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Oslo terrorist attacks: Analysis, consequences and lessons learned.

The attack in Norway, like every attack with a major impact, should and will be carefully analyzed, both by police and by terrorists. If the Norwegian authorities have officially called for a technical evaluation of Counter-terrorism (CT) and rescue national services, many sensitive aspects still remain unsure:

The profile and motivations of Anders Breivik Behring will be highly debated, and almost surely politically exploited. In particular, time will tell, because this attack probably crystallized in Europe the first major violent answer to what some people on the political fringes, among the heterogeneous networks of the radical and non-democrat far-rightists, see as an existential threat – e.g. multiculturalism. However, these

tragic events cannot only be perceived in this way. Above all, the operational planning, as presented in the now famous book titled *2083 – A European declaration of independence*, seems unprecedented. It presents and analyzes in a particularly structured way, the protocol used by Breivik to prepare his attack. This is displayed from the initial idea, to the training, testing, the search for precursors (explosive, ammo, individual ceramic body suits), etc., and to the operational phase itself, including elements of action vis-a-vis a possible SWAT team counter-strike. The author very likely studied recent terrorist events (cells dismantling and failed or successful attacks). Most impressive, the systematic way he thinks about (and describes in his book) concrete

te means to hide his preparatory activities will most likely be seen as a sort of model for copy cats ('Stealthy process'). Truly, the possibility to reproduce such a terrorist attack seems to be the most serious problem.

Lastly, the Norwegian police behaviour does not appear to have been particularly adequate. This country does not appear to have a strong operational security culture.

Profile and motivations

This aspect is obviously the most interesting for the media. It is probable that there is not here any simple answer.

Lone-wolf and Leaderless resistance?

The solitary dimension of Breivik, if it is confirmed, could be indicative of several aspects: First, an operational loneliness directly coming from white supremacists' practices. This aspect, which needs to be assessed in-depth, is rather a common practice among violent supremacists' networks. Two concepts, defined in the U.S., summarize this attitude: **Lone wolf** terrorism and « **leaderless resistance** » which underlines the absence of pyramidal structure in a terrorist organization, and implies autonomous cells (this can also be observed for jihadism).

The "lone wolf" concept seems well-shaped for representing white supremacist terrorism. It can be defined with four main criteria:

- (a) Individual action
- (b) No membership to an organized and terrorist entity or network
- (c) No leader or hierarchy
- (d) Individual conception of planning, tactic and attack

Some elements of « leaderless resistance » emerged at the beginning of the 1970s. Joseph Tommasi, founder of the National Socialist Liberation Front (NSLF) in 1974, encourage people 'to act resolutely and alone' against the state. This contradicted the Marxist organizational model of terrorist organizations at that time. The white supremacist Louis Beam, a former Ku Klux Klan and Aryan Nations member, popularised the concept. He published a book championing leaderless resistance as a tactic to countervail the destruction by law enforcement agencies of pyramidal American militias. His opinion was one where 'all individuals and groups operate independently of each other, and never report to a central headquarters' or leader – single or collective - for direction or instruction. For the lone-wolf concept, Beam credited Cold War anti-

Communist Colonel Julius Louis Amoss, who, in the early 1960s, defined the strategy as a defense against a Communist takeover of the United States.

In the late 1990s white supremacists Tom Metzger and Alex Curtis popularized the term 'lone wolf'. They envisioned lone-wolf and small-cell activism to be considerably more difficult to detect and consequently, to dismantle than other forms of terrorism. Curtis encouraged acting alone in committing violent and heinous crimes so that they would not incriminate others. Both men recognized the opportunities the Internet offered for the dissemination of information and the communication with fellow militants.

The most famous example of "leaderless resistance"/"lone wolves attack," until Oslo attacks, is certainly the attack perpetrated against the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995, by T. McVeigh and Terry Nichols. It must be noticed that the explosive devices used in both cases are pretty much similar (ANFO based). Having said that, it is certainly necessary to verify by a principle of precaution if the entity that Breivik claimed to have created with others in 2002 throughout Europe and North America, is a fantasy or something more substantial.

Unabomber type?

The manifesto published by Breivik, is essentially a narcissist opusculum composed by a self-taught individual. It obviously, and a bit superficially, mimics the pamphlet made by another bloody individual, but from another political fringe - Theodore Kaczynski (a.k.a. 'The Unabomber'). Kaczynski, truly a very dissociated personality, perceived as schizophrenic by many authoritative experts, was responsible for placing or mailing 16 package bombs and letter bombs over a period of nearly 18 years. For six years, between 1987 and 1993, Kaczynski remained inactive. In June 1993 he restarted his bomb campaign. His final attack came on 24 April 1995, when a package bomb sent to the offices of the California Forestry Association killed the association's president. Such comparison has evident limits: the modus operandi and the selected targets are very different.

