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COUNTER TERRORISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY AND THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Abstract

Terrorism is designed, as it has always been, to have profound psychological repercussions on a target audience and to undermine confidence in government and leadership. Nevertheless, after the 9/11 attacks, it is possible to claim that terrorism has changed and the European Union's response, along with the world one, has also changed. By means of discursive analysis, this paper aims at exploring the complexity of the new threats that terrorism poses to the globalised world by combining 21st century technologies with the most extreme reading and vision of the clash of civilisation. The analysis will then proceed with an assessment of the change of approach that has guided EU action in the aftermath of 9/11 and with a critical examination of the issue of global actorness.

Keywords: European Union, Security, Terrorism

Introduction

Terrorism is designed, as it has always been, to have profound psychological repercussions on a target audience and to undermine confidence in government and leadership. Nevertheless, after the 9/11 attacks, it is possible to claim that terrorism has changed and the EU response, along with the world one, has also changed. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, along with the failed attack on the White House, were characterised by new facets: the enormous scale of the simultaneous suicide attacks; the impressive coordination and detailed planning; the dedication of those who gave their lives for an ambiguous scope – which makes suicide attacks different than other terrorist operations precisely because the perpetrator's own death is a requirement for the attack's success; and finally the lethality of the operation.

Bin Laden, the terrorism CEO,¹ demonstrated to the world that the weapons of modern terrorism are not simply the guns and bombs that they have long been, but the videotapes, the

¹ Hoffmann (2002) has defined Bin Laden as terrorist CEO. According to such scholar, Bin Laden has applied to a transnational terroristic organisation, Al Qaeda, the principles of business administration and modern management. Like multinational corporations, he has shaped Al Qaeda as a linear and networked structure, he has defined aims and strategies, issued orders and finally ensured their implementation.

television, and the Internet. Bin Laden started exploiting, as ISIS is doing now, 21st-century communications technology in the service of the most extreme reading of holy war.

The use of new technologies has thus produced landmark changes for world security, and the international community has to harness the same powers of advanced technologies to defeat this new enemy. Simple in concept, this mandate is complex in reality. New technologies offer great promises but challenge fundamental assumptions and premises embedded in liberal constitutions. In fact, just as citizens expect the government to protect them against an attack, they also expect such government to safeguard their freedoms, including civil liberties and especially the right to privacy. The Civil Liberties Committee of the EU Parliament, for instance, has rejected a proposal of the European Commission concerning the storing of airline passengers' private data, by arguing that obliging airlines to provide the member states with the PNR (Personal Name Record) would have put the basic rights of citizens as well as the rule of law in a secondary position.

This is just an example showing how delicate the balance between national security for a country and the freedoms and liberties expected by its citizens are. These two components should not be conceived as dichotomous or conflicting and the solution should lie in developing critical advanced technologies simultaneously with enlightened policies that would guide the implementation of these technologies.

By means of discursive analysis, this paper aims at addressing the following research questions: what are the new challenges that terrorism poses to the globalised world and to Europe in particular? How is the EU responding to such threats, and according to which paradigm of action? Is the EU counterterrorism policy a valuable test for the evaluation of its global actorness? The paper will first of all analyse the complexity of the new terrorist threats; secondly; it will explore the EU response to terrorism and assess the change of approach that has guided EU actions in the aftermath of 9/11, with a focus on the coordination of both internal and external action; finally it will critically examine the issue of the EU global actorness.

The Terrorist Threat in the 21st Century

In recent years, transnational terrorism has come to be appreciated as a prominent threat to international and European security. Nonetheless, terrorism is not a new phenomenon and the terms transnational and global are commonly used in the scholarly debate simply to distinguish the old forms from the new ones.

In past decades, scholars usually tended to focus their analysis on three different characteristics of terrorist attacks, as the main aim was to determine the geographical boundaries of the phenomenon. The variables taken into account were: the country in which the incident takes place, the nationality of the perpetrators, and the nationality of the target (De Hoog 2005; Li 2005; cited in COT Institute for Safety, Security and Crisis Management 2008). When all the components shared the same nationality, it was possible to talk about *domestic* terrorism; when one of the components deviated from the nationality of the others, it was possible to talk about *transnational* terrorism. Instead, the term *global* terrorism seems to have emerged as a reflection of the very nature of

this century in which we live: the diminishing importance of boundaries as barriers to external threats, in fact, makes terrorism a global phenomenon (Kegley 2003 cited in COT Institute for Safety, Security and Crisis Management 2008).

