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9/11 ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL ISSUE: PERSPECTIVES ON THE WAR ON TERRORISM

Detainees being held in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

Editor's Note on 9/11 Anniversary Special Issue

Three years after the terrorist attacks on the United States and the declaration of war on terrorism by the U.S. government, the enigma of al-Qaeda remains all-pervasive. This edition marks Jamestown's unique contribution to the third anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist assaults. The article on an "undefined war," aside from providing coverage on the terrorist hotspots around the world, aptly captures the amorphous nature of this conflict and the adverse consequences that may flow from this. The report on Guantanamo Bay analyses an institution that may come to be regarded as the lasting legacy of this conflict. The article on European perspectives places the origins of the so-called "European" approach in the on-going disputes between European security services and their political masters over the nature and scope of the war. Finally a former CIA officer offers a timely critique of the 9/11 Commission's report.

The Indefinable War

By Andrew McGregor

How are we to evaluate the success of a "War on Terrorism" (WOT)? On the one hand, the United States has not experienced a foreign terror attack on its soil since 9/11. On the other hand, of all the large and small conflicts that have erupted overseas following 9/11, none have been brought to a successful conclusion. In fact, nearly all are growing worse. In addition, there seem to be multiple "Wars on Terrorism," with the U.S., Israel, Russia, China and others all apparently fighting their own battle, often with different objectives, opponents and tactics.

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The failure to define the WOT has been followed by a failure to set objectives. Even the limited yet essential objective of seizing bin Laden and al-Zawahiri failed to hold the interest of policy-makers in Washington intent on regime-change in Iraq. With the conflict in Iraq sinking into a pattern of terrorist violence and retribution, it has become nearly impossible to separate the Iraq campaign from the wider WOT. Long-term strategic objectives, especially those in the resource sector, have also complicated the conduct of the WOT.

Aside from the continuing conflict in Afghanistan, there are a number of regions worth watching as we enter the fourth year of the WOT.

Flashpoints

Russian Republic: After Russia's recent wave of terrorist attacks there is a pervasive feeling that the President's once bold response to terrorists ("We'll kill them in their outhouses!") has encountered a bitter reality: the state can no longer control Russia's spiral of violence. The President's identification of democracy as one of the root causes of terrorism has found little support at home or abroad. As Putin attempts to ride a boiling-pot of political, ethnic and religious tensions he may feel compelled to lash out in some direction to bring the state together. Sadly, this rationale was already used to ill-effect when the then-unknown Putin sought voters' support in 1999 by promising a quick and victorious war in Chechnya. Unfortunately, the deep corruption in Russia's security forces ensure a steady supply of arms and documents to terrorists and guerrillas alike.

Georgia: Following the Beslan massacre, President Putin announced that Russia was preparing pre-emptive strikes on terrorist targets beyond its borders. Moscow is angry with President Saakashvili's attempts to reconsolidate the Russian supported breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Russia maintains that Georgia's Pankisi Gorge still harbors "international terrorists" (with a surprising confirmation from the U.S. ambassador), a possible pretext for wider military operations.

The North Caucasus: As Chechnya enters its third century of resistance to Russian rule, it has become a showcase for the fight between conventional guerrilla tactics and outright terrorism as a means of struggle against the state. Practitioners of terrorism such as Shamil Basayev have come to realize that an endless war of attrition against an enemy 250 times larger holds little possibility of success, regardless of how well it is fought. With little chance for a decisive battlefield victory so long as Russia continues to throw new troops into the cauldron, Basayev is seeking a cathartic act of violence that will once and for all force Russia from Chechnya. After 5 years of war, Basayev also believes that so long as Chechens "fight fair," their struggle will remain Russia's "internal matter." Basayev seems to be taking a fatalistic regard to his own future, which makes him even more dangerous. Despite bitterness over the West's failure to support the Chechen cause, Basayev is unlikely to abandon his focus on Russia in favor of international targets.

Elsewhere in the Caucasus, Ingushetia has been drawn into the conflict and Daghestan's long pattern of political violence threatens to boil over into rebellion. Balkar militants in Kabardino-Balkaria have also been engaged in a little-known campaign of bombings and attacks on security forces.

