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EDITORIAL

HOMELAND SECURITY FOR CITIZENS: AMERICAN AND BRITISH APPROACHES



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9/11 and the series of Jihadist attacks on urban targets such as Madrid, Tokyo, Casablanca, Istanbul, London, Moscow, and Mumbai since then have dramatically changed the intelligence and security state of the immediate post-Cold War era, perhaps foremost in the U.S and in the U.K. New federal departments and agencies were created; the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has meanwhile grown to be the largest ministry in the U.S. government. Security budgets in Washington and London have doubled since 2001. Congress and Westminster have passed numerous pieces of legislation, and in short succession, in Great Britain for example: the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001; the Prevention-of-Terrorism Act 2005; the Terrorism Act 2006. Several governmental commissions on both sides of the Atlantic have studied and then recommended on all conceivable issues of state security. With all this has also come a fundamental shift in the organisation of civil protection, statutorily encompassed, for example, in Whitehall's Civil Contingencies Act 2004. In America, non-partisan groups, like the Council on

Foreign Relations, have joined governmental agencies with task force reports, such as the one entitled "Emergency Responders. Drastically Underfunded, Dangerously Unprepared" of June 2003.¹ It argues convincingly that all homeland defence must start with government bodies nearest to the people, i.e. at the local level, particularly in metropolitan areas, where terrorists since 9/11 have mostly concentrated their attacks on soft targets like transportation systems and infrastructure, and where anonymity and accessibility offer fairly easy opportunities.

There is now widespread agreement in the U.S. and the U.K. that anti-terrorist and emergency preparations must be centred on the local level, where municipal governments provide for the nearest law-enforcement and medical response, and where vulnerabilities can best be reduced and meaningful emergency training exercises can reasonably be conducted. This has been accompanied by programmes in community policing, public vigilance and civic engagement in order to improve the maintenance, recruitment, training, and especially coordination, not least with private sector partners.

A similar emphasis has been placed on so-called resilience-planning and involvement-building in the U.K., where the government has announced a number of interlocked counter-terrorist goals, the so-called five "P"s:

1. Preventing terrorism by tackling the factors which influence individuals to become extremists.

2. Pursuing terrorists and those who sponsor them.
3. Protecting the public, key national services and British interests abroad.
4. Preparing for the consequences of a terrorist attack.
5. Partnerships between all parts of government, the public, private and voluntary sector and the individual U.K. citizen.²

This translates into four key activities for minimising harm from emergency and terrorist scenarios:

1. Risk identification at every level and across the short and medium term.
2. Risk assessment in terms of likelihood and impact.
3. Building resilience with capability target-programmes, e.g. in the areas of intensive treatment, vaccination response, skills and aptitudes check, and business continuity management.
4. Evaluation to assure the adequacy of plans and preparedness.³

A key element in civil protection planning is deemed to be not only government actions at central, regional and local levels, but also the active involvement of all sections of society, i.e. of the individual citizen. This necessitates

a widely-applied communication strategy, capable of reaching the entire population in order to achieve a four-fold goal:

1. To inform and de-sensitise unnecessary secrecy.
2. To demonstrate competence and coherence to the citizenry.
3. To reassure and to build trust.
4. To build public resilience, i.e. an alert and competently prepared public.⁴

The Century Fund Task Force Report couched its recommendations for civilian protection plans in all American metropolitan areas into nine concrete measures: vulnerability assessment; personal protective gear for responders; interoperable communications; surveillance systems; intelligence sharing programmes; realistic training exercises; closed-circuit monitoring; better security of public transportation; and tested evacuation and shelter-in-place plans.⁵

Have similar programmes, initiatives and measures been publically discussed with the Austrian citizenry? Did I miss something? And more importantly: is Austria also on the path to becoming a protective state? As we know, catastrophes and terrorism can hit anywhere and at any time. A solid democracy better be prepared.

ENDNOTES

¹ *Report of an Independent Task Force Sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations*. Its main features are discussed in: *The Forgotten Homeland. A Century Foundation Task Force Report*, ed. Richard A. Clarke and Rand Beers (New York: Century Foundation Press, 2006), 9-55.

² Cf. Richard Mottram, "Protecting the Citizen in the Twenty-First Century: Issues and Challenges," in *The New Protective State. Government, Intelligence and Terrorism*, ed. Peter Hennessy (London: Continuum Books, 2007), 49-51.

³ *Ibid.*, 52f.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 61. In other words, citizen minutemen of the type discussed in my editorial of *JIPSS* 2, no. 1 (2008): 5f.

⁵ *The Forgotten Homeland*, 18.