Nevertheless, what is urgent for the international community to take into account is that terrorism is diversifying itself and that the 21st century is characterised by new terrorist threats. 9/11 seems to have represented a turning point for terrorism related studies. Since the attacks to the Twin Towers, research on the topic has flourished, producing harsh lines of division within the academic world on the presumed new distinguishing features that terrorism seems to be characterised by nowadays.

To begin with, one of those features seems to be the revival of religious motivations and fanaticism. According to Hoffman (2006), such religious imperative represents the most important characteristic of terrorist activity today, and functions not only as a legitimising force justifying violence but also as a means to explain contemporary events. Religious terrorism, the argument runs, targets a wide range of enemies and, as a consequence, uses large scale violence to attain its goals. In this respect, violence becomes a divine duty and the mass killing is not regarded as an immoral act, but rather as a necessary action to undertake. Relying on less hierarchical organisational styles is another characteristic commonly associated with new terrorism. Such leaderless resistance, as Lutz and Lutz (2005) have called it, makes counterterrorism actions extremely difficult to implement, as most of the time there is no organisational structure to attack. This new loose and flexible network is also more resilient: in fact, even though one component might be destroyed, others are able to carry on (Tucker 2001). Furthermore, action within this network is facilitated by new advanced communication technologies: the wide range of telecommunication that terrorists are equipped with allows them to be relatively autonomous, yet still linked to the group. Simon and Benjamin (2000, cited in Spencer 2006) refer to this as a combination of a “hub-spoke” structure and a “wheel” structure, which allows one unit (the node) to communicate both with the centre and the other components, but with no need to refer to the former while reaching the latter.

New terrorism has also increased its indiscriminateness. It seems terrorists have realised that the careful selection of civilian targets, with the aim of causing as many casualties as possible, lowers the risks to themselves while increasing the level of media attention (Morgan 2004; Laqueur 1999).

Linked to the willingness to use extreme and indiscriminate violence is a further distinguishing feature, the threat of mass destruction. Such a type of horrific attack, which would involve the use of a biological, chemical, or radiological agent, or an incendiary or explosive device, would be truly devastating if executed properly. In addition, former EU High Representative Javier Solana acknowledged such risk and, in 2003, described terrorist groups acquiring WMD as “the most frightening scenario”. This does not mean that such disruptive weapons are the only means that terrorists can use to cause significant harm. In this respect, the attack during the Boston marathon in 2013, where pressure cooker bombs were used, shows precisely the opposite. Therefore, what is urgent to stress is the equal consideration and attention that all possible facets of terrorist attacks must receive. The fact that, in spite of world fear, a terrorist attack by means of WMD has never

occurred, does not allow the international community to discount the possibility that it could indeed happen.²

Overall, in a new era like this, policy makers have the duty to analyse terrorism by looking at the broader picture, thus taking into account other types of attacks. Cyber-terrorism is definitely another prominent threat. Virtual attacks from “virtual sanctuaries” (Hoffmann 2002), involving anonymous cyber-assaults, may indeed become more appealing for a new generation of terrorists who do not use the means and methods of conventional assault techniques, as they once did in capacious training camps. And a possible cyber-terrorist attack is high-dangerous precisely because it is designed to cause physical violence or extreme financial harm, and its possible targets include the banking industry, military installations, power plants, air traffic control centres, and water systems.

The point is that the, as Kiras (2004 cited in COT Institute for Safety, Security and Crisis Management 2008) rightly argued, technology, mobility, and flows associated with globalisation allow terrorists to operate in a highly distributed global network that shares information and allows small groups to conduct highly coordinated and lethal attacks. Furthermore, structural links exist between terrorism and traditional criminal activity, with the latter being the source of funding for the former. When a terroristic organisation lacks what has been called state-sponsorship, it resorts to other means of financing, and criminal activities represent the easiest way to get needed funds. The range of activities is wide, but the most common and usual are undoubtedly drug and weapon trafficking and kidnapping. It was again EU High Representative Javier Solana who, in the 2003 European Security Strategy document, outlined organised crime (especially trafficking in drugs, women, illegal migrants, and weapons) and links with terrorism as one of the five key threats to Europe, along with terrorism itself, proliferation of WMD, regional conflict, and state failure.

