THE EVOLUTION OF TRANSLATLANTIC TERRORISM AND THE CASE OF EUROPE

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"We have sent a few messages to America's allies so that they cease all involvement in the American crusade… in particular, to France and to Germany. But if these things are not enough, we are prepared to do more."

- Ayman al-Zawahiri (Leader of *Al-Qaeda*)

Introduction

National Security is one of the ingredients of safeguarding peace and prosperity within a society. However, as the Global Village grows, new threats and challenges emerge and the fight against them is nothing less than constant. With international terrorism rising, 9/11 and the bombing attacks in Madrid and London were the events that called for immediate security changes in the transatlantic world.

With Jihadist extremists targeting key cities within the United States and Europe, the governments of the transatlantic world found themselves unprepared to face the not very recent challenge of international terrorism. Responding to the security crisis as a nation, the United States was able to immediately adopt controversial legislations and to establish the *Department of Homeland Security*.

However, the complexity of the European establishment and culture made the response time of the European Union longer and challenging. With similar security threats against the European Union and its continent, one should consider if similarly controversial legislations could be adopted and if a similar institutions to the idea of the *Department of Homeland Security* could be established by the Union.

The Evolution of Transatlantic Terrorism

Terrorism in the United States and Europe was mainly expressed by regional separatist movements and far-left or far-right ideologies. From organizations such as: the *Black Liberation Army* and the *Weather Underground Organization* to the Irish *RIRA*, the Basque *ETA* and the Greek *Revolutionary Nuclei*, urban terrorism was a visible fear factor in the transatlantic world in the last four decades. Driven by their ideological impulses, domestic terrorists managed to create a sense of instability. Their goal: achieving political aims and making their causes known by attracting national and/or international attention.

According to a research conducted at the University of Warsaw, left-wing terrorism (known as "Red-Terror") predominantly appeared within the European Continent during the second half of the 19th century. "Red" terrorists demanded the establishment of communist states, dethatched from the elitism of the European aristocrat rulers (Nikolov, 2012). Up to that point, anti-establishment ideologies were expressed by groups not connected to any state authority.

During the spread of globalization in the 1970s and 1980s, transforming the capitalist Europe into a communist society, detached from international organizations such as the NATO and E.U. came at the top of the European

terrorists' agenda. Assassinations, kidnappings and bombings became the terrorists' anti-establishment statements. At the same time, the global power vacuum created by the dissolution of the Soviet Union created a ground for cross-border terrorist ideologies to spread. Countries from Africa to the Middle East and South Asia offered training and recruitment opportunities for potential terrorists.

At the wake of the 1967 Six-Day War, extremist Muslims were forced to shift away from guerilla warfare and focus on urban terrorism. Palestinian terrorist networks such as the *Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)* became know-how providers for international terrorist techniques (Moore, n.d.). Islamic terrorism was stepping into the global spotlight during the 1970s. Most prominently, with the 1970 Dawson's Field incident which involved the hijacking by *PFLP* of five airliners (American, British and Israeli) which was followed by a hostage crisis in Zarka, Jordan and the 1972 Munich Massacre, where members of the Palestinian terrorist organization *Black September* assassinated eleven members of the Israeli Olympic team after a hostage standoff. Their motive: the Palestinian-Israeli conflict resulting from the –occupation- of Palestine by Israel (Reeve, 2000).

Historically, the ten year Soviet War in Afghanistan (1979 – 1989) became a turning point for the expansion of international terrorism. Jihadists trained in Afghanistan during the war were able to use their skills acquired in fighting targets of Western interests around the globe (Moore, n.d.). At the same time, state sponsored terrorism started to develop. In 1988, the transatlantic *Pan Am* Flight 103 was destroyed by a bomb over the Scottish town of Lockerbie, costing the lives of 270. Years later, in 2003, Gaddafi's Government in Libya accepted partial responsibility for the attack (Simons, 2003). By targeting American and European

airliners, the symbolisms of the attacks were profound. The international game of terror against the West had started.

Just four years after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, in 1993, Jihadists made their intentions known by bombing the World Trade Center in New York City, NY. Few years later, in 1995, the U.S. Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and in Dar es Saalam, Tanzania were simultaneously attacked. Eight years after the failed attempt to demolish the World Trade Center, America was under attack again. Using four passenger planes, *Al-Qaeda* (Arabic for *The Base*) terrorists targeted the World Trade Center as well as the Pentagon building in Washington, DC. Labeled as the New Pearl Harbor, September 11, 2001 cost the lives of 2,977 innocent people.

The Lone Wolfs

Undeniably, 9/11 changed perceptions and created racial stereotypes. In reality, major incidents prove that terrorism can be carried out by unsuspected individuals known as Lone-Wolfs. By definition, a Lone-Wolf terrorist "is a person who acts on his or her own without orders from –or even connections to- an organization" (Burton & Steward, 2008). Lone-Wolfs are usually ideologically motivated.

It was 22nd of July, 2011, when the Scandinavian nation of Norway was about to change forever. At 15:25, a car bomb explosion shook the government district of Oslo. Two hours later, dressed in a police uniform, the perpetrator of the bombing attack was arriving at the island of Utoya that was hosting the summer camp of the Labor Party's youth. In less than four hours, Andres Brehring Breivik killed seventy-seven people by using guns and explosives. His motive: His far-right ideology about the increase of Muslim population in Europe (Borchgrevink, 2013). It was the first major Lone-Wolf attack in the European continent. On the other side of the Atlantic

Ocean, the United States had experienced major Lone-Wolf terror activities from the time of the Oklahoma City bombing in Oklahoma City, OK, where Timothy McVeigh attacked the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building on April 19, 1995, killing 168 individuals. His motive: Retaliation against the federal government (Michel & Herbeck, 2002).

