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## Terminals: in the age of the marauding firearms terrorist

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# RESPONDING TO THE MARAUDING FIREARMS TERRORIST:

## ARMED GUARDS, CANINES AND BEHAVIOURAL DETECTION

by Philip Baum

These are taxing times. In the two months since our last issue, there has been an attempted coup in Turkey, Trump has secured the Republican nomination to fight to be President of the USA and Europe has had to cope with not only the uncertainty caused by the United Kingdom's decision to exit the EU but also a surge in the number of atrocities perpetrated by terrorists and those with psychological disorders.

Not all the assailants have been Islamic fundamentalists. Thomas Mair, arrested for the murder of British Member of Parliament Jo Cox on 16th June, was found to have links to an American neo-Nazi group known as the National Alliance. Micah Xavier Johnson, linked to black nationalist groups and a former member of the New Black Panther Party, killed five police officers in Dallas in the midst of the Black Lives Matter marches on 7th July. In Nigeria, more than 80 people were killed in Benue State by herdsmen involved in a land conflict.

On 26th July, Satoshi Uematsu killed 19 people in a residential care home in Japan. The attack - the worst in post-World War II Japanese history - was justified by Uematsu, who had been campaigning for many months for the lives of severely disabled people to be legally terminated. The former employee of the home where the massacre took place had written to the Speaker of the House of Representatives in February saying, "I envision a world where a person with multiple disabilities can be euthanised, with an agreement from the guardians, when it is difficult for the person to carry out household and social activities."

On 22nd July, the fifth anniversary of Anders Behring Breivik's massacre in Norway, a German/Iranian by the name of Ali David Sonboly used Facebook to entice total strangers to a McDonalds outlet in a Munich shopping centre and then started executing them before committing suicide himself.

As July drew to a close you could be excused for missing the news that paramilitary groups around the world still resort to more old school tactics to instil a climate of fear or to secure funding. The Paraguayan People's Army, a left wing guerrilla group,

**"...the Paraguayan People's Army, a left wing guerrilla group, kidnapped a farmer and demanded a \$700,000 ransom..."**

kidnapped a farmer and demanded a \$700,000 ransom - their justification was "the violation of revolutionary laws prohibiting deforestation." And in Angola, the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda killed nine soldiers as part of their struggle for independence.

But in the western world, there is little doubt that Islamic State supporters, both actual and would-be, are growing in confidence and perpetrating acts that not only result in the deaths of innocent individuals going about their daily lives - watching fireworks displays on Bastille Day, leading mass in a provincial church or travelling as passengers on a train - but also engender suspicion, at best, and hatred, at worst, of all those who claim to be or dress like followers of Islam.

And aviation continues to be targeted...

Four months ago, Brussels Zaventem Airport was targeted by suicidal terrorists. They arrived by taxi and entered the terminal building unchallenged, pushing their explosive devices into the check-in hall on trolleys. They recognised that aviation could be targeted without the need to have bags X-rayed or pass through archway metal detectors. Small surprise then that many argued that checkpoints should be established outside the entrance to the terminal building. After all, that's what they do in Istanbul!

And, despite our pleas not to create new queues and, thereby new targets, checkpoints were set up outside Brussels airport, with people standing in lengthy lines waiting to be screened for the presence of prohibited items. And for as long as we continue to search for prohibited items, rather than negative intent, our defences will be breached time and time again.

On 28th June at Istanbul's Ataturk Airport, another three suicidal individuals arrived with the intent to massacre innocent individuals, 45 of whom are now dead. Were they to be thwarted by the presence of a checkpoint outside the terminal? No, because if one is heavily armed and wearing a suicide vest, the illusion of security generated by the presence of security technologies to analyse the bodies and bags of compliant individuals can easily be punctured. The marauding firearms terrorist can simply force their way into the building, killing anybody who stands in their way.

I have long argued for a more intelligent approach to protecting the aviation industry and for the broader deployment of behavioural analysis to identify negative intent.





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That said, I would be the first to admit that, if an armed terrorist makes it as far as the terminal door, the behavioural detection officer has limited opportunity to intervene. Indeed, the process of challenging the suspect could even put him or her first on the casualty list. That said, most terrorist actions are preceded by a scoping exercise in which the groups visit the target to effect surveillance and determine the best course of action. Challenging a person with negative intent at that stage of their planning could well dissuade them from pursuing their mission.

More importantly, if a behavioural detection officer is to challenge an individual on the day of execution of their plot, one does not need a crowd of people standing around at the same location waiting to be screened. We need to be performing such screening processes whilst people are on the move or some distance from their intended target, ideally allowing enough time to sound the alarm when concern arises.

Behavioural detection is only part of the solution. The deployment of canine units to identify the presence of explosives on people as they approach terminals and visibly armed units at the ready to engage offer a far greater deterrent than any traditional checkpoint.

We can never guarantee security at airports. As is often said, the only airport which is 100% secure is one which is 100% closed. But we can – indeed must – start to put ourselves in the shoes of the terrorist and develop strategies which mitigate our vulnerabilities.

It's no easy job. This is especially true in older, city-based airports where one has limited opportunity to screen vehicles, and their passengers, at the perimeter of the airport. Anybody who has ever visited Istanbul will be able to attest to the traffic which surrounds Ataturk Airport, making effective inspection of all vehicles nigh on impossible.

**"...the marauding firearms terrorist can simply force their way into the building..."**

There has been much criticism of the new airports that have been built in Asia – the likes of Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Hong Kong – as they have been constructed considerable distances from their city centres. However, their more remote locations make it possible to effect the screening of vehicles considerable distances from the terminal buildings with broad highways facilitating the construction of toll-booth style checkpoints where behavioural analysis officers could (but as yet are not) be based. That is, in effect, exactly what happens in Tel Aviv - the one airport which, time and again, demonstrates that the best service it can afford its users is security. ■

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