The debate among both international relations scholars and terrorism experts is still ongoing and lively. Many authors in fact question the validity of the concept of new terrorism itself. In particular, many of their claims are based on the idea that those new features that seem to characterise terrorist attacks in the current century are not so new at all. For instance, Rapoport (1984 cited in Spencer 2006) claims that religious motivations, which have been outlined as one of the new characteristics of 21st-century terrorism, could also actually be traced back in history to the Zeatots-Sicarii of the 1st century. Pettiford and Harding (2003 cited in Spencer 2006) provide some examples, such as the truck bombings of US and French barracks in Lebanon in 1983 or the bombing of an Air India flight in 1985, to support their claim that the causing of indiscriminate mass-casualties cannot be considered an exclusive feature of new terrorism. Schweitzer (2000 cited in Spencer 2006) questions the association between fanatical suicide attacks with new terrorism, by pointing

² As far as Al Qaeda is concerned, according to Mowatt-Larssen (2010), the reason why radical Islamist terrorists have not used WMD depends on the role that WMD plays in their thinking. They do not choose a weapon – could it be conventional or not – based on how easy to acquire and to use it is; they choose the weapon which represents the best means to destroy the target they have in mind. Therefore, the correlation between the easiness of access to WMD and the increasing likelihood of use by terrorists does not seem to be valid. A different explanation about why the world has not witnessed a terrorist WMD attack is that Al Qaeda's WMD programme may have been disrupted by the strong response to the 9/11 attacks.

out that such form of action has been extensively deployed also by old terrorists, such as the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka since 1983. In more general terms, Spencer (2006) maintains that, as the world has changed, one cannot but expect terrorists to diversify their action in order to cope with such change. It is then simply a matter of an evolutionary development. Therefore, what these scholars dispute is the assumption according to which new forms of terrorism demand, and consequently justify, a totally new set of harsh policies. By rejecting the newness of the concept, as well as the artificial distinction with old terrorism, such stream of scholars invites reconsideration of the effectiveness and, above all, the necessity of strict counterterrorism measures that might undermine basic democratic principles and personal liberties.

The EU After 9/11: A New Paradigm?

The events of September 11, 2001, and their aftermath clearly had a major impact on the theoretical discourse on security in Europe. They demonstrated, along with the attacks on Madrid and London, the seriousness of the globalised security threat posed by terrorism and altered the European Union's threat assessment and approach to security.

The concept of terrorism itself has undergone a securitisation process. Recalling the Copenhagen School's theory of securitisation, states or international organisations (the securitising actors) can adopt the language of security to convince an audience of the existential nature of the threat (Galli 2008). The issue of securitisation is thus one of language, where the perceived reality being addressed is rendered an objective threat. Furthermore, the Copenhagen School also claimed that, after the end of the Cold War, even the concept of security itself had been redefined, as the military dimension began to be perceived as not the only crucial facet. Security began to be framed in a multidimensional context and the "societal" components (namely, politics, economy, society, and environment) were flanked to the traditional military component.

As far as the EU level is concerned, in past decades – in other words during the Cold War – the study of transnational terrorism received little attention. Considering the classical categorisation of terrorism that involves the distinction between state, state-sponsored, and non-state terrorism, it is not surprising that during the bipolar East-West confrontation, the main focus in the study of terrorism within the European continent was on state-sponsored terrorism, and more specifically on Soviet support for revolutionary movements.

The actual counter-terrorism policy that started in the 1970s, but remained unofficial through cooperation at the informal intergovernmental level, was the TREVI Cooperation.

However, the willingness of the EU to combat transnational threats through supranational action was already evident in the creation of the European Drug Unit (EDU) in the 1990s, which paved the way for the establishment of Europol. EDU began operating as an information-sharing unit in the field of drug trafficking, but over the years its mandate expanded eventually to include different types of trafficking and criminal activities. It has now become the centre of EU expertise in the fight against crime. The major merit of EDU is thus being a forerunner of Europol, which nowadays represents the main instrument that member states have for developing the necessary coordination

among their police forces. Europol in fact provides a forum where police officers, law enforcement authorities, and experts share and examine information and, after 9/11, it was endowed with a Counter Terrorism Programme, along with a special Unit and a Task Force (Extraordinary Council Meeting, Justice, Home Affairs and Civil Protection, 20 September 2001).

