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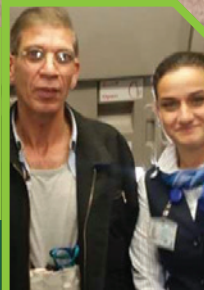
## Terminal Security: in the aftermath of Brussels Zaventem

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# BRUSSELS ZAVENTEM: THE FRONT-OF-HOUSE ATTACK BECOMES REALITY

by Philip Baum

Few security analysts can claim to be surprised by the atrocities perpetrated against both the airport and the metro system in Brussels on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016; neither by the targets selected, nor by the method of attack, and nor by the willingness of individuals to commit suicide in such a manner.

In the case of the perpetrators, we know that they were just a few of the thousands of brainwashed individuals prepared to die in the name of Islamic State. There are plenty more who would willingly respond to such calls to action by leaders, teachers, and spiritual guides who are infecting their vulnerable followers with their warped ideological viewpoints and promises of an existence of paradise in the hereafter. Addressing radicalisation is no longer some peripheral topic worthy of cursory discussion by government, schools and religious institutions, but rather an international priority in order to protect society, both by alerting children and their families to the dangers of fundamentalist influencers and by encouraging a reporting culture. Many states have now developed powerful programmes and created effective whistleblowing processes, but we should not become complacent.

Scanning internet forums responding to the multitude of articles written on the subject, the scapegoats appear to be the thousands of innocent and desperate migrants fleeing conflict zones in the Middle East and Africa and making their way to Europe. Whilst there will be, within their number, radicalised individuals travelling under the guise of being victims of conflict but who are, in reality, using the crisis to conceal their movement towards their targets, there are, as we have seen in Belgium, also those who were born and bred in Europe who are prepared to kill their fellow countrymen. Indeed, the lesson is, in part, that we simply must find a way of welcoming and integrating immigrants into society in order that future generations do not feel alienated and, in turn, elect to express their hopelessness by committing acts of violence. Some of the rhetoric, which is now commonplace on the internet and spoken about in hushed tones (as it's oh so politically incorrect) amongst friends and family, is, in itself, terrifying as entire communities are being tarnished with wild accusations of being complicit in, or sympathetic to, the type of attack we have just witnessed.

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The acts of terrorism being perpetrated against the aviation industry are becoming simpler and simpler in nature; the enemy has grasped the KISS Principle - Keep it simple, stupid. The security checkpoint is certainly being perceived as an effective countermeasure, so those with ill-intent are either bypassing it by the use of insiders or carrying out their attacks in advance of the screening checkpoint with a front-of-house assault.

On the surface, the easy solution would be either to move the existing security checkpoint to the entrance of the terminal building, or to add an additional checkpoint to screen people entering the building. This would be short-sighted if it consists of X-ray machines and metal detectors for routine inspections. The number of people we are now screening to go from landside to airside areas of terminals is far lower than the number we would have to screen at the terminal entrance – so the queues would become longer, creating a fresh target in the process. We must strive to avoid creating situations whereby large numbers of people will gather in one location. The death toll from the Glasgow Airport attack in 2007 was one – a terrorist – when a vehicle laden with liquid explosives was driven into the building; imagine how much higher the body count would have been had there been a queue of people waiting to enter the terminal building at the time. I'm all for additional checks at entrances to buildings – not only airports, but also train stations, shopping malls, sports stadia and theatres – but they must not be allowed to become chokepoints or to delay access or egress.

So what kind of checks can we carry out? Few would be surprised to hear me argue the case, once again, for behavioural analysis. Whether we are dealing with a Daallo Airlines-style insider threat (possibly also a Metrojet one), or a Germanwings-style suicidal pilot, a Northwest Airlines-style underpants bomber or a Zaventem-style front-of-house attack, it is the one security process we can say addresses the broad range of threats we face today, as well as many of those of tomorrow. Many airports do use such techniques – but such programmes are often watered down, often to the point of being totally ineffective. Examples of this include: having one or two people on patrol at peak hours, providing their services



are not required elsewhere; delegating the responsibility to the police; allowing officers to stand and chat with each other whilst supposedly carrying out surveillance. We need to maintain that sense of crisis 24/7 so, in the same way that we would never abandon a checkpoint, we should never be downgrading the value of the eyes and ears patrolling the entrances to our terminals and our public areas. Regulators often view behavioural analysis with disdain because it is a subjective technique which is very hard to test; the testing becomes even harder if it is a process we are only doing some of the time with inadequate staffing levels. Does it cost? Sure it does, but what is the cost of failure?

