

FAILURES OF INTELL SERVICES

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Abstract: *The main purpose of this article is to bring more light - further information and a better understanding – on the reasons for the failure of the intelligence services to combat terrorist attacks. Starting with September 11th 2001 in the USA, continuing with the attack on 11th March 2004 in Madrid, and the London one on 7th July 2005, and the latest events – the bombing of the Paris and Istanbul, all this made me pay particular attention to the reasons for the intelligence services not to fall within the limits of early warning, which often lead to real catastrophes. The article focuses on drawing, as close to reality as possible, the parallel between failures of intelligence and terrorist attacks. Therefore, I have focused on the connection between actionable intelligence and terrorist attack on September 11th, 2001 in the USA. The concept 'actionable intelligence' involves the transformation of information into real action, one meant to launch a protective barrier, and go on the offensive. Starting from this premise, and in parallel with the attack on September 11th, 2001, we can say that intell services failed to prevent and stop this event. 'Balance bombing' meant the first piece of the terrorist attacks puzzle, which has tended towards a broadening of horizon given the increasing number of attacks occurred so far. Thus, the article briefly reflects an assessment of the grounds for which the intelligence services continue to fail in fighting terrorism.*

Keywords: intelligence, actionable intelligence, intell education, balance bombing

1. Introduction

The Intelligence is a tool to fight the possible dangers and threats of a state, its institutions, sovereignty and state independence. One of the contemporary dangers questioning the effectiveness of intelligence refers to the terrorist threats and attacks. These violent acts that tend to broaden their horizons, increase fear among the population, but also lead to destabilization in all areas of activity of a state. Intervention of intelligence in this case would be an anticipation of these **real disasters**.

Several times the premise of anticipation and prevention of terrorist attacks remains only in theory, because these tragic events are still happening,

which makes us think of another failure of intelligence services. As a lesson of good practice regarding the failures of intell services, the attack of September 11th 2001 in the US is from my point of view, the first piece of the puzzle of terrorist attacks.

2. Errors of Intell Services

The main characteristic of terrorist groups, giving them a strategic advantage in the face of overwhelming state authorities, is that they do not belong to a state and can not be identified with national or foreign policy of a state entity. Although the US has some of the most complex intelligence services, the CIA and FBI, they could not predict what would happen. At that time intelligence services had knowledge of the

occurrence of terrorist attacks in the form of hijackings, but could not predict that the US is the target of attacks. A first wrong analysis which determines an intelligence failure is the **errors and omissions in the estimation of threats**. Although the US is a superpower, this doesn't mean that it cannot become a possible target. On the contrary, 11th September highlights the **superficiality in gathering and collecting / connecting data and information**. 11th September 2001 is written with black frame in the American calendar. That day, 19 terrorists belonging to Al Qaeda hijacked four commercial airplanes: one crashed in Pennsylvania, two hit New York in the twin towers and the last hit the Pentagon. The impact was devastating: 3,000 people died. The thought of this tragic assassination leads us to the following directions: could the intell services anticipate and stop this catastrophe? Why have these services failed in fighting the terrorist attack? In creating a response we must pursue the reasons why the intelligence services **do not fall within the early warning**. From my point of view, the reasons would lead to errors in **collecting information and data, analysis and dissemination**, especially **poor interpretation of information and understanding of the priorities** of both the intelligence and the political decision-makers. Informants from the intelligence must serve politics, but at the same time must be protected from political influence. To remove this political contamination on intell services, the two entities should look for more efficient ways of cooperation, but in order to achieve the primary objective of protecting the national territory. Correlating this idea with the September 11th event, industry experts have pointed out the **poor analysis and misinterpretation** of the intelligence services, but also the political factor on a possible terrorist threat on US soil. The next direction leads to the most famous instances of errors encountered within the intelligence services, namely, **quality collectors of raw information, as**

well as analysts who disseminate this data and turn them into final information, and often **decision-makers who consume these products**. Thus the quality of information available at the US intelligence services, and closer cooperation with political decision-makers of these services could **perhaps minimize** this event. To understand properly a past event, it must be analyzed with data and the minds of then to shape very good future projection errors in the context of countermeasures.

