



The UK response to current terrorism The financial element

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Since 2001 the UK law enforcement have held that it is essential not just to concentrate upon the suspects, means and motives, but also to consider the changing nature of the target. In stark terms, Bin Laden demonstrated the advantages retained by the terrorist:

- the element of surprise and choice of weaponry
- the ability to change targeting at will
- the option of returning to a target, if a previous attack was unsuccessful
- above all, access to individuals who are prepared to die in order to achieve their operational objectives.

The UK Police counter terrorist action is that of a five strand counter-terrorist strategy – preparatory action, preventative measures, proactive operations, post event investigations, and consequence management/community involvement. All this is designed to impact on the vulnerabilities of terrorist operations. In this context these elements are of particular importance:

- people
- equipment including weapons and explosives
- finance
- accommodation
- storage
- transport/travel
- communications

The five strand strategy is supported by the tactical activities of professional use of force, technical measures, surveillance, asset tracing, proactive use of informants and highly developed analytical techniques.

One significant aspect of the post 2001 era within United Kingdom intelligence and law enforcement was that financing of terrorism had developed and was finally acknowledged as differing intelligence element from anti money laundering. It indeed had similar and common elements, but there were substantial, radical differences which rendered it another type of investigative discipline.

In 2005, following the 7/7 attacks in London, another slight but more significant operational change emerged with regard to both asset tracing and the financing of terrorism. In strategic terms the concentration was on the financing of terrorist groups within the EU and on an international scale. During the post 2005 period a strategic the question was raised by experts and became the subject of international academic debate, as to whether the new Islamic extremist threat was a core issue of terrorist economics or of a quasi grand strategy by *Al Qaeda* and affiliate groups engaged in economic warfare and specifically targeting vulnerable economic sectors, economic warfare. This question was definitively sidelined by UK law enforcement, in favour of the more practical considerations of the modus of financing by the individual terrorist groups. The micro economic questions emanating from the fact that micro economic questions of only small amounts of monies were required for terrorist attacks were subsumed into the imperative that such amounts of monies, irrespective of size, needed to be identified as transfer indicators; in this context banks were viewed as potentially important vehicles and therefore still particularly vulnerable to exploitation for terrorist financing purposes. However these methods of transfer, like those of funding were not merely part of the pragmatic nature of terrorist financing, There was a questioning of the overall value of financial institutions producing,(after considerable some time and effort,) elaborate account behaviour patterns compiled on the analytical basis of pure electronic data capture.

The real priority was that of a concentration of information exchange of exchange of small but valuable pieces of real time financial information, given speedily. Above all, financial data, financial intelligence and the valuable analysis was all integrated in support of and part of the basics of criminal and security intelligence- concentration and focussing upon focus on the individual(s) under investigation.