

September 15, 2007

WAR Declared on the United States of America Six Years Ago Terrorists active, general complacency exists

The Inspector General of the Central Intelligence Agency recently released a classified document regarding the investigative effort and the general preparedness of the intelligence community prior to 9/11. The overall findings claimed neither the CIA nor the U.S. Government had a comprehensive strategy for combating al Qaeda. The full range of resources necessary to combat the growing threat to the United States were never deployed and the agencies responsible for the security of the United States were not cooperating to a degree commensurate with the impending threat. The Director of the CIA was criticized for failing to raise the threat emanating from al Qaeda and its leader Osama bin Laden to an elevated level. While some may question these findings, it is a fact that the United States was not prepared for al Qaeda and what occurred on 9/11.

Al Qaeda had struck New York once before, in 1993. While the terrorist organization remained active in other parts of the world, America became complacent, believing it was invulnerable to similar terrorist catastrophes.

Since 9/11, significant resources have been dedicated to prevent another attack, and the preparedness issue has been studied and debated extensively. However, studies continue to surface questioning the investigative effort and preparedness. Osama bin Laden recently released a video timed to coincide with the sixth anniversary of 9/11 in which he attested to the fact he is alive and well and is still actively involved in waging jihad against the West. However intelligence experts doubt that he is little more than a figurehead for al Qaeda, which has become the generic umbrella name for a growing and dangerous movement of Islamic extremism.

Meanwhile the Director of the FBI, Robert Mueller, warns that al Qaeda is seeking to acquire and detonate nuclear weapons in the United States. A nuclear weapon or even a dirty bomb would have a devastating and long-term effect. The terrorists' capabilities are advanced. Violence is their most effective propaganda tool, described as "propaganda of the deed" because violence intimidates the uncommitted, undermines

confidence in the authorities, demonstrates potency and can provoke a disproportionate military response that is often provocative and counterproductive. While Europe and many areas of the world have experienced more frequent attacks, Al Qaeda and other jihadists retain the ability and the desire to conduct tactical strikes within the United States. U.S. counterterrorism experts remain concerned that an attack on American soil is about to take place. A burst of recent chatter monitored by the intelligence community cited a threat to several major American cities. These recent suspected planned attacks could have devastating consequences. A University of Southern California research project suggested that a dirty bomb attack on the Los Angeles-Long Beach port would probably fail, but the economic consequences of a successful strike could climb into the tens of billions of dollars. The Terrorist Screening Center revealed that U. S. authorities made more than 20,000 detentions as a result of their terrorist screening operations in 2006. Although only a small percentage of these people were arrested, the screening allows the government to keep track of suspicious persons. For example, the database allowed U.S. officials to stop a suspicious Egyptian man from entering the country on multiple occasions; the man later carried out a suicide bombing in Qatar in 2005. As incredible as it seems in the wake of the continuous and unrelenting threats from al Qaeda and warnings from our homeland security officials, some question the necessity of strong legislation and the dedication of sufficient resources to counter these threats. This issue of The Lipman Report will examine the domestic and international threat to the United States and to American interests overseas.

Threat to the Homeland

The post-September 11th world has taught that the tools for conducting serious attacks are becoming easier to acquire. The 9/11 tragedy was an attack from overseas. The participants entered the United States legally, but they planned and trained for the event while they were outside the country. While the threat from abroad remains, many of the terrorist attacks or thwarted attacks against cities in

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Europe, Canada, Australia and the United States have been conceptualized and planned by local residents who sought to attack their country of residence. Several recent events underscore the seriousness of this emerging threat; for example, a plot by homegrown jihadists to attack Fort Dix in New Jersey was thwarted in May 2007, four other men in June were charged with conspiring to blow up jet-fuel supply tanks at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York and two Middle Eastern men stopped by a sheriff's deputy for speeding near Goose Creek, South Carolina, were charged with the possession of a destructive device after a search of their vehicle turned up bomb making materials.

