

# Vancouver olympic games 2010 security



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The international Olympic Games are international is a competition hosted by different countries around the world for expert athletes in their respective fields of sport. The very first Olympic games event to be held was the 1924 Chamonix, France (Marsh, 2018). This was then followed by Olympic Games in Canada: Calgary Olympics of 1988 and Vancouver of 2010. It is as well important to note that Canada has won over 199 Olympic medals. The Olympic games are held in winter to include particular sports activities that can only be played during the season. Some of these activities include sports such as ice hockey and figure skating which are suited to the season. There has been a steady growth of the Olympic Games since it was first established in 1924. It initially featured 16 countries and 258 athletes all over the world competing in 16 sports event (Bennett & Haggerty, 2014). However, steadily grown to over 2781 athletes in 2014 Sochi Olympic Games, and 98 sporting events.

The Olympic Games is one of the most popular international sports events recognized today. The activities are aimed at bringing together different people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Nevertheless, the recognition that the event always brings to the host country has been both beneficial and dangerous to the country. While such an event might be important in showcasing the country's resources, economy and natural beauty, it also further exposes the country to security threats such as acts of terrorism.

The Vancouver Olympic Games was an athletic competition that lasted a total of sixteen days. The event offered a platform of showcasing the host country and an avenue for international rivalry. Nonetheless, there are

occasions when the host countries for such events have been negatively portrayed rather than being positively showcased to the world. Historically, international sporting events have been quite fertile platforms for drawing much attention to the airing of political grievances of the various national parties. More specifically, these events have been widely used in embarrassing the governments of the countries hosting the events, drawing much attention to the injustices practiced in the host country, initiating quite controversial ethical issues, and the potential for the application of political blackmail (Burgo & Cromartie, 2018). The situation has been worse in cases where terrorism has been organized and attacked on such countries. This paper, therefore, seeks to analyze the security issues that were involved in the planning and management of the event. The security issues in the planning and management of the Olympic games revolved around three aspects of the planning: reliance on volunteers, cooperation of relevant agencies and logistical disadvantages of the international games.

Evaluation of the planning and management

Fertile grounds for terrorist attacks

Security management, organization and planning are such important aspects of planning and management of international events that are quite likely to contain a high population. An international Olympic event would therefore place the country as a target for terrorism especially after the 9/11 attacks. Terrorist attacks are mostly known for their preference to an event attended by tourists, international leaders, athletes and international media. All these groups would be available at the international Olympic games (Burgo

&Cromartie, 2018). Besides, this was an event that had to be widely televised in the entire world to billions of population in the world. The event would attract much attention from the media and cultural perspectives that makes it quite fertile for terrorist attack.

Additionally, it is quite important to note that this was an event that would be attended by quite a high number of people which may cause logistical security challenges. High populations in the country would pose a serious security challenge for the involved agencies. The number of fans in the host country, their uncontrolled movement and flow, as well as the passionate and excited atmosphere would make it quite easy for the terrorists to target and attack the event (Burgo & Cromartie, 2018). However, it must be noted that the international Olympic Committee claimed that it was the responsibility of the host countries and city in particular to ensure a secure environment for the visitors from abroad and residents within the country, this posed a challenge to the country's security agencies.

#### Logistical security challenges

The International Olympic Games require a massive budget to cover for the security and accommodation challenges posed to the host country. This explains the significance of proper decision making as well as prioritization of certain risks pertaining to safety above others. This is based on the fact that it is nearly impossible to protect all the people in the country in every location they are based at all times. This is a complicated process that requires a proper and extensive process of planning on risk management throughout the event (Klauser, 2015). Moreover, these challenges constantly

shift depending on the location of the game as well as the time. The limited resources to be used in the planning and management would not be enough to achieve the desired security management.

More specifically, data and network security issues posed a challenge to the event, and required more resources than the previous Olympic Games.

Furthermore, logistical problems cannot be prevented in such situations due to the complexity, size and scope of the events. In an effort to regulate the logistical challenges, the planners always make's sure that the host country is identified quite early before the actual time for the event. In addition to this, all the venues for each game should be properly identified and secured one year prior to the actual event. Unfortunately, these benchmarks are quite essential in anyone interested in organizing the terrorist attacks. The prior identification of the data and location of the events is quite an important information to a malicious individual interested in planning a terrorist attack, methods to combat such violence from erupting could be; proper assessment of security measures for the event, conduct prior surveillance and set insiders in the host country before the event (Zurawski, 2012). It is also important to note the lack of power in controlling the number of supporters and fans of athletes who would be interested in attending the games. It is easy for a malicious individual to quickly blend in with others without being suspected by anybody (Klauser, 2015). Moreover, it is easy for an individual to commit a terrorist attack and escape after taking advantage of the transportation hubs for the events. Therefore, the planners of the events must understand that logistical challenges can be properly managed

if more people are involved in the coordination of the security protocol not only in the event venues but in the entire city hosting the event.

Luckily, this was an event that would take place during the winter, and had to be in separate locations. The distance between the two main venues locations for the Vancouver Olympics were large enough, and had enough road access in case of significant delays and closure of the main routes. The accessibility, location and important connections between the two venues created such a significant security measure in the country at the time (Klauser, 2015). Conversely, it would be worse had there been another simultaneous event around the two venues. This could have posed serious security threats for the event.

#### Inter-agency cooperation challenge

The successful execution of any international games requires the collaborative efforts of multiple agencies. The Vancouver Olympic games in 2010 were more complex and larger than the previous Olympic games. Initially, Olympic Games would be assessed by the domestic agencies and authorities of the host countries. The agencies had to ensure communication, cooperation and coordination for smooth organization and management of the activities (Clement. 2017). Then again, this adversely challenged and limited the cooperation of the agencies. For instance, during the Vancouver Olympics in 2010 all agencies were committed to collaboration and deeply involved in their responsibilities and did not care about what the other agency would do. Every agency is concerned with the public association of its function depending on the agenda, interests and

internal culture of the agency. All these characteristics inhibit the needed cooperation for the success of maximum security during the event.