However, both Unabomber and Breivik have published and disseminated their manifesto. The one made by Breivik is far more structured and ambitious, in particular, concerning ways and means. And once again, their vision (used here is a quasi-mystical sense) is very different, and even opposed, Kaczynski being essentially a sort of green-anarchist.

Breivik's manifesto is huge and according to his author, a compendium of references, articles and

opinions coming from various rightist / (neo-) conservatives or nationalists authors or organizations. Their analysis provides precious information on Breivik radical opinions. First, it must be admitted that, among political pamphlets, many that are disseminated among far-rightists networks and communities, are much less structured, informed, and are blatantly racist or plain insulting. 2083 is truly a naive book in many ways. It is also a symptomatic mix: it is indicative of a post 9-11 vision of the world and of Europe, based on an eschatological perception of the Western world or civilization decline. Its references are essentially post-9-11, mostly neo-conservative, or even pro-Israel. It considers Islam as a religion that is, in essence, violent and expansionist (Daniel Pipes, the *MEMRI* and *Jihadwatch* are largely quoted). Furthermore, they also consider Europe as a decadent continent, overwhelmed by a radical and dynamic Islam (Bat Ye'or *Eurabia*). For that reason, Breivik cannot be considered as a neo-nazi. He writes somewhere else in his book that Hitler and Nazis can actually be criticized for what they did, and that forbids probably forever the Europeans to act vigorously against minorities.

2083 is also full of anti-European Union, anti-federalist and anti-Brussels stances. For instance, the EU is seen as a general and well-orchestrated process of multiculturalization of the Old continent:

“Why the EU needs to be destroyed and soon.”

“The EU court of Justice in Strasbourg is a cultural Marxist Controlled political entity” (p. 338).

Classically, for a far-rightist pamphlet, everything that reminds of a worldwide government is highly criticized:

“Boycott the UN” (p. 329).

“EUSSR. “

This claim to return to a more traditional sovereignty system, based on States, and correlative to the European integration enhancement, is maybe an emerging vision in Europe. It is furthermore, in a symmetric way to anti-federalist currents in the U.S., a paradoxical sign of success for the E.U. Like Washington, D.C., a capital sometimes viewed as full of corrupted bureaucrats, Brussels is also denounced as a kind of social-democrat, multiculturalist Babylon. (For that reason, a comparison between Breivik and McVeigh is pertinent here).

The author also seems to be particularly sensitive to what he perceives as the decline of masculinity in the Western man, due to feminism.

It is interesting to note that he appears less interested by migrants and Muslims, than by those he considers as responsible of the situation he denounces, e.g. leftist political parties, social-democrats, « progressists » and « immigrationist » intellectuals. That could largely explain, with operational necessities, Breivik's target choice – a meeting of young social-democrat militants rather than, let's say, a mosque.

Breivik specific ideology is certainly representative, at the end, of what radical and violent far-rightism is: A heterogeneous mix of diversified beliefs and ideologies – Paneuropeanism, odinism (the cult of Scandinavian gods), white supremacy, anti-Marxism, anti-federalism, freemasonry symbolism, anti-democracy, racism, a surprising papism, coupled with typical neo-con post 9-11 fears and perceptions and an obvious fetishism for weaponry and knights/crusaders aesthetic.

Suicide by cop?

The motivations of terrorists are not easy to analyze; the general and traditional reason being the word « terrorism » itself. This term can be pejorative by defining and disqualifying these acts as the “violence of the other.” Different researchers have tried to analyze terrorism, in particular Crelinsten, Crenshaw, Della Porta, Gurr, Ross and Sprinzak. Even though Gurr ignores psychology and group dynamics, Crenshaw, in her introduction of *Terrorism in Context*, considers that the causal analysis of terrorist acts is complex, and it implied psychological considerations, internal bargaining inside and actors' interactions inside or outside the terrorist organization. Ross tries to link “structural causes” (i.e. socio-cultural) to psychological factors within a complex model. Della Porta has mainly studied the radicalization process of the European post-1968 movement (Red Brigades, Rote Armee Fraktion or the French Action Directe) by focusing on environmental (sociological) and group dynamics. Crelinsten developed an analysis of terrorism as a way of political communication, between the State, which “controls,” and “controlled” (the protestors and infra-state groups). It is obvious that terrorist political organization's members do not obviously have a unique motivation. On the contrary, each of these organizations is founded on specific doctrines and sociocultural basis and recruit or mobilizes militants and sympathizers with specific socio-cultural profiles. For example, numerous psychological studies on prominent members of the Red Army Fraction (R.A.F.) showed very par-