Uzbekistan: This strategically important country is now host to an important U.S. military base. This spring's outbreak of violence in the cities of Tashkent and Bukhara demonstrated the continuing radicalization of the population in the face of growing political repression. Uzbekistan has become the home of the modern "Caliphate" movement, which seeks to revive the Islamic Caliphate as a pan-Islamic political model. (Mustafa Kemal eliminated the role of Caliph, last filled by the Ottoman Sultans, in 1924). Important elements of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, including its leader Tahir Yuldash, appear to have survived the WOT in the tribal regions of northwest Pakistan. Uzbekistan's Hizb ut-Tahrir movement, a leader in the revival of the Caliphate, is making progress in other parts of Central Asia, partly as a result of Islamists fleeing the Karimov regime for neighboring countries. Meanwhile, Karimov has learned to play his two suitors, Russia and the U.S., against each other in order to consolidate his personal rule.

Pakistan: If the elimination of al-Qaeda is to be undertaken in any seriousness, it will involve Coalition operations in Pakistan's difficult Northwest Frontier region. Pakistan's own raids in the area have yielded few results other than fanciful gun battles with Ayman al-Zawahiri and small defeats blamed on the presence of the ubiquitous Chechens. Any coalition operation in the region will likely be met with fierce opposition from local tribesmen.

Iraq: The great danger from Iraq will be the internationalization of this conflict, should Coalition forces fail to establish a working democracy in the nation. With the decreasing likelihood of this result in the near future, it is possible that the Iraqi resistance might take their fight overseas. Despite their reputation, few Iraqis have figured as players in international terrorism. If the many emerging forces in Iraqi politics are again repressed it is almost inevitable that terrorist groups

will attempt to force international involvement through extra-territorial violence.

Yemen: This South Arabian country remains deeply unsettled as the military struggles to enforce the rule of President Salih, whose alliance with the U.S. is widely resented. Yemen has long been a recruiting ground for al-Qaeda, as well as hosting a variety of home-grown militant movements.

Tactics

With a few exceptions, there has been surprisingly little innovation in terrorist methods. High explosives, packaged as a car-bomb, a truck-bomb or a pedestrian suicide-bomber have all proven easier and more effective to carry out than the daily parade of nightmarish scenarios presented in the media. The media's lurid and prolonged fascination with bizarre methods of mass destruction bears little resemblance to reality. It is easier to kill someone with a bullet than anthrax. It easier to blow someone up than it is to induce them to ingest ricin. A recent trend that will likely be seen more often is the large-scale coordinated attack, combining targeted killings, bombings, and the temporary seizure of government installations. Examples of this occurred in Ingushetia and Uzbekistan earlier this year.

In response to terrorism the U.S., Russia and Israel have all adopted a pre-emptive strike policy (including assassination) without reference to the UN Security Council. Unfortunately, acceptance of the "pre-emptive strike" policy invites covert manipulations and provocations designed to provide a pretext for war. The dangers of such policies in a volatile world are clear from history: WWI began with a political assassination, WWII with a "pre-emptive" strike.

Collateral Damage

The fallout from the WOT has created a new set of dangers and challenges. Foremost is a growing willingness to accept democratic reversals in nations "on-side" with the WOT, such as Yemen, Pakistan and Uzbekistan; closely related is the failure to address the concept of "state terrorism," an important issue in many parts of the world. Both of these issues strike at the moral legitimacy of the WOT. The use of torture has compounded this effect, taking most of the moral steam out of the WOT and irrevocably alienating many in the Muslim world who would otherwise be open to the U.S. message of democracy and the rule of law. A lesser known outcome has been the collapse of "the War on Drugs." In the last year of Taliban rule, opium production was nearly eliminated. Today Afghanistan provides three-quarters of the world supply, as neither the Coalition nor NATO forces consider drug enforcement part of their operational mandate. As the blight of heroin use spreads across Asia, disease and corruption follow in its path.

Finally, one cannot overlook the damage done to the intelligence capacity of Coalition countries through political interference. The shortcomings of U.S. and British intelligence have been well documented. Their problems are rooted in two issues, the selective use of raw and unconfirmed intelligence to support ideological positions and the uselessness of the "Links" method of intelligence analysis. Though they might look good in a PowerPoint presentation, "Links" are not connections, agreements or alliances. The construction of a web of conspiracy with al-Qaeda at the center of all Muslim terrorist or guerrilla activity is counter-productive. There are numerous struggles in which Muslims are engaged throughout the world. At the moment it seems sufficient to declare all such struggles as "al-Qaeda-inspired" (through the magic of the "links" system) in order to gain Western military support. The "links" obscure the far more regional and specific concerns of societies struggling with economic and political turmoil, much of it unforeseen fallout from the end of the Cold War complicated by the appeal of an "Islamic alternative."

