

URBAN C4ISTAR

(‘The impact of 9/11 away from the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan’)

Introduction

The impacts of the terrorist attacks on the USA on 11th September 2001, in terms of the military response, are well known. The deployments of armed forces to Iraq and Afghanistan are reported daily. However, the subsequent attacks in Bali, Madrid and London (7/7(2005)), to name a few, indicate that the ‘Global War on Terror’ is not confined purely within the military battlespace, or that it can be addressed solely by the world’s Armed Forces. Every area is affected: Government buildings, embassies and large financial institutions are perhaps obvious targets. However, there remains an increasing need to protect the routine and normal aspects of life: airports, railway stations (Madrid), sports venues and large shopping malls; but do so in a manner that does not defeat democracy. How can this be achieved?

Today’s Operations

This Symposium first sets as its backdrop not the Iraq conflict but its aftermath: a situation where operations on the battlefield are given a great deal of prominence. However, these overt military actions pale compared to the many, behind the scenes, security procedures being enacted throughout the civilian world to protect the general public in many countries from the attempts of terrorist groups to disrupt and instil fear into those societies. It could be argued that the garnering of sound intelligence, the correct analysis of that intelligence, and effective information management of the product (including sharing across many diverse national and international bodies); followed by effective action in response to such intelligence is just as vital in the urban environment of any large city as it is in the battlespace of Iraq or Afghanistan. How do police, security services and emergency services cope with the build up to – and on occasions the response to such incidents?

The scene is set by a senior military figure in the Homeland Security field setting out a Keynote address. This will set out the fact that in the past many agencies and governments were unready for the precipitate from the genesis of a Global War on Terrorism. However, all governments have had to react quickly to protect their populations. Often this response is in a more covert manner to avoid either frightening their people or to avoid alerting the terrorists to new preventative measures. The speaker may also allude to challenges that the authorities are now addressing that are outside the scope of the average electorate now – but which will move to sharp focus in 6 or more years time (eg security of London Olympics in 2012). Therefore, to meet the challenges we need information superiority through an appropriate blend of organisations, information, procedures and technology. The focus then switches to the specific challenges of the military community where such issues are within their bailiwick; and those of the emergency services, where these are new and additional factors affecting their training, resources and critically, their taut budgets. The discussion will then look at the deeper technical issues drawn from past experiences, addressing technical and physical constraints and limits and other impacts, such as the media, on a free society’s ability to counter ruthless terrorist campaigns. Then, we will look at how Industry and technology are helping to create a carapace of protection whilst still addressing issues of personal freedom and liberty (eg items such

as behavioural recognition software, better information sharing and dissemination). This will also include the experience of other countries and how we might mitigate the challenges of the future. The day will round off with a view on how the Government needs Industry to deliver key technical and procedural solutions to match the challenges in this new arena of conflict.