Special Homeland Security Issue

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Editor's Note

This special issue of the journal is devoted to studying threats to U.S. Homeland security. Since the catastrophic 9-11 attacks homeland security has been almost exclusively equated with the fight against jihadi terrorism. Homeland security, however, is far more complex. This is made palpably clear by Russia's cyber warfare directed at influencing the U.S. election. This issue accordingly examines a multiplicity of dangers the U.S. confronts. These include the threat of terrorism, dangers to food security, climate change and migration.

We begin by looking at intelligence planning between five Anglo-American countries. Dr. James JS Dailey of Angelo State University provides us with an informative look at the cooperative arrangement between the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and how pooling secure intelligence information has accelerated between these countries since the advent of the "war on terror".

Labelled the Five Eyes the relationship between these countries intelligence agencies is largely ad hoc and incremental. Recently, however, premature disclosures by US security services of intelligence information related to the May 22, 2017 Manchester Arena attack that killed 22 people have enraged British officials investigating the terror assault. Such friction between Anglo-American security agencies is, however, an anomaly. Dr. Dailey argues that the Five Eyes has generally been an effective forum for data sharing and has assisted in the fight against jihadi terrorism.

The Islamic State's threat to Western homeland security since the caliphate's 2014 emergence makes multi-lateral intelligence cooperation vital. Significantly IS network has inspired or directed acts of terror in the U.S., Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom. One 2016 U.S. congressional study reports that IS has been linked to over 101 attacks against Western homelands [1]

In our second article Dr. Anthony Celso of Angelo State University discusses IS's terror campaign against the West. After reviewing the role of the caliphate's late spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani and the IS' Amniyat security apparatus in directing and inspiring attacks against Europe and America, the author discusses IS' overall strategy and the means by which it has killed over 300 Westerners in their native lands. The impending demise of IS' state building project will force the movement to morph into an insurgent-terror organization. Though diminished IS terror will continue to present regional and international security dangers.

Border security and the threat associated with illegal immigration is analyzed in our third essay by Dr. Monica Koenigsberg that looks at the issue of terrorist penetration across America's insecure frontier. Given the controversy engendered President Donald Trump's travel ban of immigrants form select Muslim countries Dr. Koenigsberg examines U.S. Border and Customs apprehension data and the degree to which Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) migrants threaten American security. She finds that migration from this region is relatively miniscule and contrary to Administration fears presents an insignificant terror treat.

Human migration is also featured in Angelo State University's Dr. Mark Pullin analysis of climate change on U.S. homeland security. The author examines exogenous shocks impact on migration and the deleterious health, economic, and physical security dangers they portend. Using Hurricane Katrina as a principal case study the author looks at how poorly prepared emergency and security services were in dealing with the hurricane's calamitous aftermath that left tens of thousands homeless and ignited a crime spree.

Though New Orleans was especially hard hit Gulf States were overwhelmed by the enormity of population movements created by one of the worst natural disasters America has experienced. Given future increases in global temperatures these climatic shocks and their migratory impacts are likely to become worse. In his conclusion Dr. Pullin urges greater Federal-State emergency planning and coordination to avert a future Katrina like debacle.

In our final essay Angelo State University's Dr. Manuel Zamora reviews the many threats associated with agro-terrorism and food security. After surveying the history of biological warfare from the middle ages to the modern era Dr. Zamora looks at the health and security dangers associated with contamination of food and water supplies. The author notes that the U.S. food and water supply system is insecure and vulnerable to terrorist penetration. Given the potential health catastrophes that could emerge when food and water resources are compromised, greater security procedures and federally oversight are indispensable.

[1]   "Terror Gone Viral Overview of the 100+ ISIS-Linked Plots Against the West" House Homeland Security Committee Majority Staff Report 2014-2016 July 2016 accessed at: https://homeland.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Report_Terror-Gone-Viral.pdf