ticular profiles: most of them had distant or conflicting links with their parents, particularly the father. The terrorist group provided them a unique way of socialization. The R.A.F. produced a kind of “collective-Self” in which immature personalities could aggregate themselves. A study about Italian terrorism concluded that from 1969 to 1980, 2,017 individuals had been indicted for terrorist acts in Italy. 55 % of them were far leftist, 45 % far rightist. The authors tried to distinguish a few psychological constants of the far rightist terrorists: “stereotyped social behaviors” (?), ambiguities concerning authority, weak intelligence, self-destructive and destructive pulsions, superstitions, weapons fetishist perceptions and adhesion to a culture of violence. Interestingly, some of these aspects could be applied to Breivik.

Another concept might probably be evoked by his lawyer, because it implies psychological (and thus penal) irresponsibility. The “suicide by cop” is a classical concept of American criminology defined as: “Those criminal homicides in which the victim is a direct, positive precipitator in the crime. The role of the victim is characterized by his having been the first in the homicide drama to use physical force directed against his subsequent slayer. The victim-precipitated cases are those in which the victim was the first to show and use a deadly weapon, to strike a blow in an altercation – in short, the first to commence the interplay of resort to physical violence.” This concept, moreover, is rather close to that of *Amok* developed earlier by Sigmund Freud, starting from the analysis of suicide by provocation, of Indonesian origin. This indirect suicidal tendency does not always imply the death for the individual who commits such a violent act, especially if the local police do not have an operational culture of shooting, which seems to be the case in Norway. However, *in fine*, which is a decisive attitude, Breivik is reputed to have surrendered to police forces, without trying to menace (and be killed by) them.

His book also makes a clear distinction between suicide and martyrdom (2083, p.1347) (However, it might be a way to “intellectualize” some suicidal tendencies). Furthermore, he claims that the post-attack phase should be carefully considered for propaganda reasons, not taking into account that he could be placed into isolation by the police.

Operational and pre-operational aspects

In terms of terrorism practices, it can be said that this attack, considering the number of victims, belongs to the emerging and worrying cate-

gory of **massive urban terrorism**. The ratio number of terrorist(s) to victims is significantly higher than those of the Mumbay attack (164 deaths, 30 wounded by 10 gunmen). Unfortunately, this indicates a good accuracy of the means used against the selected target, at least for the sniping part of the attack.

It is also fundamentally new and innovative by the very structured and detailed description of Oslo attacks' modus operandi. 2083 is a sort of Internet free handbook, easily accessible (See Breivik allegedly 5,000 Facebook contacts, 2083, p.1418), especially among sympathizers, and above...

Pre-operational and operational elements and considerations presented in the book seem to conform to what happened during Oslo attacks. Specific facts still need to be conformed, such as whether Breivik added a pure and highly toxic form of nicotine to the bullets, for the purpose of raising lethality.

The following two elements seem particularly impressive to the authors:

The culture of secrecy and adaptability during the planning and preparatory phases (including by active measures, such as creating two companies for justifying and hiding the purchase of explosive precursors), the rational, discrete and methodical research in foreign countries, and online, of products that Breivik identified as necessary. The search for a weapon seems to have been naive and amateurish (if, again, the assertions contained in 2083 are true) – a purchase attempt on the black market in Prague, and possibly, a purchase in Norway or elsewhere? Norway has a large population of hunters. Semi-automatic and bolt action rifles, as well as shotguns, make up the better part of the guns in civilian homes. There is a total ban on automatic weapons for civilians, unless they fall into the collector category, by the Firearm Weapons Act, with a new secondary law in effect 1 July 2009 providing more detailed regulation. Modification of semi-automatic guns into fully automatic without the consent of the police is a felony crime.

A systematic evaluation of every steps and preparatory acts, their advantages and perceived inconvenients, the difficulties and challenges that Breivik faced, the mistakes he identified. For the moment, in the aftermath of Oslo attack,

Breivik seems to have found a breach in the existing security measures and counter-terrorism sensitivity and detection capacity. Every nation's CT services will have soon to « test » their own system with Breivik approach, by a necessary principle of precaution.

This attack in obviously a massive failure for the Norwegian authorities (detection failure, prevention failure, SWAT team transportation delays, neutralization/arrest delays). While Norway has a deradicalization programme for its local far-rightists violent extremists and skinheads, this country failed to detect Breivik while he was active online in chatrooms, and probably in real life. The rescue phase did not seem particularly well-managed either, at least on some specific aspects.