Historically, international terrorist acts that took place in the United States were not targeted at the United States and the American infrastructure. Although these acts were usually carried out by immigrants and refugees with "old world grudges," the targets were usually embassies, consulates or foreign government owned businesses. Serbs and Croats attacked Yugoslav diplomatic and commercial establishments, Armenian groups attacked Turkish establishments, the Jewish Defense League targeted Soviet diplomatic establishments and businesses, Palestinian groups targeted Israeli interests while Cuban émigrés fixated on the Cuban Mission to the United Nations, and the Irish collected significant sums of money to support IRA activities. The intent was not to kill large numbers of Americans, but to use violence in a targeted venue to make a political statement regarding real or purported grievances. American interests overseas were periodically attacked by Middle Eastern groups, but these groups were unable to mount a major attack in the United States. Prior to 9/11, the most devastating attack carried out in the United States was the truck bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995. Timothy McVeigh, the main subject in the conspiracy, was, like his colleagues, an "unremarkable" individual without a criminal record who became radicalized to the point of committing a colossal act of violence killing and severely injuring a large group of people.

The most surprising and sensational acts of terrorism carried out by radicalized individuals have occurred in the United Kingdom during the past several years. The July 2005 attacks on the London Underground, the 2006 conspiracy to blow up airliners destined for the United States and the recent 2007 attempts in London and Glasgow are examples of "unremarkable people" without criminal histories who become radicalized and attempted to carry out terrorist acts as suicide bombers.

Europe's failure to integrate the second and third generation of its immigrants into society, both economically and socially, has left many young Muslims torn between the secular West and their religious heritage. This inner conflict makes them especially vulnerable to extremism. The radical views, philosophy, and rhetoric that is highly advertised and becoming more and more fashionable among young Muslims in the West. Although America's Muslim population may be less susceptible than Europe's Muslim population, recent research has voiced a concern: second and third generation citizens residing in the European Union can travel to the United States without visas. These individuals can enter the United States without attention unless their names appear on a screening list.

To date, Germany has not been successfully targeted by al Qaeda like Madrid and London, but the recent arrests in Germany of al Qaeda inspired jihadists convincingly evidences the international dimension of this phenomenon. Two young ethnic German converts to Islamic radicalism and a Turkish citizen were arrested by the German authorities as they planned car bombings in Germany. The three, who the police said had traveled to Pakistan for terrorist training from an Uzbek group called the Islamic Jihad Union, were charged with planning to detonate gigantic bombs. The group planned to attack "soft targets" near American military installations along with the Frankfurt airport. Again "unremarkable" individuals planned to turn Germany into a battlefield of international jihad. The German authorities indicated they have a significant

number of investigations of young Islamists who espouse violence. The growing number of radical, self-generating terror cells in Western countries, indicates that the radical and violent segment of the West's population is expanding.

The Intelligence Division of the New York Police Department prepared a study of recent foreign and domestic terrorist events and came to the following conclusion. Despite the economic opportunities in the United States, the powerful gravitational pull of individuals' religious roots and identity sometimes supersedes the assimilating nature of American society that includes the pursuit of a professional career, financial stability and material comforts. This conclusion was based on the NYPD's examination of U.S. homegrown terrorism cases that surfaced in Lackawanna, New York; Portland, Oregon; Northern Virginia and two New York groups. All the individuals in the aforementioned groups passed through a four-stage radicalization process to ultimately embrace the jihadist ideology. A new phenomenon that plays into this equation is the Internet, a driver and enabler for the process of radicalization. Supporting this concern the FBI Director recently testified, "Although we assess that the level and intensity of extremism inside the United States does not equal that in the United Kingdom or elsewhere in Europe, we are well aware we have extremists in the United States who wish to do us harm."

Security and the Private Sector

The private sector in the United States controls eighty-five percent of the infrastructure and therefore must share responsibility for the protection of these assets.

Al Qaeda continues to employ reconnaissance to find the weak links. News and intelligence reports appear on a daily basis regarding suspicious activities connected with our transportation system, refineries, chemical industry and commercial infrastructure. The FBI recently took the unusual step of asking the public to help identify two men who were suspected of conducting surveillance for an attack on the ferries near Seattle. If the men were in fact militants planning an operation, their

presence on the ferries underscores the continued desire of jihadists to target public transportation and to carry out attacks in the United States.