Conclusion

The list of potential flashpoints is unfortunately long and far from complete, but there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Most people in the Islamic world don't take bin Laden seriously. In the years before and after 9/11, he has still to form any kind of political platform or suggest some alternative to the current world order other than a vague "return to Islam." Having seized the world stage, he is at a curious loss for words. His attacks have done nothing to improve the lot of Muslims in Palestine, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Uzbekistan, or any other scene of conflict. No state would willingly harbor bin Laden and his agents at this point, partly because al-Qaeda is an anti-state organization with no national allegiances, a lesson learned the hard way by the Taliban. His usefulness to anyone now is limited; as Shamil Basayev says, "I don't know him, but I'd take his money." Bin Laden's condemnation by many of Islam's most radical shaykhs for bringing ruin upon a Muslim nation (Afghanistan) has been little noted in the West. Al-Qaeda is best noted for its cynicism, its willingness to consign both Muslims and infidels to the "foundation of cripples and corpses" predicted by the late 'Abdullah 'Azzam, bin Laden's spiritual mentor. Its core membership forms an apocalyptic group that did not expect to survive the immediate fallout from 9/11. The elimination of bin Laden and al-Zawahiri would help bring the WOT out of the shadows and enable

the West to deal more realistically with the threat of terrorism and the complexities of international relations.

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Who's Who at Guantanamo Bay

By John Daly

America's slippery road into international legal limbo began on November 13, 2001 – the day Northern Alliance troops captured Kabul from Taliban forces. That same day, George W. Bush issued a presidential directive, "Detention, Treatment, and Trial of Certain Non-Citizens in the War Against Terrorism." Directing the Secretary of Defense to "take all necessary measures to ensure that any individual subject to this order is detained in accordance with section 3," the order allows for individuals to be "detained at an appropriate location designated by the Secretary of Defense outside or within the United States."

On January 11, 2002, the first 20 blindfolded, manacled men in orange jumpsuits were offloaded from a C-141 transport plane in Cuba after a 15-hour flight from Kandahar, Afghanistan. Other flights soon followed, eventually filling the hastily-prepared facility, Camp X-Ray, at Guantanamo Bay, with nearly 700 men. The American contractors Brown and Root Services, a subsidiary of Haliburton, built Camp Delta in Cuba under a $9.7 million contract to replace Camp X-Ray shortly thereafter.

For the last two-and-a-half years, these suspected terrorists have sat in a legal limbo, as the Bush administration argued that they were not subject to the provisions of the Geneva Convention regarding prisoners of war. The holding facilities at Guantanamo have been a magnet for fierce criticism both in the U.S. and around the world as an abrogation of the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. Constitution; even the U.S.'s closest European ally, Britain, complained about the treatment of its nationals incarcerated in Cuba. Only belatedly has the Bush administration realized that its treatment of captive "detainees" is a potential liability.

Who's Who in Guantanamo

The U.S. dragnet captured a number of big fish, like Haji Naim Kuchai Mulla (Pushtun leader of Ahmadzai tribe), Mulla Abdus Salam Zaeef (Taliban ambassador to Pakistan), Fazel Mazloom (Taliban army's former chief of staff), Nurullah Nuri (former governor of northern Afghanistan) Mullah Mohammad Fazel (Taliban deputy defense minister) and Mulla Khairullah Khairkhwa (Taliban governor in Herat). It also picked up the less fortunate, like Wazir Mohammad, a taxicab driver, whose case is supported by Amnesty International.

As the prisoners began filling Camp X-Ray, their numbers and movements were considered classified information by the Department of Defense. Individual names and countries of origin were similarly classified. When the story broke, however, the statistical breakdown was intriguing. Research revealed that at least 160 of the 650 detainees (nearly a quarter) held at the time at Guantanamo were from Saudi Arabia. The magnitude of the Saudi presence in Camp Delta raises troubling questions about Saudis in Afghanistan and whether U.S. forces succeeded in capturing more than a fraction of those who might have been there.

Yemen was the second highest nationality with 85 detainees, followed by Pakistan with 82. Afghans were the fourth largest nationality with 80 detainees, followed by Jordan and Egypt, with 30 citizens apiece incarcerated in Guantanamo. Nor were the prisoners solely from the middle or lower classes; according to Najeeb al-Nauimi, former Qatari Minister of Justice with the power of attorney over 100 prisoners, a member of the Bahraini royal family is among those detained.

