

Globalisation, Terrorism and Cosmopolitan Australia

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The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in New York and Washington radically changed the geopolitical landscape and the way in which we view national security. They demonstrated that it no longer took the massive infrastructure and capability of the state to carry out strategic strikes at the global level. The subsequent high profile attacks in Bali, Madrid and London have further demonstrated that there is no 'front-line' in this so called "War on Terror". This article argues that the methods used by contemporary transnational terrorist are inherent in contemporary globalised society. Moreover, when this current wave of jihadist extremism is over, the global framework as it exists today will still be just as ready to be exploited by the next generation of extremists, whatever their cause might be. Mikkel Rasmussen argues that "As globalization was believed to define the future, the dark side of globalization harbours dark prospects for the future."¹

As the world has globalised, states have ceded their sovereign powers in many areas on a political, economic and also on the individual level. At a state to state level, countries like Australia must consider their international responsibilities (treaties and relations) in not just foreign but also domestic policy terms. Likewise, Australia is becoming increasingly interested in the internal policies of other states to which it gives aid and support (such as governance issues in PNG and the Solomon Islands) or countries where Australia has other interests (e.g. Indonesian judicial decisions). Economically, the interdependence of nations through international trade and financial flows means that no functioning economy is able to deviate from established norms. The flight of capital from the countries in the Americas such as Argentina and Venezuela as they move towards greater protectionism, and from Bolivia as it pursues the nationalisation of its largest enterprises is evidence of the cost of 'bucking the system'.²

This article will focus primarily on the impact of non-state actors. Non-state actors can operate within a group structure or as an individual. These political agents are gaining influence over events that reverberate within the

¹ Mikkel Rasmussen, 'A Parallel Globalization of Terror': 9-11, Security and Globalization,' Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association, vol. 37, no. 3 (September 2002), p. 330.

² 'Pisco Sour,' The Economist, 26 August 2006, p. 34

state and the international system. Whilst this development is admittedly in the embryonic stages, my analysis has led me to consider it is likely that the power of the individual is only going to increase over time.

On the individual level, people are taking advantage of what could be called the infrastructure of globalisation (relatively inexpensive global mass transport services, the internet, other global telecommunications systems and the global media) to travel widely either for work or pleasure. Young Australians are typical of this phenomenon. It is not uncommon for our youth to spend at least some of their adult working lives overseas and it is just as common for individuals to come to Australia to work.

The terrorists who perpetrated the 9/11 attacks exploited the freedoms available to most people in the world to travel to the USA. They set up residence in the USA, purchased flying lessons and then used four civilian aircraft as very crude but highly effective guided missiles. Arguably, the intelligence failure was in part caused by the fact that they were working within the global economic system established to promote globalisation, rather than threatening it from the outside.

Australia is gradually becoming a state of residents rather than of citizens. From a nation-building perspective, the increased transience of citizens and visitors and the growing trend towards small government that relates to people more as customers than citizens has helped people disassociate themselves from the state.³ As a society, we in Australia possess a wealth of interpersonal ties to the rest of the world regardless of whether we are Australian citizens by birth or by pledge. Through personal travel abroad, family or ethnic ties, religion, politics or issue-based groups, Australians have used the infrastructure of globalisation to develop strong ties with people and groups in other states or without any geographical base (for example on-line communities). The process of relationship is one way in which we all develop our own sense of identity. Australians who have strong ties to non-Australian entities are likely to also develop a complex set of overlapping loyalties across a wide range of state and non-state actors.

The process of transformation of its people that Australia is experiencing is being replicated internationally. The complex inter-linkages among states, civil actors and individuals have made the notion of a hard outer layer of national sovereignty and national security increasingly problematic. The most difficult aspect of contemporary national security is transnational terrorism. Contemporary terrorists work within loose networks that do not respect state borders, are fluid in nature and very resilient.⁴ Peter Clarke of Scotland Yard believes that the current transnational terrorist threat is a

³ S. Bislev, 'Globalization, State Transformation and Public Security,' *International Political Science Review*, vol. 25, no. 3 (2004), pp. 281-296.

