

Edison order to  
create a small bomb.



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Edison Henriquez Intelligence/Counter Terrorism Dr. Cozine 12/12/17 Question #1 The 2006 Liquid bombing plot was a transatlantic aircraft threat taking place in the United Kingdom and affecting the United States and Canada which had the potential to kill thousands of people. The plot was discovered by the British police with the help of an extensive surveillance operation. Because of the grave threat to society, unprecedented security measures were initially put in place at airports from that point on.

As you will read, there were many benefits that came with information sharing but unfortunately, along with that came a few pitfalls as well. There were a number of different methods used to gather information like Covert Human Intelligence, surveillance and a few other methods. The way that the UK conducts counter terrorism investigations is much different than the way the United States does but at the end of the day, I believe the US has a better approach. Abdulla Ahmed Ali, Assad Sarwar and Tanvir Hussain are three of eight Muslim men who were charged on planning suicide attacks on airliners using bombs created from household chemicals. The plot was carried out to attract a lot of attention and “ create a disturbance” as Abdulla Ahmed Ali said. For Israeli investigations, the UK would always have their info shared with the Americans and inform them about major developments. According to General Michael Hayden, (CIA Director at the time), ‘ The United States and the United Kingdom were so closely linked that if there were bad things happening in Great Britain, it would affect America domestically.’ This information would get carried all the way up to the present Homeland Security intelligence director at the time, Charlie Allen.

Throughout the span of 2-3 months, the plot was being put into action. The suspected terrorists began purchasing suspicious amounts of household goods which were all found to be ingredients in order to create a small bomb. The terrorists involved in this plot were very detail oriented in their endeavors and they were smart enough to understand that this threat, if executed properly, was going to have a serious global and local effect on two of the greatest superpowers in the world – the UK and the United States. Overall, an estimated 400, 000 passengers were affected because of the alerts of the plot. It has been estimated that the first day of delays cost the airlines over \$175 million. As many as 20, 000 bags are believed to have been misplaced at Heathrow. On August 13th, 2006, Michael O’Leary, chief executive of Ryanair, claimed that the chaos at airports meant that the terrorists were achieving their aims. Locally, without knowing, the suspected terrorists were under extensive monitoring throughout their transatlantic airline plot. These men were found in London purchasing a suspicious amount of hydrogen peroxide at a local salon.

The investigators did not know the plot, what it was aimed towards but they knew that this was suspicious. What the British and American investigators still didn’t know at beginning of the case was what exactly would the target be. Was it going to be an attack on public or private places? Investigators didn’t know, at first if the target was a shopping center, a night club, private building, or anything else. The following methods used to gather information were essential to the investigation because it helped British officials discover the threat that these suspected terrorists posed.

Covert Human Intelligence Sources was an essential aspect of the investigation. This involves people who provide secret information about a target of an investigation. Directed surveillance was also put into place as human sources followed and observed suspicious targets. Along with this, there was an interception of communications, such as monitoring emails and audio visuals. There was intrusive surveillance as human intelligence sources would place eavesdropping devices in the home of the suspected terrorist and there was the use of equipment interference, which covertly accessed computer usage.

All of these methods to gather information was effective in obtaining secret intelligence. These methods were indeed necessary because the suspected terrorists were no amateurs; they were exceptionally good at counter surveillance measures. They would speak in code when speaking about the liquid bombing plot, would use nicknames so as not to incriminate themselves and unlike many amateur terrorists, did not directly say what it was that they were going to do over through computer or cellphone. They tried to do everything they could so that their intelligence would not leak – they would even cover their mouths when speaking in public so that agents could not see what they were saying.

As discussed in class, I would classify them within the Signals intelligence by communications monitoring. In order to ensure the safety of other nations, organizations, and/or civilians, protective measures are put in place in order to share valuable information and strengthen security across organizational boundaries. This system is known as information sharing. With this plot, there were several benefits and a few pitfalls. The first benefit was that as <https://assignbuster.com/edison-order-to-create-a-small-bomb/>

soon as the British first suspected the potentiality of the plot, they informed the United States Department of Homeland Security. Michael Chertoff, the Secretary of Homeland Security at the time got a telephone call from British authorities and he carried the message onto President Bush. The Homeland Security Intelligence team, along with the FBI and the CIA were able to meet and attempt to address the issue by changing the protocol for aviation security. This issue was brought all the way down to the head of aviation security – the Transport Security Administrator, Kip Hawley.

A major benefit of information sharing was that the US could properly prepare for/attempt to prevent another disaster similar to 9/11 from happening. Along with benefits, unfortunately there are pitfalls. One major pitfall was the break in trust that occurred between the UK and the US. This happened once current CIA director at the time, General Michael Hayden took the situation under his hands without consulting his British counterparts.

CIA director took a trip to Pakistan and he had a conversation about the plot with his Pakistani counterpart. On the same day that the CIA director visited Pakistan, the head of the liquid bombing operation, Rashid Rauf, was captured. The UK believed that this action would compromise operation. At this point, the UK did not know what the three suspected Pakistanians were going to do – flee from London or carry on with the operation. It's safe to say that counter terrorism investigations conducted in the UK are different than in the United States. The UK British police did not believe that they had enough substantial evidence to convict these people. American officials, however did not want to wait and agree to the risk of terrorism. UK officials

believe that it is not enough to have sub-par intelligence; instead, they believe that there must be a substantially valuable amount of intelligence that can be acted upon.

As the plot thickened, there was an addition of suspects and a higher level of surveillance officers were needed. At the time, over 200 officers around the country were brought into London who were trained in surveillance and would actually compliment what was put in place.” General Michael Hayden disputed with the UK, arguing that the US was not trying to let the situation progress anymore. The UK, on the other hand wanted to let the situation run a little more in order to obtain more valuable intelligence.

The CIA Director at the time believed that they were in a period of war and that essentially, it was “ time to move.” If this plot progressed anymore, the consequences would be immense and profound. The reason that the UK was so hesitant was because they have an extensive past experience when dealing with these judgement calls of whether or not to arrest terrorist suspects too soon.

This becomes a mixture of instincts and hard evidence. The US however, takes action as soon as possible so as to mitigate potential threats. I believe that the American way of handling terrorist plots is the superior way of going about a plot – especially as one so impactful as this. The reason being is because as we as we look back at 9/11, we seemed to have had no control over it happening; essentially, we had no knowledge that it was going to happen. We cannot let another case similar to 9/11 take place again.

We must stop terrorist threats at the source whenever it is possible. I would not like to sit around and wait for something worse to happen in order to obtain credible intelligence because it may be too late to prevent the issue from happening. If the UK government agreed with the US in taking immediate action, then they wouldn't have risked having 7 of their airliners to go down.