In a more startling development, military authorities determined that one of the prisoners, Yaser Esam Hamdi, was in fact an American citizen of Saudi descent born in East Baton Rouge, Louisiana. After discovering his nationality, the Defense Department flew Hamdi to Washington in April 2002 – in the hopes of transferring to custody of the Department of Justice. While on the runway in Washington, Justice Department officials asked for Hamdi's file, only to be informed there was none. Justice Department officials stated they could not take custody of Hamdi without documentation and would have to release him, so Hamdi was subsequently transferred to the Navy brig in Norfolk, Virginia.

The Pentagon's own list of nationalities detained in Cuba were regarded as potentially flawed by those involved. Yemeni Embassy deputy chief of communication Yahya al-Shawkani said earlier this year that his government cited domestic reports that more than twice as many Yemenis were held as the Department of Defense has told the Yemeni government. Meanwhile, a number of detainees have remained steadfastly uncooperative; according to a

government source speaking on condition of anonymity, one prisoner for over two years when asked about his name has repeatedly replied "Mickey Mouse."

Camp Delta and Beyond

Though the detention facility at Guantanamo is the most well known, suspected terrorists are detained by U.S. forces at a number of points worldwide, including the British territory of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and Bagram air force base outside Kabul. Other terrorist suspects are handed to "friendly" governments such as Egypt and Jordan for questioning by more forceful means. But Camp Delta has attracted the most media attention and international protest.

The "detainee" population in Camp Delta is truly diverse; Morocco, site of an al-Qaeda attack on a synagogue in April 2002 that killed 21 people, has 18 of its citizens incarcerated there. Algeria, currently in the throes of a violent conflict between Muslim fundamentalists and the government, had nearly 20 citizens in Cuba. Emphasizing the cosmopolitan nature of the camp, six Algerians were arrested in Sarajevo in January 2002, far from Afghanistan.

Kuwait, liberated from Saddam Hussein by Operation Desert Storm in 1991, has 12 detainees in Camp Delta; the Kuwaiti government insists that all of its citizen were involved in charity and relief work. China also has at least 12 of its citizens there, although they are all identified as ethnic Uighurs rather than Han Chinese. Tajikistan and Turkey have 11 citizens each. Nine British citizens of Muslim background were originally at Camp Delta; five were released earlier this year. They have proven to be a political liability for Prime Minister Tony Blair, as calls have been made in Parliament for the remaining four's repatriation.

Both Tunisia and Russia had eight of their nationals incarcerated in Camp Delta. A Russian embassy spokesman was careful to point out, however, that the eight Russian citizens are not ethnic Russians. Rustam Akmerov, Ravil Gumarov, Timur Ishmuradov, Shamil Khadzhiev (originally identified as Almaz Sharipov), Rasul Kudaev, Ravil Mingazov, Ruslan Odigov and Airat Vakhitov are members of Russia's Muslim community. The Russian embassy pursued negotiations with Washington to extradite its citizens, eventually securing their transfer. After a brief period of detention back in Russia, the eight were quietly released.

Among the seven detained Bahrainis is Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, a member of the royal family. Khalifa is the son of Sheikh Ibrahim bin Mohammed al-Khalifa, chairman of the Bahrain German Entertainment Projects Co. and a distant cousin of King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa. Sheik Ibrahim said that an unspecified party had received $20,000 for handing over his son, who had gone to Pakistan to do charity work.

France also has seven citizens detained in Guantanamo, though it was only earlier this year that its seventh national was discovered at Camp Delta. Kazakhstan has been quietly lobbying Washington for the return of its four citizens, as have Australia and Canada. Australian David Hicks is one of the most high profile prisoners in Camp Delta; a convert to Islam, Hicks allegedly fought as a jihadi in the Balkans before shipping out to Afghanistan.

There are reportedly at least two Chechens, two Uzbeks and two Syrians in Camp Delta. The Syrian detainees especially interest U.S. intelligence, as Air Force translator Senior Airman Ahmad al-Halabi has been charged with trying to pass messages from the prisoners to Syria.

There are also two Georgian and two Sudanese nationals (one later freed) in detention at Camp Delta, while Bangladesh, Belgium, Chile, Denmark, Germany, Iraq, Kenya, Libya, Mauritania, Qatar, Spain and Sweden each have a single citizen in the facility. While many assume that Camp Delta holds exclusively those picked up either on the battlefield or in Pakistan, such is not the case. Camp Delta also holds seven Arab men handed over to U.S. authorities in Bosnia, as well as five individuals arrested in Malawi last summer.

