountability should be enhanced, and joint strategies need to be elaborated (Combating terrorism 15-16). The CIA vs. the FBI competition is well-documented since there is no wonder why American safety system is so exposed to external threats, with a good number of civilians victimized both inside and outside the US. It is safe to admit that Boston bombing took place due to the lack or poor cooperation between law enforcement agencies. Police officers to guard the marathon were unaware of what would happen at the moment of explosion, which is nothing else but intelligence and information sharing failure. Overall, the USA counterterrorism strategy is efficient; however it lacks good partnership on the part of its countless agencies that constitute its major frame. The 2013 Barack Obama's strategy is thought to be a step back to the pre 9/11 state of affairs, with the focus of attention being put on overseas threat and radical Muslims within the country. However, it authorizes the use of destructive weapon that may backfire, setting local population against American peacemakers and nurturing local resistance as well as giving Al-Qaeda problem a fighting chance. One of the most dangerous international terrorist organizations, formerly headed by the now late Osama bin Laden, is reported to have been dealt a serious blow, which was the focal point of Obama's presidential address. Political pundits and opposition are inclined to believe that the president was slightly quick to profess about the victory over the organization. Such way or another, the USA is yet to win its major ideology battle to make sure there is no threat to its citizens' welfare.

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