In effect, I'd like to see us reverse-engineer our airports and deploy customs-style screening at the entrance to our terminals. Many passengers breeze through such checkpoints on arrival oblivious to the fact that they are often walking through passive millimetre wave screening portals which may detect anomalies beneath the clothing. And customs officers only pull aside those persons who they deem to be 'of interest'. Customs and quarantine agencies routinely use canine units in baggage reclaim halls and often to great effect. Why can we not do the same when people arrive at the airport?

After every attack, the media ask the question, 'why can't airports be more like Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion International Airport?' There are indeed lessons to be learned, above all the deployment of common sense. Equally, there is a lot that is simply not possible to replicate – every vehicle having to slow down at the entrance to the airport so that its driver and passengers can be visually profiled, for example. If we were to do that at London Heathrow, the traffic would back up into central London and down the M4 motorway to Wales! But note that neither passengers nor members of the non-flying general public are screened by any technology as they enter the terminal in Tel Aviv; they are observed, a few – based on behavioural analysis – are questioned, and, once inside there are teams of plain-clothed officers patrolling the public areas. That is doable in airports worldwide. It's a question of investment, training, discipline and willpower.

I believe that the three men who appear in the CCTV image released after the Brussels attack might well have caused concern had they tried to enter Ben Gurion Airport – not because of their race or religion, and I have no knowledge of their degree of nervousness (if any), but because most people who have checked luggage also have hand baggage and for three people - two of whom were wearing a single glove - not to have any, would be regarded as a deviation from the baseline. But that's only identifiable if there are a sufficient number of fully alert personnel, with no other duties, deployed throughout the terminal, or at least at the entrances, taxi ranks, bus terminals and airport station platforms.

We also need to explore the ways in which technology might better assist us in the monitoring of public areas. Intelligent CCTV now enables us to automatically detect

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a person walking in the opposite direction to the regular flow and, as such, has applications in access control. Yet it can also help detect individuals who remain in one place for long periods while surrounding crowds are moving, thereby potentially alerting us to somebody carrying out surveillance. Unusual behaviour patterns, such as pacing backwards and forwards or even entering buildings and not following the traditional direction of airport users (normally to a check-in desk or kiosk, or to the toilets) can also be built into the CCTV automatic alert system.

Meanwhile, facial recognition software can help identify known criminals or other persons of concern; gait analysis technology can alert authorities to a potential suicide bomber approaching a building or checkpoint if they are wearing a bomb vest, the weight of which will impact on a normal stride pattern; and, facial thermographs can be used not only by quarantine officers aiming to detect a fever or other medical condition, but also by security units to identify heat spots associated with stress and attempts at deception, and to diagnose abnormalities about a given person's emotional state. All of these solutions are designed to scan people from a distance.

The hard truth is that it is all too easy, in hindsight, to criticise Zaventem for its failure to prevent the recent attack when it could have happened at most airports around the globe. It is an attack scenario that will more than likely be repeated, and one which traditional screening checkpoints will struggle to prevent from being realised. Whilst we can never guarantee security, we can certainly make the airport a less appealing target. To do so, we need to reduce the predictability of the screening process, and increase the variety of means to identify negative intent; the answer lies in canine patrols, behavioural analysis, and investing in the R&D necessary to convert some of the more conceptual technologies into mature, deployable solutions.

Whilst we must take steps to reduce our vulnerability to attack, we must also demonstrate our own resilience and try, as far as possible, to return to 'business as normal'. A wonderful example of this has recently emerged in Ivory Coast where, on 13th March this year, gunmen from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb killed 19 people on the beach in the resort of Grand Bassam. Only 11 days later, Ivorian musicians gathered on the same beach and recorded a song and video entitled *Même Pas Peur (I'm Not Afraid)*, which is now a YouTube hit (see [www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9OcCdB5\\_NM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9OcCdB5_NM)). The lyrics remind all that, "In Ivory Coast, we're on our feet" and the video showed tourists enjoying the sand and sea. Airports can also take covert measures to enhance security, whilst avoiding introducing standardised checks which only contribute to creating a climate of fear. ■