3. Actionable Intelligence Concept

Further in this article I wish to point out a concept launched by the US in the intell world namely, **actionable intelligence**. This concept is ambiguous for the entire community although US intelligence, also refers to one of the **major sources of errors and erroneous estimates**. Synonymous with "**to act from inside**", the concept involves the transformation of information into real action by specialized structures to organize defense against an attack, but at the same time to act and fight back against the opponent. Actionable intelligence refers to information involving a practical application and relevance. Approached through the massive flow of information, open concept provides a decision-maker, to take decisions designed to anticipate, prevent, respond and take practical measures against attacks targeted the state. Intell services can fail when collecting information through neglect exploitation of available sources. The main challenge now for intell services is to collect information that opponents want to keep secret. The most important thing for an intelligence service is to find correct answers. Creating a parallel between adversaries who US had during the Cold War with those of the contemporary period, it can be argued that opponents today are not as capable as those faced by the US during the Cold War, even if the intentions of the contemporary are more hostile and capabilities and intentions

more clearly defined. During the Cold War, intelligence targets in the area were easy to find but hard to kill (Soviet military forces), today they are easy to kill, but hard to find (terrorists). The attack of 11th September 2001 in the US, as a whole, the failure to anticipate and to the tragedy led to highlight several findings about failures of intelligence: the first direction draws promptly reasons of wrong analysis committed, namely **underestimation** (while in other cases we meet an **overestimation**) of intentions of the enemy. 2001 - present, the intelligence services should pay attention biases search of data and information that support prejudices and previous experiences of analysts and decision-makers in light of the various attacks products, especially popular solutions to combat them. The next direction is targeting the **poor communication between intelligence agencies** and between those agencies **and policymakers**. The **competition** between them intervenes but particularly **rigidity cooperation between the various components intelligence services**, so preventing these things and more to the objective of defense / protection of the state. Also worth mentioning **superficiality** or **poor training of staff** responsible for gathering of information / data, analysts trying to find connections between the data received. All of this human whole should know exactly what it is like in the field of information. So all these reasons mentioned for determining the intelligence failures are linked, each weakness following the other. Correlating all these reasons and setbacks can make finding possible causes of these phenomena, and knowing the causes we can act to remedy them. Although the attack of September 11th cannot be deprived of criticism (as well as any other attack that occurred), later in this article I want to establish some premises which could lead to a more pragmatic approach from intelligence.

4. A positive view

"The victory smiles to those who anticipate change, not to those who wait to adapt when changes occur." This quote can be a contemplation of the intelligence services, and also in drawing attention to failures, often losing sight of the many successes of the system. A first step towards an efficient system is the **human quality**. Therefore intell agencies must invest in this pillar of education, creation of **"students"** who are able to understand the work of intelligence, the creation of schools and courses with practical applications for a seamless training of future officers. From my point of view, very much of the material and financial power available should be geared towards the training and specialization of agents from **infiltrating**. The technique evolves constantly and terrorist groups seem to keep up with this development. Therefore we need to create a buffer zone. Involve as many agents specialized in this area, and also their success (by entering into such an organization and transmission of information) can strengthen the line of fighting these terrorist attacks. So, to defeat opponents from out of state, but also those inside already, one solution is to invest in specialize agents in infiltration to penetrate their secrets and bring to the surface / out information in their possession . Once this pivotal point is well made in an agency, will phase analysis of data received. In this context analyst predictions become paramount, because it is based on information from the person who must find the connection between them and thus be able to predict what is going to happen. Information received goes through all 3 levels of knowledge process of the analyst: processing, thinking and judgment. The role of the analyst in an intell agencies is vital both for its success, especially for state security.

The second line shows the evolution of threats and potential conflicts. They should be viewed from the following

perspectives: the intell education should be oriented towards knowledge. Transitioning from the **deploy force state** (the ability of a state to apply all elements of national power to fast action response in a crisis, regional stability, etc.) to **ready state** (environmental awareness in its entirety, its overall vision). This indirect route traces intelligence vigilance, awareness clearly defined that the environment is constantly changing threat increased with the flow. The American concept of **sensemaking** is helping intell services, a process which creates situations unfamiliar and highly complex in order to following up the decision making. This process represents a motivating and continuous effort to understand the connections (which can be between people, places and events) in order to anticipate paths and to act in an effective way.

The third step is the concept of **team work**, intell linking all agencies within a state, or even between agencies of different states to prevent and combat such attacks. Although the CIA and FBI are some of the most effective individual intelligence services, separate behold expertise proved to be non-effective in crisis with global implications. So we can talk about the important role of an intelligence community

cohesive, consistent and open cooperation at the level of organizations, coalitions, global etc. We can talk about the success of an information system, but only at entity level. But globalization agencies should follow this course. The event of terrorist attacks in a given region must concern all other states, because they themselves can become targets. Surprise in the terrorist attack is almost always a matter of degree. Therefore, special attention should be paid to networking between intell agencies as this could be another way to combat terrorist attacks.

5. Conclusions

The present article draws and tries to bring more information regarding the reasons why intelligence agencies sometimes fail in fighting terrorist attacks and as a good practical example I mentioned briefly the September 11th, 2001 episode.

I want this article to be just a meditation to the question: How can we avoid a terrorist attack?

The final part of the article is a positive, practical manner way of addressing, when talking about the possibility of producing a terrorist attack.

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