⁴ P. Walters, 'Unclear and present danger,' *The Australian*, 23 September 2006.

reverse of all the traditional security issues of rules of engagement and boundaries in the 'war zone'.⁵ We are now fighting an enemy that has found new ways to develop asymmetries within this conflict

The terrorists who perpetrated the Bali bombings had as their aim to turn the region into a pan-South East Asian Islamic state, starting with the creation of a Islamic theocracy in Indonesia.⁶ Importantly, the terrorists struck not only targets like the Kuta Beach night clubs but also Christian churches throughout Indonesia, as well as Western embassies in Jakarta and a plan to attack the US Embassy in Singapore.⁷ The aims of the terrorists could be viewed as being nationalistic in their aims. However, they were not aligned with goals of other Indonesian nationalist groups, but with those of other non-Asian jihadist extremists. The actions of terrorists like the Bali bombers highlight just how these extremists are not so much concerned for their fellow Indonesians, as they are for those of the followers of their branch of Islam. The attitude of the terrorists highlights the flipside to globalisation. Many academics acknowledge that as people and states become more integrated in a global civil society, society is fracturing along ethnic, national and religious lines. These fractures are occurring in both geographically centralised and geographically dispersed forms.

Citizenship and loyalty to one state alone has become a growing issue in Australia and across the world as nation-builders realize the fracturing and overlapping of loyalties of their peoples. Some commentators see complex individual loyalties as a threat to nationhood and have pushed for more hard-lined approaches to the issue of citizenship, but mixed loyalty in itself is not a bad thing.

Australians have always identified with a range of groups; loyalty to one's state, to one's faith and one's family among others. Traditionally these overlapping loyalties have worked in a kind of concentric, harmonious and balanced manner ("For God, Queen and Country"). Today, an individual can identify with and pledge loyalty to states and groups whose centres of gravity are outside of traditional Australian societal frameworks. Nino Randazzo and Marco Fedi are good examples of this. Both men live in Melbourne and hold dual Italian and Australian citizenship. In April 2006 they were elected to the Italian Parliament as representatives of all Italians living in Oceania and Africa. Both men will be serving a clear constituency (Italian nationals) in a foreign political system whilst legitimately living in Australia abiding by Australian laws. Their loyalties are clearly mixed without any detriment to

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ 'The Bali bombers' networks of terror', Asia-Pacific BBC News, 6 August 2003, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/2499193.stm>> [Accessed 19 October 2006].

⁷ Ibid.

either state. Their case is just one, albeit rather special, case illustrating the incidences of mixed loyalties that exist within Australia.⁸

It is not practical to require people with strong ties and loyalties outside of Australia to cut all ties in order to live in harmony within their state, nor is it realistic to perceive all our complex relationships as being possible threats. Indeed, with the changing nature of an individual's relationship to the state, as a customer relating to a service provider, there may be, in some instances, very little material to work with when attempting to convince a person to commit completely to the state.

A requirement to sever loyalties with the rest of the world would also stifle welcome emotional ties, such as a concern for humanity. It would also reduce benefits that can be gained from the global economy (which is still based on person relationships) and for many, whilst their work, relationships, heritage or religion has them looking outwards, they still consider Australia home and the only home that they know or would want to know. Individuals will still be linked emotionally to their places of residence.

Two events in the last year highlight these dynamics. Firstly, during the recent war in Lebanon, Australian-Israelis demonstrated in support of the Israeli operations and Australian-Lebanese against them. Both parties did so peacefully. At the same time, pressure was put on the Australian Government to help evacuate some several thousand Australians living in or visiting Lebanon. Such is the diversity of global relationships existing within Australia that a conflict on the other side of the planet can dramatically impact upon domestic politics and government action. The Israeli-Hezbollah War highlighted just how Australian citizens and residents still have very real associations with other parts of the world.