The following key elements are intended to provide a first analysis of lessons learned, based on an incomplete knowledge.

Lessons learned

Norwegian police – Organization and main characteristics

The Norwegian police, with about 13,000 officers and other staffers, is organized in 27 regional districts and 7 national units. Each regional district, with a certain administrative and budgetary autonomy, has specialized units, mobile forces, including a SWAT team, able to act to neutralize individuals or in CT operations. Most of the time, Police officers do not carry any weapons, even though they can have one, in particular, in patrolling cars. The use of a weapon is highly restricted. The Norwegian police is reputed to have opened fire 79 times between 1994 and 2004.

Each regional district has an emergency calls system able to respond to public calls and to mobilize and coordinate rescue means (Firefighters and Emergency Medical Services (EMS)).

On a national level, an air unit, based in Oslo and depending on this regional district, has two helicopters that can be used, when it is necessary, by special units from other districts. One, with optical systems, is mostly used for monitoring and surveillance. The other is for transportation, but has a very limited capacity (4 passengers).

Norwegian rescue services and crisis management organization

The firefighters, at the local or intercity levels, are responsible for rescuing populations. The operational direction for security and rescue

during large public events is organized by an interservices cooperation, from security to medical emergency teams, under the police leadership. Crisis management is based on the capacity to bring together different public actors, NGOs and even private means, if necessary. Such organization, appealing in theory, has been regularly criticized in Norway.: In practice, like in other countries, interservices cooperation has occasionally been very challenging and produced unequal results.

Police and EMS intervention on Utoya island

The difficulties seem to have stem primarily from three causes:

The first one is related to the time of intervention by police forces. The Oslo Police seems to have been overwhelmed by the bombing in Oslo, in spite of many calls from the island, including from the terrorist himself. Too many minutes were needed, and wasted, before someone understood that a massive sniping attack was occurring elsewhere. This is certainly indicative of a lack of knowledge and training on redundant terrorist attacks among the Norwegian security community. One of the shooting victims was a (unarmed) police officer. A lost opportunity, this officer could have provided some credible and actionable information.

The relative isolation of Utoya Island strongly limited rapid deployment response, and seems to demonstrate that Norwegian SWAT teams did not have, at least at that moment, appropriate means of transportation and projection. They symptomatically used very basic boats provided by private citizens. This highlights for sure some under-dimensioned capacities of the Norwegian SWAT counter-terrorism teams. It must be noticed that the arrest phase benefited from favorable circumstances, since Breivik spontaneously surrounded.

The last one is related to the official assessment of the victims' number. In particular, the deaths estimate gradually decreased from 92 (22/07/11) to 77 (29/07/11). This demonstrates incontestably an organizational failure in centralizing information, and a lack of coordination between the field and the upper levels.

Conclusion – Next steps?

After such bloody attacks, any CT service will try to assess what happened in Norway and will expect to receive actionable intelligence from Norway. We can assume that part of the exchange of information will be on a) the modus operandi details and b) possible international connections or supports.

Norwegian CT services did not estimate as highly probable a terrorist attack by radical and violent far-rightist activists. Open sources also mentioned that they received some signs of Breivik's efforts to buy small quantity of chemical precursors. They did not see the inherent danger of his activity, partly because of the size and the low-cost of the purchases, but also by reason of the systematic security measures taken by him – he created operational invisibility. Finally, it is possible that the whole Norwegian security community was simply looking elsewhere, e.g. global jihad.

This tragic event demonstrates how analysis is a sensitive and complicated process. It certainly also indicates how the scenario-based approaches, which tend to « predict » violent behaviours and terrorist practices from specific groups and individuals, in a routine way, can be counter-productive, and even dangerous. Breivik just proves how a very organized and determined

individual, both methodical and prudent, is perfectly able to perform a major terrorist attack, without raising suspicion. This truth is disturbing. It should help us to favor operational answers based on multiple capacity means, both mobile and largely adaptative. Any CT SWAT team should have sufficient and permanent (24/7) projection means (air, road, sea).

Furthermore, detection and the definition of sensitive and accurate indicators should obviously be reassessed after Oslo attack.

Emergency rescues teams and firefighters should always be able to provide a verified/confirmed casualty toll, in order to avoid any detrimental imprecision.

Finally, it is essential to be prepared against a) simultaneous attacks against multiple targets, and b) second or redundant strike against rescue teams. It is also necessary to disseminate that operational culture among the first-line workers.

Assertions and opinions in this paper are solely those of the author (s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Center for Transatlantic Relations or the Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique

Notes

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