At the level of judicial cooperation, the action against terrorism has been strengthened by the establishment of Eurojust (Council Decision of 28 February 2002, Setting up Eurojust with a reinforcing the fight against serious crime, 2002/187/JHA), which is a cooperation unit of national prosecutors, magistrates, and lawyers, with the aim of making the fight against terrorism and organised crime more effective. Considering the highly incompatible and different judicial systems of member states, it is possible to affirm that the real task of Eurojust is to seek and facilitate harmonisation through multilateralism.

Despite the willingness of the Community to promote different initiatives in the fight against terrorism over the years, structural difficulties in the coordination of member states, as well as their readiness to cooperate and implement concerted measures, have many times impeded integration to go further (De Cesari 2006). Nonetheless, at the dawn of the 21st century, the high-profile 9/11 terrorist attacks generated a shared sense of urgency and, consequently to the impact of these events, the EU decided to take more determined and concrete steps to deal with the issue, by focusing national defence efforts on identifying and pre-empting planned acts of terrorism; in other words: counter-terrorism.

This new attention for terrorism at EU level is based on the realisation that the EU is not simply a possible target for terrorist attacks, but also an important stage for preparatory and logistic purposes. Germany and Spain were in fact identified as key logistic and planning bases for the attacks on the US. As a result, European leaders acknowledged that the EU's largely open borders and Europe's different legal systems enabled some terrorists and other criminals to move around easily and evade arrest and prosecution.

Therefore, it is possible to affirm that after 9/11 a new paradigm emerged, in the sense that the EU member states finally recognised that "no single country is able to tackle today's complex problems on its own" (European Security Strategy 2003, 1), since threats, especially terrorism, pose a growing strategic threat to the EU as a whole. The attacks on American soil thus gave Europe a major impulse for further integration in the field of criminal law, culminating with the introduction of the European arrest warrant in 2002 (Council Framework Decision 2002/584/JHA of 13 June 2002 on the European arrest warrant and the surrender procedures between member states).

As a result of this new paradigm, the EU has promoted the securitisation of terrorism as an issue at EU level. With the Plan of Action endorsed right after the World Trade Center attacks, the European Council provided the EU with a "road map" for the fight against terrorism, where the focus was on five areas: enhancing police and judicial cooperation; developing international legal instruments; putting an end to the funding of terrorism; strengthening air security; and coordinating the EU's global action (Conclusions and Plan of Action of the Extraordinary European Council Meeting on 21 September 2001). Since

then, the EU has intensified data sharing, police cooperation, and cooperation in the field of judicial affairs.

One of the major developments regarding the conception of security at EU level came with the European Security Strategy, endorsed in 2003, which reflects Europe's concern in reinforcing a multidimensional and multilateral vision of regional and international security. In it, the EU explicitly identified, for the first time, key threats to its security and the way in which it intended to respond to these. The selection of threats reflected the EU's multidimensional concept of security, with poverty, pandemics, and competition for resources appearing alongside terrorism, international organised crime, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and regional conflicts.

Together with the prioritisation of the issue of terrorism, the understanding of security issues has also evolved. As a result, the European Security Strategy emphasised the significance of comprehensive approaches to security issues that would incorporate multi-faceted instruments and solutions in dealing with security problems, such as, for instance, terrorism.

A year later, the need to develop a coherent external dimension of the EU Freedom, Justice, and Security Area pushed the EU to adopt, in 2004, the Hague Programme with the aim of outlining the overall priorities, and then, one year later, the five-year Action Plan was launched, in order to translate the Hague proposals into concrete actions. Therefore, terrorism has played a prominent role in transforming the external dimension of Europe's security agenda, which has evolved in response to the changing security environment. Long before the approval of the Lisbon Treaty, the issue of terrorism had already become a cross-pillar cooperation field.

After the attacks, which saw Europe as a target, the EU decided to enhance the level of action, and the Council adopted the 2005 Counter Terrorism Strategy, based on four pillars: Prevent, Protect, Pursue, Respond. The basic idea is that the EU aims at tackling terrorism while respecting human rights and allowing its people to live in a more secure Europe. To counter terrorism, the EU argues, one must address the radicalisation and propaganda that draws people into Al Qaeda or likeminded groups. These two factors play a major role in recruiting new terrorists and are, thus, the areas that need to be addressed. The best way to combat terrorism would therefore be by tackling the root causes of terrorism through increased democracy, literacy, equality and economic growth. The coordination of both internal and external action, in order to enhance the impact of EU's efforts, represents an approach that has been reiterated in the wake of the most recent Paris attacks. During its most recent meeting, the Council has in fact called for greater engagements with the Middle East and North African countries, with emphasis to be put on countering radicalisation and addressing underlying factors, such as poverty and state fragility (Council Conclusions on Counter-Terrorism 9 February 2015).