Secondly, on Cronulla Beach in the summer of 2005, groups of youths fought each other, and the police, in pitched battles. The youths were divided into self-described "Lebanese-Australians" and "Aussies". While the issue of who is more Australian and the deeper meanings of these labels is too large a topic to discuss at this point, the conflict highlighted both the sense of complex identity on the part of the Lebanese-Australian youths, and the intolerance or frustration at this complexity by their Anglo "Aussie" peers. Whilst, so far, the Cronulla riots are an aberration in Australian social dynamics, it demonstrates just how strongly some Australians hold to their complex and mixed senses of loyalty and identity. It also serves as a warning as to what can happen when any group (in this case Lebanese-Australians and white 'Aussies') feels disaffected.

⁸ 'Melbourne men win Italian Parliament seats,' ABC News, 12 April 2006, <www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200604/s1614542.htm> [Accessed 21 December 2006].

Australia is not alone with regard to the issue of complex and overlapping loyalties. The London Underground bombings shocked the world in two ways. Firstly, the calculated ferocity of the attack rekindled memories of 9/11. Secondly, once the identities of the terrorists were revealed, nobody who knew them, not even their families, could understand why they had done it. Mohammad Sidique Khan was in most ways a typical British kid growing up in Leeds. He loved his soccer and was an active member of his local society. His co-conspirators were similarly part of English society. At some point, Khan and his friends began to become increasingly radicalised. They were especially interested in video footage of Muslims suffering in Palestine or Chechnya. A not particularly religious person, these images appear to have had a profound affect on Khan. It is now known that Khan subsequently travelled to Pakistan (and possibly Afghanistan), where it is believed that he met members of Al Qaeda.⁹

For some reason, these British citizens decided that one of their overlapping loyalties, the one to a community of suffering Muslims (that they had come to identify with via the television) was more important than all their other identities and associations. For them, it meant resorting to commit terrible violence. The shock felt by their family and friends is also testament to just how most people in a globalised society have little difficulty handling their overlapping loyalties in a peaceful way. Those young men were an aberration.

Unfortunately though, individuals today have more power to influence the course of events than ever before through access to dangerous information on the internet. There is a great deal of extremist jihadist material on the internet, from video clips of Osama bin Laden to DIY bomb making instructions. In many respects, these men were freelancers, choosing to take up the cause and carrying it out in their own homeland rather than being tasked or even sent to a foreign target by a direct line of authority. It is at this point, after the London bombings, that the challenge for national security professions really becomes difficult.

When the US was attacked in 2001, its response was to invade Afghanistan, the home base of the Al Qaeda terrorist network and its leader Osama bin Laden. The US response was an approach that had all the hallmarks of statist thinking. It had to attack the geographical home of the problem. In the main, the US were aiming in the right direction but five years on, Al Qaeda is still a potent albeit crippled force. Whereas the power of states and sub-state groups (like the Taliban) is anchored to territory, non-state actors are mobile enough to create an asymmetrical, global battle space that works in their favour.

⁹ '7 July bomber's motives examined,' UK BBC News, 17 November 2005, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/444358.stm>> [Accessed 19 October 2006].

After the Bali bombings, there was nowhere to invade because any of the staging areas outside of Indonesia had only ever been temporary and after the attack, the planners and support team were able to disperse without the need to defend a fixed base of operations. The rounding up of the terrorist cell became a law enforcement matter, where the most potent weapon in the police arsenal was strong international cross-jurisdictional cooperation.

The London bombers left security professionals with no geographical homeland to invade (unless one considers it appropriate to invade Yorkshire). There was even less in the way of foreign command and control structures to track down. These men had largely acted out of an imagined sense of community with the jihadists. They were not foreigners and yet their reported reasons for committing their crimes were firmly anchored in the treatment of foreigners whom they felt a closeness to but had never met.

By analysing the three acts of terror together in these ways, one arrives at two conclusions. Firstly, there is no strong correlation between the attacks in respects to method, organisational support or even methodology. This indicates an unpredictable fluidity and diversity in terrorists globally. Secondly, the one clear feature common to them all is that they each exploited or were the product of the infrastructure of globalisation.

In some ways, transnational terrorism is an outcome of globalisation. But this does not mean that one must choose to either live with the threat of terrorism or abandon the globalisation project. What it does mean is that we need to incorporate new ways of thinking into security planning.