The private sector needs to support strong defensive measures implemented by the government, and to employ sufficient countermeasures to protect its domain. Those responsible for security in their organizations, including chief executive officers, need to have the technical ability and a strong knowledge of the domestic and overseas risks to their personnel, facilities and the reputations of their firms. Risk assessments and physical security surveys conducted by security industry professionals are of paramount importance for an understanding of the operational requirements to guarantee a secure and safe facility. Those responsible for leadership in their organizations also should have the technical knowledge and business experience to determine whether the proposal of a contract security provider is achievable, and its claims regarding capabilities are genuine. No private industry or commercial organization should award a contract worth a significant sum of money without due diligence.

Considering that we have identified a dangerous enemy predisposed to attack our infrastructure again, and the problems emanating from workplace violence, crime, pandemics, weather-related calamities and general safety issues which could seriously impact business continuity, it is inconceivable that a commercial enterprise would fail to invest in the necessary countermeasures to allow for the security of their facilities and the safety of their employees. Unfortunately, this predicament, or sense of complacency, can be summed up by the recent remarks by the CIA director, General Michael Hayden. He lamented that the September 11 attacks have become a distant memory and suggested we should be treating the existing threat as if today is September 12th. General Hayden cited the findings of a recent National Intelligence Estimate about the terrorism threat to America that supports this need for urgency. He indicated that American spy agencies believe that al Qaeda is planning "high-impact

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plots” against the United States and is focusing on targets that would “produce mass casualties, dramatic destruction and significant economic aftershocks”

Since September 11th, 2001, jihadists comprising about 70 nationalities have been captured in some one hundred countries around the world and jihadist money has been frozen in 130 countries. As a result of this global war, the “battlefield” has stretched across two dozen countries, including Afghanistan, Egypt, Indonesia, India, Iraq, Kenya, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Tanzania, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and Yemen. Terrorism is now the central concern for our government and it may even be said that terrorism has become a war. However, this all-pervasive terrorism has itself undergone a significant mutation from state sponsored groups to random, unconnected entities that can strike anywhere, anytime and the victim can be anyone. Civilians, cities, corporations and the population at large will be increasingly affected.

In view of the scope and randomness of the threat, governments can only do so much. The Federal Government should concentrate on preventing the worst-case scenarios, such as nuclear, chemical and biological attacks, and accept that no amount of security can make the country safe from every possible threat. Consequently, local governments should enhance their dedicated intelligence operations and community policing. The private sector should take prudent and reasonable steps to be prepared and to supplement the federal and municipal efforts to protect and maintain the business continuity of the critical infrastructure.

Critical infrastructures include electricity grids, water supplies, telecommunications, health care systems, transportation, banking and financial services. Increasingly in an era of terror, reliability is defined by the resilience of operations—their ability to absorb or recover from a shock or attack. Continuing operations after a disaster requires detailed planning beforehand to identify potential losses and to maintain viable recovery strategies. A successful strategy must include

personnel training, plan testing and continual plan maintenance. Everyone within the organization needs to understand who will make decisions, how the decisions will be implemented and what responsibilities will be assigned to the people involved. Chief executive officers need to budget for, and must be prepared to obtain, necessary resources to secure company assets. Additionally business continuity planning is one of the “material risk” controls required by the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002. A well-known organization in England estimates that diligent continuity planning can reduce the economic impact of a terrorist attack by a remarkable 50 to 90 percent.

The Time for Urgency is Now®

In the six years since 9/11, an atmosphere of complacency has developed, as many people believe we have overcome our vulnerability to terrorism and there is no need for additional sacrifice or concern. However, as events in Europe, Asia and Africa and reported threats in the United States suggest, Al Qaeda is considering measures to hit the U.S. homeland again.

Those responsible for maintaining the security of the American infrastructure do not want to become the subjects of an Inspector General report that holds them accountable for not elevating security countermeasures in response to a serious threat; accordingly, security directors are well-advised to perform due diligence when selecting their contractors. Even so, the nation's defenders have to be successful all the time to prevent attacks, whereas terrorists only have to be successful once to create chaos. If an organization establishes and practices a comprehensive plan for business continuity, it is much more likely to recover from such a tragedy. We are still a nation at risk.



The Lipman Report Editors