Hence, there is reason to believe that the Charlie Hebdo attack is going to function as a new "policy window",³ with the European authorities harnessing the momentum in

³ According to Kingdon (1995, cited in Smith and Larimer (2009)), a policy window is a new opportunity that holds great potential for producing policy change. It can be predictable, unpredictable (such as a dramatic event), or created on purpose.

order to further deepen integration on the matter. In fact, the European legislative branch has very recently (February 11th 2015) passed a resolution committing to finalising the Personal Record Name draft law – that in 2011 had been rejected by vote of the Civil Liberties Committee out of concern for the right to privacy and the rule of law – by the end of the year.

Critical Evaluation of the 2005 Strategy

Conceptually, the key objectives outlined by the Strategy, namely prevent, protect, pursue, and respond, seem to reflect the EU's sectorial conception of counter terrorism. The fundamental question is then coherence of action and coordination of such objectives with structures and instruments. Improving the EU counter terrorism approach thus means that the EU has to improve its coherence, by firstly defining its interests and concerns of foreign and domestic policy connected to each of the four objectives.

The Prevention field, for instance, presents some difficulties of implementation, as, due to the diffuse nature of terrorist organisations and the impossibility of determining the circle of supporters, it is not easy to develop effective strategies.

At the level of the Protection of citizens and infrastructures, high emphasis is posed on circulation and thus on security transportation. The action of the EU in this field has been concentrated on the collection of huge amount of data concerning passengers with the aim of making civil transportation by plane safer. Nevertheless, the point to be stressed is the necessity to reconsider such approach, as it implies an equation simplistically linking bigger amounts of data to higher security. This does not mean that gathering data is in itself useless or dangerous: what is dangerous is the absence of a proper selection and consequent analysis, which is a risk to undermining the right to privacy.

The Pursue part sets as one of its key priorities the cut of funding to terrorism, and it seems to be one of the best achievements of the EU in the fight against terror, as assets worth millions of US dollars have been frozen. However, this task remains a long-term one and its implementation largely depends on the EU's capacity of enhancing cooperation. It is in fact a matter regarding different sectorial fields of actions at both the domestic level (for instance, money laundering, electronic payments, investigations, law enforcement) and foreign policy level (dialogue, agreements, and treaties with Third Countries).

As far as the ability of the EU to Respond to crises and emergencies is concerned, high expectations have been placed. The EU needs in fact more cross-sectional capacities in order to address transboundary crises and urges to act as both a facilitator and coordinator among member states.

Unfortunately, the implementation of all these actions has not always been consistent or timely. There were initially high hopes that the majority of EU measures would be transposed and enacted through member states' national laws within about a year. However, the willingness of EU members to cooperate in fighting terrorism does not always translate into common action. The effectiveness of EU measures is thus critically dependent on the capacity of member states to implement each measure.

Nevertheless, what it is possible to affirm is that ever since the EU has progressively incorporated the fight against terrorism into policies concerned with both its external

relations and its security dimension, both the level of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the level of the former Third Pillar have assumed a more prominent role.

Overall, the European Union Counter Terrorism Strategy has the merit to guide the EU's efforts in fighting terrorism, as well as to deepen EU integration in security affairs and in justice and law enforcement, although counter terrorism nonetheless remains staunchly a member states' preoccupation.

The EU has made rapid progress since 2001 on forging political agreements on many counterterrorism initiatives. Indeed, the pace has been speedy for the EU, a traditionally slow-moving body because of its intergovernmental nature and largely consensus-based decision-making processes. In fact, despite the Lisbon Treaty allowing member states to use a qualified majority voting system for most decisions in order to speed EU decision-making, in practice, it seems that EU member states still seek consensus as much as possible on sensitive policies.

The critical point is, as it has been said, the implementation of policies, which is up to the member states, and which produces, as a consequence, considerable lag times between when an agreement is reached in Brussels and when it is implemented at national level. In addition, EU member states retain national control over their law enforcement and judicial authorities, and some national police and intelligence services remain reluctant to share information with each other. Consequently, efforts to promote greater EU-wide cooperation against terrorism and other cross-border crimes remain works in progress. Unfortunately, as Bures (2013) rightly maintains, the EU counterterrorism policy still seems more of a paper tiger than an effective counterterrorism device.

