

*Siegfried Beer*

## EDITORIAL

### 10TH ISSUE OF JIPSS, AND SOME THOUGHTS ON FIGHTING GRASSROOTS TERRORISM



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Welcome to the 10th issue of JIPSS. We are elated to have reached double digits. In the five years of our existence the hard copy publishing of a journal has not become any easier. Despite growing financial pressures we are determined to withstand the trend towards reducing periodicals to a mere electronic medium. As public funding of scientific publications diminishes or potentially even vanishes, this call for electronic solutions will undoubtedly intensify. However, we believe that screen reading a journal or book will never favourably compare to holding it in your hands or being able to hand it on to a friend or neighbour. Therefore, we intend to continue providing JIPSS in hard copy for as long as we possibly can.

Our alert readers may have noticed not only the growing diversity of our articles but also the timeliness of the publication of some of the subject matters we cover. JIPSS 1/2011 is a good case in point. Adrian Hänni's and Lukas Hegi's piece on ISI, the "Pakistani Godfather", went into print just as Osama bin Laden's capture and killing was announced. This issue includes a comprehensive review by Hans Coppi and Winfried Meyer of a prolific intelligence author's most recent book who, as former head of state security in Thuringia, finds himself currently in the news in connection with the killing spree of neo-Nazi elements in Germany.<sup>1</sup> Again, this assessment was written before the implicating story of the neo-Nazi Zwickau murder group started to make headlines; it provides good insight into the dilet-

tantish, careless and even deceitful way with which an erstwhile highly-positioned intelligence official has chosen to deal with serious subjects. In this new issue of JIPSS we have also included a very personal and critical assessment of an already distant yet still relevant era of military intelligence in Austria, coming from the pen of a long-term member of a small air force intelligence unit. Other articles report on the military use of Indian scouts, NS-infiltration of Yugoslavia, Transnational Organized Crime and Unmanned Vehicles and Systems, to name just a few. JIPSS pledges to continue providing a wide array of subjects, reviews and references on its three pillar issues: intelligence, propaganda and security. We invite our readers to interact with us on your topics of choice and/or to make suggestions for improving our product as we enter into a hopefully long and productive double-digit future.

In his monumental book on the historical evolution of terrorism since the 16th century and its strategic lessons for the present and the future, Philip Bobbitt concludes: "Every constitutional order evokes a unique form of terrorism. [Only] in Heaven there will be no terror, and the lion will lie down with the lamb."<sup>2</sup> But Bobbitt does not only deliver impressive insights and metaphors, he also points to several concrete measures for the states of consent (as he calls them) to win the war against globalized forces of fear and destruction. One of the imperatives for the states of consent to win the wars against terror is also drawn

from historical experience: “if there is one lesson of the Long War of the Twentieth Century [i.e. 1914-1991], it is that standing together the democracies are practically invincible.”<sup>3</sup> Not surprisingly, one of the most significant areas of alliance pertains to intelligence cooperation, and not only against rogue states but also against threats coming from non-state actors, often relatively small groups or even just cells. However, and regrettably, Bobbitt only thinks of institutional cooperation, mostly on the level of specialized services; disappointingly, he ignores the cooperative power of civil society.



Why ignore the citizen’s potential contribution in fighting crime and terror through local vigilance and enhanced situational awareness? We now know that counter-terrorism agencies (and not only in Austria) do not have the manpower and resources to look out for so-called attack-planning indicators, despite generally increased budgets for counter-terrorism since 9/11. Anders Breivik’s Oslo “lone wolf”-attack of July 22, 2011 has blatantly proven that.<sup>4</sup> Al Qaeda’s activities of late have also shown that militant actors have switched to adopting “leaderless resistance” in order to avoid detection. Such grassroots militants can only be incapacitated by grassroots defenders. While it can be argued that, by and large, general militants connected to well-established organizations of crime and terror, pose a more serious threat than do grassroots militants, we only need to remember that grassroots attacks like the July 2005 bombings in London, with 52 people killed, and Breivik’s shooting spree, with 77 mostly young people killed, can be just as deadly as more conventional forms of terror. Primary counter-terrorism agencies focus mainly on