It took years after the Oklahoma City bombing for the threat of the Lone-Wolf terrorism to become evident. In 2003, the then-Director of the *FBI*, Robert S. Muller III stated that "the threat from single individuals sympathetic or affiliated with *Al-Qaeda*, acting without external support or surrounding conspiracies, is increasing" (Mueller, 2003). The evolution of information technologies made the spread of radical ideas easily accessible. Clearly, dealing with the growing numbers of unsuspected individuals fascinated with radical ideas makes it difficult to predict the "who, where and when", while raising ethical questions on the issues of freedom of speech and information.

Signed into law just a month after 9/11, the controversial Patriot Act gave the U.S. government a hedge against terror. Among others, the Patriot Act gave the federal government the ability to track and intercept communications for law enforcement and intelligence gathering purposes, as well as the ability to track and monitor financial institutions and transactions. On the down side, the Patriot Act limited civil liberties, since it made every-day Americans subjects of potential scrutiny (Smith & Hung, 2010). However, the Act enhanced information sharing between the U.S. law enforcement agencies, tearing down a communications wall that could have prevented 9/11.

The Case of Europe

A little more than a year after the 9/11 attacks, on November 25, 2002, the *Department of Homeland Security (DHS)* was established in the United States. *DHS* was a clear response to the threat of terrorist groups such as *Al Qaeda* and other affiliate extremist cells. The Department's mission: 1. preventing terrorism and enhancing security, 2. securing and managing the U.S. borders, 3. enforcing and administering the U.S. immigration laws, 4. safeguarding and securing the cyberspace and 5. ensuring resilience to disasters (DHS, 2013).

Facing similar challenges, establishing organizations reflecting key mission points of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security became a necessity for Europe. According to a *Europol* publication on terrorism, 2012 showed a steep rise in deaths of European citizens because of terrorism. Mainly from a bomb attack in Burgas Airport, Bulgaria and a Lone-Wolf attack in Toulouse and Montauban, France. However, *Al-Qaeda* remains a key security concern for E.U. Member States. More importantly, the fact that numbers of European Union citizens traveled to Syria and fought alongside groups associated with radicalized terrorism (Europol, 2013).

The U.S. based *Council on Foreign Relations* reports that Jihadist networks operate around Europe. More importantly, radical Islam has become popular among second and third generation European Muslims. These individuals are carrying European passports, able to travel visa-free in the United States and other European countries. According to the same report, *Al-Qaeda* recruitment centers and sleeper-cells operate across Europe, responsible for sending European recruits to the Middle East for advanced training and assisting terrorist recruiters to enter the European continent (Leiken, 2005).

Even if most illegal immigrants enter Europe to find refuge from their war-torn countries, infiltration by potential terrorists is inevitable. Responding to the growing problem, the European Union established *Frontex* in 2005. Its mission: the protection of the European Union boarders from illegal immigration, human trafficking and furthermore, the infiltration of terrorist from North Africa and Turkey. According to a *CNN* report, *Frontex* estimates that more than 72,000 individuals entered the European Union illegally in 2012 (CNN, 2013).

With the increase of immigrants in Europe, Right-Wing ideologies and racist attacks became a social phenomenon. Subsequently, the representation of such ideologies in European parliaments became tolerable. *Europol* reports that extremist Right-Wing parties are unlikely to orchestrate violent offences. However, their ideologies can inspire followers to commit hate crimes and Lone-Wolf attacks. On the other hand, *Europol* estimates that Left-Wing/Anarchist terrorism in Europe has been showing a decrease, especially in the "Mediterranean Anarchist Triangle" of Greece, Italy and Spain. Interestingly, coordination among Anarchist groups has been observed, expressed by small scale attacks that show mutual understanding and solidarity (Europol, 2013).

Concluding Remarks

Enhancing classified information sharing between Member States and signing into law the allowance of intercepting communications is clearly a challenge for Europe. The national interests of the individual E.U States as well as the civil liberties culture demands from the European establishment to explore alternative approaches in fighting terror.

Important steps have been made in creating a ground for implementing the E.U. Common Foreign and Security Policy through the European External Action Service, which operates as the Foreign Ministry of the European Union. It also oversees the E.U. Intelligence Analysis Center (EU INTCEN), the intelligence body of the European Union which operates based on intelligence received by Member States. On the other hand, questions arise on the extend Member States share vital intelligence (Jones, 2013).

In order to understand the challenge of establishing a *European Department of Homeland Security*, one should consider the foreign policy approaches of the United States and Europe. Today, the United States is a key player in global politics by utilizing two instruments, the U.S. Armed Forces and their cultural influence known as Americanization. The American foreign policy is based on achieving goals and safeguarding national interests by taking immediate actions. At the same time, the European Union respects the rule of law, using its soft powers to approach the global community.

With Europe's strong support on the War on Terror and the subsequent Madrid and London bombings, the feeling of security was partially destroyed in the continent. International terrorism changed perceptions, how the intelligence/security community operates and shook the pillars of the transatlantic establishment. The new millennium changed the face of the enemy as well as the rules of the game for both the United States and Europe. Taking a closer look at Europe, cultural and structural differences make the pass of security legislations as well as the establishment of a *European Department of Homeland Security* difficult. It is not only the European pro-civil rights culture, but also the fact that is too early for that

level of integration in Europe. However, progress has been made with the establishments of *Frontex* and the *E.U. Intelligence Analysis Center* as distant "cousins" of the DHS.

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