In its quest for information from the captives, the U.S. administration has even recruited spies. Canadian Abdurahman Khadr, who was released from the Guantanamo detention center late last year said that he was recruited to work for the U.S. military in Afghanistan and later the CIA, who used him as a mole in Camp Delta. Khadr said, "I took the people from the CIA, the FBI, the military. We'd go around in a car in Kabul and show them the houses of al-Qaida people, the guesthouses, the safe houses...I just told them what I knew." Khadr said he worked for the CIA in Kabul for about nine months until he was told he'd be sent undercover to Camp Delta. Khadr remained there for three months, commenting: "Their hope was when they take me to Cuba they could put me next to anyone that was stubborn and that wouldn't talk and, you know, I would talk him into it. Well, it's not that easy, first thing, because lots of people won't talk to anyone because everybody in Cuba is scared of the person next to him. I couldn't do a lot for them."

Capture and Release

On January 28, 2002, a week after the first batch of detainees arrived from Afghanistan, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stated, "They are bad guys. They are the worst of the worst, and if let out on the street, they will go back to the proclivity of trying to kill Americans and others." In 2004, perhaps feeling the pressure of the upcoming presidential election, the Bush administration has discreetly been trying to downsize the prisoner population in Cuba by releasing foreign nationals to their home countries on the proviso that their home government continue their detention.

Washington has also come under increasing pressure from its allies to release prisoners. On September 18, Washington transferred 35 Pakistani prisoners from Camp Delta to Pakistan. Islamabad asserted that after an earlier release of 29 inmates, Camp Delta held only 38 Pakistanis, purportedly leaving only three at Camp Delta. Under its arrangement with the U.S., six of those liberated were arrested upon their return to Pakistan for further investigation. According to a Pakistani journalist speaking on condition of anonymity, Pakistani President Pervez Musharaf, currently in New York for the United Nations General Assembly meeting, will quietly transfer to U.S. custody a number of terrorist suspects picked up during recent Pakistani army operations in south Waziristan.

Releases have been haphazard and furtive; in February 2004 three teenagers were released, while another 87 detainees were transferred pending release. Four detainees were also give into Saudi custody, to continue their imprisonment in Saudi Arabia.

But not all the releases have gone smoothly. Mulla Shehzada, captured in late 2001 was sent to Guantanamo. Despite having been a former deputy to Taliban army chief Mullah Fazal Mazloom, Shehzada convinced his U.S. interrogators of his innocence, and he was released along with 15 other Afghans last summer. Returned to Afghanistan, Shehzada quickly resumed his attacks against coalition forces. Last October Shehzada masterminded a jailbreak in Kandahar where 41 Taliban prisoners burrowed under prison walls with help from bribed guards. Taliban spokesman Hamid Agha said of Shehzada's activities, "Once a Taliban, always a Taliban. Now he wants revenge." Shezada was subsequently killed in U.S. raid in late May 2004.

Conclusion

At the end of the day, Camp Delta has proven to be a self-inflicted public relations wound for the Bush administration. The intelligence value of most of the prisoners has greatly diminished, as in many cases they have been held for nearly three years. Even close allies such as Britain, Russia and Pakistan have been alienated by the highhandedness of the U.S. Policy, and face growing domestic political pressure to rescue their nationals from Guantanamo. These legal machinations have taken yet another turn as military tribunals for some of the detainees have begun.

The question of Guantanamo's future is unclear; while the military tribunals are certain to infuriate allies, the release program cannot simply let the nearly 700 men go, as it would be too much of an admission of the whole exercise being a mistake. The only certainty about Guantanamo is that the majority of the men held there will remain "detainees" for the foreseeable future.

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The European Response to September 11

By Sebastian Gorka

The ramifications of the 9/11 attacks and the lessons learned have been appreciated differently in various parts of the world. Most striking, perhaps, is the apparent difference in response between Europe and the United States. But how different is the continental approach? Can we really speak of a unified European response?

Crumbling Transatlantic Link?

