

GA1: Disarmament and International Security

Preventing the Mobility of International Terrorist Groups

Current Situation

Terrorist groups both domestically and internationally threaten global security due to their intricate network and extensive nature. The expansive mobility of these terrorist groups threatens security worldwide and proves to be a key issue when addressing international security. The mobility of terrorism and the groups that invoke terrorism has exponentially increased in recent years.

After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the United States Department of Homeland Security, established in 2003 for this very purpose, viewed the loopholes in border security as one avenue for the mobility of terrorism.¹ Along with border security, “transportation and immigration systems are themselves venues for significant development of knowledge, rules, and processes with which to counter terrorist mobility.”² As society internationally has experienced four social revolutions, from the horticultural and pastoral societies to the industrial and information societies, the way in which terroristic acts are completed have changed as well.³ With the many advances in technology in the Information age, the attackers do not have to physically be in the same place as the people or country being attacked. This has allowed for increased expansion in the terrorist spectrum, giving terrorist organizations more opportunities to carry out their terrorist acts. Although there are still numerous attacks via suicide bombs or, as shown in the United States on September 11, 2001, feats of suicide no matter what venue, there is another expanding category of attacks that occur from a place separate from the actual attack. With this in mind, the prevention of the mobility of terrorist groups worldwide has taken on a whole new meaning.

This effort to prevent the mobilization of terrorist groups, also referred to as counter-terrorism, is continuously being addressed by the United Nations. Due to the increasing threat and opportunity for the mobilization of these groups to have a detrimental impact on all states, this issue is of urgent importance especially after the attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) was formed after these attacks in 2001, in order to monitor “the efforts of countries to combat the global scourge of terrorism.”⁴ The CTED aids the Council’s Counter-Terrorism Committee which was formed in 2004. They assist in “monitoring the implementation of resolution 1373” which “calls on countries to adopt a number of measures to enhance their ability to counter terrorist activities nationally, regionally and globally.”⁴ In 2003, one year before the Counter-Terrorism Committee was formed, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was established as a reaction to the evident simplicity of entering the United States and completing the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. While border management and immigration reform are two of the main topics addressed by the DHS, “terrorist mobility comprises a set of problems distinct from,

¹ “El Al Israel Airlines.” *Answers.com*. 2008. Answers Corporation. 21 Apr. 2008. <<http://www.answers.com/topic/el-al-israel-airlines?cat=biz-fin>>.

² Ginsburg, Susan. “Countering Terrorist Mobility.” *Migration Information Source*. Mar. 2006. 21 Apr. 2008. <<http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?ID=379>>.

³ Henslin, James. *Essentials of Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach*. Boston: Pearson, 2007.

⁴ “Security Council Extends Counter Terrorism Offices Mandate Until End of 2010.” *UN News Centre*. 20 Mar. 2008. 23 Apr. 2008. <<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=26055&Cr=terror&Cr1=>>>.

although clearly linked to, the phenomenon of global migration and the problem of controlling immigration to the United States.”⁵ While the DHS seems to have identified a possible solution to ceasing the rapidity of foreign terrorism’s mobility in the United States, the mobility of domestic terrorism has been an urgent issue in not only the United States but many states internationally as well.

Many states now have to face the reality of terrorism from within their own borders.

On March 11, 2004, the Atocha train station in Madrid was the site of a chain of terrorist bombings that killed 191 people and injured 1,755.⁶ At first, officials believed the work was of ETA, a northern Basque nationalist terrorist organization native to Spain, but upon further investigation found that the attacks were actually the work of Moroccan national Jamal Zougam with possible al Qaeda ties. These highly coordinated attacks could have only been the work of a highly mobile international terrorist group, and are further evidence that action must be taken in the international arena to prevent the mobility their mobility.⁷

In 2001, officials discovered plots to bomb the United States embassy in Paris, France, as well as the NATO headquarters in Brussels. The plot was uncovered when conspirator Djamel Beghal was caught for passport fraud in Dubai with a fake French passport. Thus, simple security measures such as customs and passport control, when implemented effectively, can make a huge difference in preventing the mobility of international terrorist organizations. Simple measures such as better training for border control officers can make a difference when it comes to uncovering an international terrorist plot.⁸

On July 7, 2005, London experienced a different form of terrorism in comparison to the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States. The attacks in the United States were perpetrated by non-U.S. citizens; however, the London bombings on July 7, 2005, were perpetrated from terrorists within the borders of the United Kingdom.⁹ While the focus recently has been on foreign terrorism, the mobility of terrorism from within may have had an opportunity to increase. The United Nations Security Council met hours after the London bombings and adopted Resolution 1611. In accordance to Resolution 1373, the Council insisted on all States “to cooperate actively in efforts to find and bring to justice the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of these barbaric acts” and to regard “any act of terrorism as a threat to peace and security.”¹⁰ These attacks aroused concern for many states as to what the future may hold in reference to terrorism, the extent in which it is mobilizing and the character of its destruction. The United Nation’s response to these detrimental attacks proves to have a significant impact on combating the mobilization of terrorism worldwide.

⁵ “Countering Terrorist Mobility.” Migration Information Source. Mar. 2006. 5 Aug. 2008. <<http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=379>>.

⁶ http://www.elmundo.es/documentos/2006/04/11/auto_11m.html

⁷ <http://www.elmundo.es/papel/2005/12/09/espana/1900192.html>

⁸ <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/europe/10/26/inv.thwarting.cells/>

⁹ “Migration, Integration and Security in the UK Since July 7.” Migration Information Source. Mar. 2006. 6 Aug. 2008. <<http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?ID=383>>.

¹⁰ “Security Council Condemns ‘Barbaric’ London Terrorist Attacks, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 1611(2005).” United Nations. 7 July 2005. 6 Aug. 2008. <<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/sc8438.doc.htm>>.