In many instances, there have been cases of power sharing and hierarchy disputes between security agencies to an extent where the dispute interferes with basic security planning. A united front might publicly appear yet there is mistrust and fighting among the agencies. In such situations, there will be higher degrees of discretion and the agencies will begin hesitating to engage in open exchange, particularly with regard to logistical information, which may give them the advantage on the world stage. This leads to Inter-agency rivalry and less cooperation on the larger scale, making it quite hard for the relevant agencies to come in and help in the emergency situation rather than keeping away from the other agency's responsibility.

Most importantly, there has been an increase in the commercialization of the international games particularly with regard to the Olympics. Private leadership has developed much interest in such activities to an extent that they want to control the event. For instance, it is common knowledge that many states would contribute to the planning of the event and later demand that their respective agencies accompany their dignitaries and agencies to the event. Some of these countries are wealthy countries that may not be turned down (Clement, 2017). Nonetheless, this does not appear quite a security issue, and has never created a situation. On the other hand, in the case of a security crisis in the event, this would make a quite murky and awkward situation not only for the host country but to the foreign country with its security agents in a foreign land.

Similarly, Vancouver was most likely to experience inter-agency cooperation challenges. The structure at the time greatly promoted the competition and lack of cooperation by the relevant agencies. This is largely based on the 2003 formation of the V2010- ISU which was aimed at providing security to all the games in the country (Hill & Kaluzny, 2010). However, this was an agency that would comprise the municipal agencies in the country such as Whistler Police, the Vancouver City Police (Giulianotti & Klauser, 2010). Besides, the agency would incorporate other 118 local police agencies in the country. Each agency was given the role to play during the event. For instance, provincial agencies were given the responsibility of managing emergency situations, disaster management and public health for the entire period. Canada's Integrated Threat Assessment Sector would provide risk and intelligence assessments (Zekulin, 2009). Contrastingly, Canada had not had a good history of the coordination and cooperation of its agencies especially on intelligence and security matters. These are agencies that have been in constant conflicts in issues of national importance. The organizers made an effort in the mitigation of cooperation, communication and coordination challenges that could have interfered with the security operations of the agency.

## Volunteers

Trained private and public security professionals provide security in such international games. But, these professionals have never been enough to fully secure the entire period of a long event. Proper security measures require volunteers to act as ambassadors and leaders overseeing important activities in the organization. The volunteers should, in addition to this, play <https://assignbuster.com/vancouver-olympic-games-2010-security/>



quite an important role in the security operations for the event (Baum, 2007). In spite of this, poor determination and selection of volunteers for such events has led to security issues. Malicious individuals with the purpose of attacking an event can take advantage of the situation to get to the venue for the planned attack. Similarly, volunteers and trained personnel may be expected to operate quite smoothly without much friction. Yet, this has never been the issue based on the fact that volunteers are poorly compensated and not treated with much respect by the relevant authorities. Volunteers may decide to fail and do not show up for at a time that they were critically needed in the event.

Vancouver Olympics required over 25000 volunteers for services All the volunteers were to go through thorough checking and screening of the individuals' credentials to maintain the high security in the country for the event. The venues for every activity in the entire period of the event required screening of an individual, determination and processing of the access to the restricted areas as a basic security measure. This improved the confidence on the efficiency and effectiveness of the security concern for the entire period of the event (Baum, 2007). More importantly, there were lots of technological advances made in the accreditation field to heighten the security measure in the country at the time.

Surprisingly, the organizers of the event failed to recruit the required number of volunteer and had to turn back to the local businesses in the country to lend their staff in helping during the international event. This disappointed people and some even thought that the organizers had failed in their duty in ensuring the safety and protection of everybody in the event. In case there

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would be inadequate volunteers, the effectiveness and efficiency of the events security measures would be adversely affected (Clement, 2017). Besides, this was most likely to interfere with the selection of the volunteers for the event. Volunteers who were previously turned down based on their disqualifications would be deemed fit because there would be serious shortage of volunteers. As a result, this could have affected the Vancouver Games.

## Conclusion

The successful organization of an international event like the Vancouver Olympic in 2010 is such a great achievement that should be appreciated, but which requires rigorous strategic planning and risk management beforehand to ensure its success. This is an event where the host country has had to deal with both its domestic issues, as well as issues from other nations. The security organizers of the Vancouver Olympics were quite significant in monitoring every possible scenario where insecurity could possibly arise within the event. Domestic groups, were as well controlled and made the event a success. While everybody individual was busy playing their part of the success of the organization, there must have been individuals with plans to disrupt the event. However, the Organizers of the event were quite influential in analyzing the security weaknesses that malicious people may take advantage of in the society. This ultimately lead to the sufficient management of the three security challenges posed to organizers and successful completion of the event. Some shortcomings of the event included the inability of security agencies to work in collaboration during regarding logistical planning. There was a high level of competition and

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tension among rivaling companies due to the scale of the event on the world stage and the amount of free sponsorship such an event might result in. Thus, security agencies are largely interested in showcasing themselves as the best during these events which can unfortunately work to hinder the effectivity of pre-planning upon arrival at the event. As mentioned earlier the number of people concentrated within a centralized location makes the event prime for some form of attack. This means that there is no way one agency on its own can protect it, and even a group of agencies produce no true guarantees with an event in such scale. In the end such an even cannot take place without some collaboration albeit a weak one, such as observed with the Vancouver games whose agencies were able to look past their opportunistic desires for the sake of the safety of the event.

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