Much has been made of the apparent fact that in its responses to the horrific attacks, the United States has demonstrated a propensity not only to a Manichean view of the world – divided among simply the good and the bad – but also a renewed unilateralism, which favors force over political or diplomatic tools. Such a shift has been said to exacerbate tension between Washington and various capitals in Europe. Whilst in many instances such a categorization of U.S. policies may indeed be valid, in fact a judicious examination of foreign policy and defense initiatives under the previous two Democrat administrations results in a more nuanced appreciation of the current U.S. stance. It should not be forgotten that prior to 9/11, the Clinton White House was often prepared to use force unilaterally, in theaters such

as Somalia, Afghanistan and the Sudan – especially in response to terrorism. Likewise it was prepared more than once to commit sizeable defense assets to prolonged military operations in other parts of the world without a specific UN mandate (viz. Bosnia and Kosovo).

How can we therefore explain the growing number of voices that speak of irrevocable damage down to European-US relations caused by the radical shift in White House policies? How do commentators such as Robert Kagan find themselves in a position whereby their books on the seminal difference between the two partners and their approaches to global affairs become best-sellers? It is important here to look more closely at what in fact Europe has done sine 9/11.

Operational Realities versus Political Transience

With the exception of the Madrid bombings this March, al-Qaeda instigated mass-casualty terrorism has yet to make its presence felt throughout Europe. As a result, the general sense of vulnerability amongst members of the public can be said to be quite low. Nevertheless, if we look at the history preceding the execution of the 9/11 hijackings and also the numerous subsequent arrests made all across Europe, a distinctly different picture emerges.

We now know, predominantly as a result of effective cooperation between the FBI and the police and security services of Germany, that Europe played an important part in the staging and preparation of the 9/11 attacks. In fact, there is evidence that the Madrid train bombing was logistically underpinned by remnants of the support base used by Mohamed Atta in Hamburg, prior to his leaving for the U.S. Richard Reid, the infamous shoebomber, was in fact a UK national who had converted to the Islamic faith. More significantly, in very successful (often international) operations conducted in the last two years across Europe, numerous terrorists and cells have been interdicted in countries such as Italy, France, Germany and the UK. More than once they have been found to be in possession of materials destined for use in a chemically-enhanced, toxic attack.

Those arrested since September 11th have often been legally resident immigrants. But in France, for example, non-Arab, previously non-Muslim French nationals have also been detained, having similar Islamic conversion stories to that of Richard Reid. Indeed, wide use is also made of fake or re-engineered EU passports. During a number of arrests on the continent, no less that 28 false passports were retrieved. The unitary Schengen frontier around the continental members of the EU obviously makes EU-nation-state issued travel documents all the more appealing, given the freedom of movement guaranteed to the holder once he has crossed the Schengen border.

Questioning of apprehended suspects has revealed that once inside an EU member state, the early Arab Service Bureau system as set-up by Osama bin Laden, is able to continue to function on the continent and also in the UK. Along with remaining bureaus, certain mosques have become the recruiting and meeting place for lower level operatives, especially those associated with the more radical and charismatic imams. Overlapping this network is a string of charitable organizations, often linked to Islamist philanthropists resident in Saudi Arabia and several schools which, if not overtly Islamist, are linked via board members, or in other ways, to the previous networks.

As a result of the numerous arrests, subsequent trials and information gathered, it is fair to state that operationally, Europe has indeed taken its responsibilities seriously. Law enforcement officials agree in their analysis that al-Qaeda represents a significant threat not only to the U.S. but also to the continent. But the threat assessment is not universally appreciated. As one of Europe's leading al-Qaeda experts from the German Foreign Intelligence Service (BND) indicated to the author, there is a distinct gulf between the reality on the ground perceived by the agencies and the stance evinced by the political leaders of many nations, Germany included. Although this may be hard to understand, there does exist a plausible explanation for the disjunct.

Selective Targeting

Despite declaring for well over a decade now that the whole of the West is heretical and anathema to the Muslim value system and that it must therefore be destroyed, Osama bin Laden has been less than broad-brushed in his targeting. Although all Western nations are seen as equally debauched and detestable, his organization has concentrated almost exclusively on attacking but one country of this "civilization": the United States. From the first WTC bombing, through the African embassy attacks, the USS Cole and 9/11 itself, al-Qaeda has been less than catholic in its choice of "Western" targets. Subsequently, whilst operational officers are fully aware of the extent of penetration of the European Union and the fact that it may be only a matter of time until they too are attacked, politically this is a difficult reality for EU elites to broach, let alone discuss openly.