The Eternal Quest for Global Actorness

The 2003 European Security Strategy served as a step to reinforce Europe's standing in international politics, a process that began decades ago. Since the end of the Cold War, in fact, the EU has embarked on a path towards designing a CFSP among its member states, thus becoming a stronger and more viable actor on the world stage, economically, politically, and militarily, although to differing degrees.

The fact that the 2005 EU Counter Terrorism Strategy declares, as its purpose, to "combat terrorism globally" leaves no mistake about where the EU sees its realm of action. The EU intends to act wherever necessary, not just among its members' or within its own national boundaries. Of course, the term globally also refers to the indispensable cooperation with other actors, such as the UN, thus giving a double understanding of the EU's action: pushing action beyond its borders and pulling in cooperation with other institutions.

Nevertheless, the eternal quest for EU global actorness is tied to the dichotomy between the high strategic ambitions set by EU institutions and the EU's capability to meet them in the concrete reality of its actions.

Despite the ambitions of the previously mentioned document to pave the way for a global action of the EU in the field of counter terrorism, it is impossible not to admit that, in reality, the EU's role in such field is complementary. Although EU integration has progressed in unprecedented ways, it has been a process very much tailor-made, as

a consequence of the difficulties to find political compromises. Concretely, the EU has two specific roles in this fight, regulation and coordination, along with one most important precondition: information sharing.

Therefore, as Khandekar (2011) also mentioned, an assessment of the EU's global actorness must come with a just consideration of its *sui generis* nature and the margin it is allowed to operate in: it is eclipsed by its member states, as third countries still prefer to opt for bilateral cooperation; it is not yet a completed structure itself and hence in a state of mutation and development which might not reassure third countries; it does not have the same competences as a country. All these factors end up undermining the EU effectiveness as a global actor in counter terrorism. The divisions among member states, the state-centrism of some of them and mistrust tend to lead to a lack of internal coherence that, in turn, impedes the EU from acting as a unitary global actor.

Thus, these are the biggest and most urgent requirements for the EU: a redefinition of political will becomes crucial along with the need to build up trust among member states themselves and towards the EU.

Conclusion

Terrorism has been labelled the biggest threat to Western societies, indeed to civilisation in general, and subsequently as a problem that needs to be fought, eradicated, or solved at any cost. Nowhere was this clearer than in the US, when President George W. Bush declared the war on terror. But is such war a viable solution? It seems that both political leaders and public opinion should have better realistic expectations of what can and cannot be achieved when combating terrorism and of the vulnerabilities that inherently exist in any open and democratic society. The struggle against terrorism, in fact, might be never-ending, as the fundamental asymmetry of the inability to protect all targets all the time against all possible attacks ensures that terrorism will continue to remain attractive. The only key for succeeding against such threat is producing efforts which must be as tireless, innovative, and dynamic as that of the opponent.

The threat of terrorism demonstrated in the attacks in the US in 2001, in Madrid in 2004, in London in 2005, and more recently in Paris, has elevated the visibility and importance of the fight against terrorism at EU level. However, the EU as a whole is not set up to allow a cohesive response to terrorism, as it must rely on member states to enact and implement policy. Any EU effort to fight terrorism has, therefore, to be agonising and time-consuming, indeed the result of a delicate compromise. What the EU does best is organising coordination: since terrorism is a transnational phenomenon, the EU is automatically implicated and its role and responsibility amplified. Nonetheless, for the EU, terrorism is primarily a call for global action but not global war, and this marks a clear difference with the American approach.

The spectre of the possible repetition of any other catastrophic attack, like the ones that both Europe and the world have witnessed, forces the international community to work on a new way of dealing with such kind of enemies and the threat they put forward. With special regard to the EU, the long-term aim of the counter terrorism approach should be the construction of a set of sophisticated technological tools, combined with sophisticated

policies that will effectively foil and neutralise attempted attacks, since this is counter terrorism in its true nature.

A request for the adjournment and update of the Counter Terrorism Strategy, with special regard to the issues of radicalisation and recruitment, was approved during the Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting of June 6th and 7th 2013. The Council recognised that despite “the responsibility of combating radicalisation and terrorist recruitment lies primarily with the member states, [...] the EU efforts can provide an important framework to share good practices”. Nevertheless, the concrete experiences outlined by this paper show that, perhaps, the EU does not really need any other decisions or plans – or at least it is not a top priority. Perhaps the EU should try, for now, to develop the already existing instruments, this time with more conviction.

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