When guarding against terrorists in Australia, it is important to not assume that Australians are a homogenous group with simple allegiances. This is obviously not the case. People living in Australia (residents and citizens) have complex transnational networks of their own, each one subtly different. These personal networks could play an important role in national security both positively and negatively.

We need to recognise that as in other places around the world, if an attack does occur, the culprits may not have reached these shores until the very moment of the attack or that the perpetrators were Australians but motivated and supported from abroad. Therefore, the relationships that Australian security professionals maintain with other foreign agencies are vital. If we consider a fourth incident, the recent foiled plot to blow up US planes departing British airports, US national security was assured by foreigners, albeit an ally. Australia will benefit from strong multilevel security ties with as many nations as possible, not just our friends.

Peter Clarke has argued that along with enhancing police counter terrorism capabilities materially, it is vital to pre-empt attacks by working closely with local communities and by promoting international co-operation between law

enforcement authorities and developing transnational intelligence sharing arrangements.¹⁰ Ultimately, those analytical frameworks which presume that the greatest threats to national security will come from foreign sources are missing the finer points of global society. What is needed is an analytical framework which is able to cope with concepts such as overlapping loyalties and complex relationships on both state and individual levels. In doing so, the framework would be able to identify actual threats without misunderstanding the normal, everyday dynamics of people living within a globalised world.

In many cases, the traditional frameworks of Realism and Liberalism (and their respective revisions) work within a statist paradigm. The globalised world has shown that whilst the state is the most powerful player in the system for the time being, it has lost its mantle of absolute sovereignty over its territorial domains and over the allegiances of its citizens. What is needed is a new theory.

I propose that more work be done on applying Cosmopolitan theory to the national security debate. Cosmopolitanism describes the post-Westphalian world system of states with overlapping interests and shared sovereignty on some matters. It also describes the overlapping loyalties of individuals who are subject to various (sometimes competing) forces all of whom seek some form of allegiance. Cosmopolitan theory is able to describe much that is ignored by the other theories as being “low politics”, and to describe how it relates to the international system. It accepts the complexities of modern society and does not distinguish as concretely between domestic and foreign or state and non-state actors in the same way as traditional theories.

Cosmopolitanism is not the complete answer. The complete Cosmopolitan objective is about more than national security. As a program it seeks to fulfil Kant's objective of ‘perpetual peace’ by revolutionising the international system in a way that will eliminate state-based inequality. It is not my intention to argue for or against such a proposition. As an analytical framework, Cosmopolitanism is a useful tool to possess. That said, national security professionals can use the insights gained from Cosmopolitanism to develop effective security strategies to protect against future terrorist threats.

On the state level, governments can more fully engage in mutually beneficial partnerships between different governments, militaries and law enforcement bodies. Domestically, rather than trying to convince individuals that they must choose between Australia and a multitude of other actors, the Australian government can make engagement with the various communities that have a presence in Australia a central plank of the national security framework.

¹⁰ Walters, *op. cit.*

Australian society is already cosmopolitan. Along with many citizens of other Western countries, individuals in Australia are becoming more concerned for the security and well being of humanity in general. It stands to reason that by encouraging that altruism internationally, counter-terrorism experts may be able to take advantage of people in other states who are not prepared to sit back whilst innocent Australians are being killed by terrorist attacks. Engagement both domestically and internationally can increase our capability to recognise actual threats.

Our interstate relations and our international economic activity have come to be vital parts of Australian domestic life, and it is becoming clear that Australia cannot defend itself alone against such a resilient and mobile enemy as the transnational terrorist. Australia will only ever be safer if it acknowledges that other states and foreign individuals can play an active role in Australia's national security framework, just as Australia (and Australians) can reciprocally play an active role in the national security of other states. This style of security arrangement is another, but necessary, dissolution of state sovereignty and a move towards a truly global security arrangement.

If Australia exploits the benefits that come with being a cosmopolitan society, the interconnectedness that we have with the rest of the world, then we have a chance to defend ourselves against the transnational terrorist who is exploiting the infrastructure of globalisation. There are many more individuals in the world who want to live in peace than there are terrorists. We must find ways to harness the complex and multi-layered allegiances and relationships of the global citizenry to combat the violent and murderous few.

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