Many in the U.S. government expected this to change after Madrid. It was felt that the major nations of the EU would

finally appreciate the full importance of the Global War on Terrorism (WOT) and support it more fully. The results of the attacks were, however, quite the opposite of what was expected.

The Madrid bombing resulted in a more dove-ish Spanish stance because of the incompetence of the then administration and the surprise results of the elections held one week later. Once it was clear that it was al-Qaeda and not ETA that was responsible for the attacks, as had been stated almost immediately by the then Minister for the Interior, the government was seen as wholly incompetent and worthy of punishment. The expected election results were therefore reversed and the incumbents replaced. Since the public had "voted with their feet" and since the Anzar government has been one of the WOT's strongest supporters, the new administration, in a show of appreciation, distanced itself from the previous hawkish, pro-WOT stance. It is unlikely that the same would happen if a similar attack were to occur in another EU state that was not on the cusp of an election and where the government did not make the mistake of apportioning blame incorrectly.

The difference, therefore between U.S. and European understandings of the 9/11 attacks and their ramifications are not are large as they may seem, especially if one is able to separate the political from the practical.

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The 9/11 Commission Report: A Former CIA Officer's Perspective

By Thomas Patrick Carroll

After poring over 2.5 million pages of documents, interviewing 1,200 people (including almost every senior official from the Clinton and Bush administrations), holding 19 hearings with public testimony from 160 witnesses, the 9/11 Commission issued its final report in July of this year. Fundamentally, the Commission asked two questions: What led to the attacks of 11 September? What can America do to ensure nothing similar ever happens again?

Most of the report is devoted to the first question, with a detailed history of the people, events, and decisions that paved the way for 9/11. Although complex and detailed, the narrative is clear, organized, well-written and (to the Commission's credit) free of destructive finger-pointing and scapegoating. No matter what your level of expertise, you will learn something.

The second question is addressed with a series of 41 discrete recommendations. Most are sound, but some present problems. For example, the Commission sometimes seems to favor form over substance, arguing for changes in bureaucratic relationships instead of concrete, operational reform.

National Intelligence Director

Do we really need a new National Intelligence Director (NID), over and above the current Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), as the Commission suggested? It would appear so, at least at first glance. The 9/11 report clearly demonstrates the problems caused by diffuse authority within the Intelligence Community (IC). To say nobody is in charge may be an oversimplification, but it contains a lot of truth.

Still, just because the IC needs greater central authority, a NID is not necessarily the answer. The new powers the Commission recommends — control over budgets, authority to hire and fire senior IC managers, and the ability to set universal standards — could just as well reside with the DCI. In fact, the 1947 National Security Act suggests the position already has such authority, though (perhaps unfortunately) it was never spelled out.

The Commission's main argument against expanding the DCI's role is that he has too many responsibilities already, e.g., head of CIA, analyst-in-chief for the President, nominal leader of the IC. But this is far from convincing. Responsibility for 1,000 things doesn't mean doing 1,000 things. Good management is all about delegation and rational subordination, and that holds no less for the DCI than for the head of General Motors.

The focus on bureaucratic solutions also obscures the fact that the most serious problems facing the IC are operational, not organizational.

A good example is the Directorate of Operations (DO), the branch of the CIA that goes abroad and steals secrets. The reason the 9/11 conspiracy was able to function for so many years without detection had little to do with poorly designed

org charts. The fundamental reason for the failure was that the DO had no spies in al-Qaeda. Only concrete, working-level reforms within the DO itself will solve that kind of problem. Yet the Commission's report is dismayingly brief and unimaginative on this crucial point. A better hope for a reinvigorated DO may lie with the appointment of a strong DCI who both understands the DO and its problems, and can articulate a vision of what a true post-Cold War spy agency should look like.

Reform at the FBI

The 9/11 report dismissed the idea of creating an independent domestic U.S. intelligence organization (the British MI-5 model), for mostly sound reasons. Instead, it recommended the FBI put together an internal "specialized and integrated national security workforce…imbued with a deep expertise in intelligence and national security.' This is often called the service-within-a-service model, i.e., a domestic intelligence service embedded within the larger FBI. The Commission noted with approval the FBI's new Directorate of Intelligence, which it sees as a step in the right direction.

Unfortunately, despite the sign on the door, the FBI's fledging "Directorate of Intelligence" does not appear to be a true intelligence organization. A real intelligence service would have dedicated officers doing operational intelligence collection. There would be a macro layer to support and oversee their work — directing them, for example, to collect against al-Qaeda and not the government of India. And they would serve in a career untouched by traditional FBI concerns, like stolen cars, banks robberies, and kidnappings. But what the Bureau is actually building looks more like a police organization with intelligence trappings.