known actors; the lone wolf or small cell operators too frequently escape attention. And for good reasons: finite even if improved resources (personnel and budget) of counter-terrorism investigators; labour intensity of surveillance; vagueness of command structure; difficulties with profiling leaderless cells or potential militants. In other words, internal security services like MI5 in Great Britain, the FBI in the United States or the BVT in Austria are not only over-burdened but also over-stretched.

Thus the need and call for grassroots defenders. It is quite apparent that grassroots militants have to engage in preparatory activities which make them and their plots vulnerable to making mistakes and therefore to detection. However, such lapses have a better chance of being noticed by someone other than a MI5-, FBI- or BVT-officer. Ordinary police and security personnel, but in much greater numbers alert citizens practising situational awareness, have a good chance of discovering and reporting possible indications of criminal and terrorist behaviour. Grassroots militants are prone to make pre-operational mistakes in such areas as surveillance, document fraud, purchasing bomb-making components, unlawfully acquiring weapons or illegally procuring funds. The U.S. Government has recognised the importance of heightened vigilance by local police and has established a national training program for police officers, the so-called National Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative. America’s civil security community numbers over one million; nevertheless, there is a need for a broader spectrum of grassroots defenders, i.e. ordinary citizens such as alert neighbours, salesmen, landlords, hotel managers etc. with above average situational awareness. Such citizens can definitely save lives by taking proactive measures and quickly alerting authorities. Perhaps the globally best-known example of this is the bombing attempt made on New York City’s Times Square on May 1, 2010 which was foiled by two alert street vendors. This incident led to the New York Police Department’s campaign running under the slogan “If You See Something, Say Something”. It is allegedly considered for emulation by the Department of Homeland Security.<sup>5</sup>

We have already addressed the topic of citizens’ participation in fighting crime, adversity and terror in editorials of previous issues of JIPSS.<sup>6</sup> It is a concept and concern still widely ignored and neglected in Austria. Yet situational awareness can be practised and consciously acquired for one’s own personal

safety in any environment.<sup>7</sup> It has nothing to do with paranoia but is as much a mindset as it is a hard skill; it can definitely be learned and practised by anyone. When applied collectively, it has the potential of impacting local and even national security and can also prevent terrorist acts. Ignoring it might turn fatal

and is fed by apathy, complacency and denial, all of which are properties not totally alien to Austrians. Perhaps it is time to recognise also in this country that citizen involvement in fighting crime and terror is a strategy well worth pursuing in order to enhance safety in neighbourhoods and to improve security at any level of society.



## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Three references, also stressing the connection to a Graz publishing house, must suffice: DerStandard.at, 16 November 2011, WeltOnline, 16 November 2011 and “Die ZEIT”, 24 November 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Philip Bobbitt, *Terror and Consent. The Wars for the Twenty-First Century* (New York 2008), 548.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 536.

<sup>4</sup> Breivik allegedly committed several pre-operational blunders which should have made him vulnerable and could have been detected, had Norwegian security forces been vigilant enough.

<sup>5</sup> In America such ideas and programs are not only encouraged or promoted by public institutions but also by private organizations, such as the intelligence company Strategic Forecasting (Stratfor) of Austin, TX.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. JIPSS 2/1 (2008), 5f. and JIPSS 2/2 (2008), 5f.

<sup>7</sup> Specialists like Scott Stewart of Stratfor speak of five levels or states of awareness: “tuned out”, “relaxed awareness”, “focused awareness”, “high alert” and “comatose/frozen”. Of these “relaxed awareness” is the most effective level for personal security and also the easiest to sustain. Training one’s awareness helps consciously moving from one level to another, as the situation demands.