A basic distinction will help make this clear. Intelligence collection (the work of the CIA's DO and other spy organizations) is fundamentally different from evidence gathering, the purview of law enforcement agencies like the FBI. Intelligence collection is proactive; intelligence organizations look at our knowledge of the world, identify gaps, and then seek to fill the gaps. The result is new understanding and insight.

The evidence gathering done by law enforcement, on the other hand, is essentially reactive. Law enforcement gathers evidence after a crime is committed, and the results are arrest, trial, and conviction. It seeks to discover information (evidence) that will prove someone guilty. In law enforcement, most of the answer is already apparent — e.g., we know Wells-Fargo was robbed. The only questions are who did it and how can we prove it. In the intelligence world, by contrast, the questions are barely understood, much less the answers. An intelligence service puzzles over issues like, What will happen next year? Who can hurt us? What are they thinking? Are they trying to deceive us?

Not only are the law enforcement and intelligence models different, they are at odds. The "crime fighting" assumptions, rules, habits, methods, and legal scaffolding essential to law enforcement will sabotage intelligence work, and vice versa.

If the FBI's Directorate of Intelligence is to succeed, it will need to be a true clandestine service, almost a domestic version of the CIA's DO. It must specifically hire people for a career in intelligence, not just pull from the law enforcement side. And an intelligence officer, even in the FBI, cannot be worried about building cases or putting people in jail.

Because the Commission did not take the opportunity to champion real, substantive changes like these, genuine reform at the FBI is less certain than it might have been.

Sharing intelligence and protecting sources

Spy organizations work mightily to keep their intelligence reports secret. And contrary to the 9/11 Commission, this has little to do with any "human or systemic resistance to sharing information." Instead, it comes from a rational concern for the safety and security of the source of those reports.

The problem of source protection is real. An intelligence report is inherently source-revealing, especially when the content is unique or explicit, or when the event described could be known by only a few individuals. If a report cites the Prime Minister's private medical records, it's not difficult to narrow the possible sources to a very few suspects, maybe even a single doctor. In many ways, this problem is even more acute today than during the Cold War. After all, it could be quite difficult for KGB counterintelligence officers to figure out who in the Ministry of Defense was passing classified cable traffic to the Americans, when so many individuals in the labyrinthine Soviet bureaucracy had access. But the Islamist groups we are trying to penetrate today are typically tiny cells of close friends or even relatives. When information from these small cadres gets out, the source is often obvious.

Still, there is no point in collecting intelligence if it's not used, so a balance must always be struck between source protection and the utility of information sharing. And in this day and age, it is clear the scales must be tilted much more to the sharing side than they were in the past.

Toward this end, the Commission makes a good recommendation: begin every intelligence report with the information in its most sharable form, sanitized enough to protect the source, but still sufficiently detailed to be useful. That opening paragraph or two could then be widely shared.

The CIA has actually been doing something close to this for years with its terrorist threat reporting. At the end of each threat report, an unclassified "tear line" version of the intelligence is always included for passage to people without security clearances, like policemen or airline employees. There is no reason we couldn't do this with almost every report the Agency produces. With few exceptions, any piece of intelligence can be sanitized to the point where risk to the source is acceptably low, but the information still has value. The Commission suggested the "need to know" principle be replaced with "need to share," but maybe an even better principle would be "build to share." If CIA officers understand they must provide an unclassified tear line with every HUMINT report they produce, they can write the intelligence accordingly. And in those rare circumstances when source sensitivity is so great that a tear line is impossible, the Chief of Station should have the authority to omit it.

One former senior DO official takes this a step further. He suggests that the intelligence classification regime pertain only to the Federal government, so that when intelligence leaves Federal institutions (like the CIA or FBI) and goes to state and local authorities, it would do so in an unclassified form. Security clearances would no longer be an issue for state troopers, we wouldn't need expensive and temperamental secure telephones in the governors mansions, and officers on both sides of the Federal divide wouldn't need to worry about making those dicey (and often subjective) need-to-know judgments.

Conclusion

The 9/11 Commissioners and staff performed a valuable and commendable service, and their report deserves to be read. But we must treat their recommendations as just that, and objectively consider the best steps to take next in combating terrorism. The safety of our nation requires nothing less.

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