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Private security sector (PSS) role in Australia's counter-terrorism strategy

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of PSS in general and security guards in particular in the holistic approach of the Australian government to CT. This study analysed the government publications in regard to CT strategies and plans from 2010 to 2018 to demonstrate the lack of engagement between the public sector and PSS. As a result, the UK experience in the engagement between private security and public sector is innovative and will of benefit to Australia to learn from. In conclusion, the relationship between government security agencies and PSS is insufficient to tackle any terrorism or mass causality incidents.

Keywords: Private, security, Australia, counter-terrorism.

El papel del Sector de Seguridad Privada (PSS) en la estrategia antiterrorista de Australia

Resumen

Este estudio investiga el papel del PSS en general y los guardias de seguridad en particular en el enfoque holístico del gobierno australiano a la TC. Este estudio analizó las publicaciones del gobierno con respecto a las estrategias y planes de CT del 2010 al 2018 para demostrar la falta de compromiso entre el sector público y el PSS. Como resultado, la experiencia del Reino Unido en el compromiso entre la seguridad privada y el sector público es innovadora y beneficiará a Australia para aprender de ella. En conclusión, la relación entre las agencias de seguridad del gobierno y el PSS es insuficiente para abordar cualquier incidente de terrorismo o causalidad en masa.

Palabras clave: privado, seguridad, Australia, contraterrorismo.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, many countries have delegated many of its primary public services to the private sector due to increasing demand for these services which challenge the capacity of governments in delivering quality services. However, these countries have only retained the services that cannot be otherwise delivered except through governments agencies or these services could not be carried out properly without the government involvements. Security services are one of the most critical services that have been delegated to private contractors to deliver. It was developed in the last years to be one of the most important services not only for the security and safety of the public but also for its economic role in developing a country. In Australia, the security guard number has recently increased rapidly to mount twofold the number of enlisted personnel in the Police.

Although the 9/11 have made security services at the forefront against terrorism and crime, the growing importance of the private security services in all aspect of Australian life was not considered important when discussing the Counterterrorism strategies. According to Victoria's Department of Justice, Since September 11, they have played, a vital counter-terrorism role in protecting airports and other critical infrastructure. In fact, terrorism carries one of the most consistent threats that not only affects the government services but also business sectors and could have devastating consequences on the

wellbeing of Australia if it is not treated comprehensively. Unfortunately, although, the government publications on CT have stressed the importance of including all tiers of the private sector in the CT efforts, the many government publications on counterterrorism (CT) tend to neglect the role of security guards in CT.

This study examines, for the first time, the role of private security personnel in the contemporary provision of security and protection services in terms of counter-terrorism in Australia. It will unpack the consequences of lacking PSS inclusion in the government efforts to CT. Security guards' numbers in Australia are two times the police numbers, yet the government has excluded them from the CT efforts. This study will first outline the key literature that informs our understanding on the important role of private security sector inclusion in the CT strategy.

Here the study explores the services provided by security guards which has a direct relation to CT. Although security guards perceived by some police officers as unreliable, they are protecting the most vulnerable assets such as critical infrastructure, crowded places and big events (Bergin et al., 2018). The second part of this study scrutinizes the government documents in relation to CT and security industry such as the CT strategy 2015, CT plan, 2017 and white paper 2017. Finally, the study will draw on the UK experience to implement the PSS in its CT strategies to use it as a case study. The recommendation of this study suggests the government establish an entity or a position within the Home affairs with full authority to work

closely with the PSS in finding best possible methods for training and integration security guards in the government CT strategies and plans.

2. BACKGROUND

There is a dearth on the scholarly contribution made by practitioners and academics on the security private sector engagement in CT business (Howie, 2014). In 2013, Rosemont found out through reviewing on three prominent journals, Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression, Terrorism and Political Violence and Studies in Conflict and Terrorism a lack of scholarly articles in regards to the relation between counter-terrorism and private security sector. Much of the current written scholarly concerns the private security sector support to CT efforts through supporting military forces overseas such as in Iraq and Afghanistan. Bailes and Frommelt stated that in modern era defense sector faces a drop in demand as youth is no longer a desire to enlist in the army for many reasons. However, the private security sector is filling the void to function as uniform personnel without much responsibility (Bailes & Frommelt, 2004).

Indeed, not all PSS work as mercenary's fighter in overseas wars but there are many logistic operations such as supplies, laundry procurement, and training PSS can offer. The authors also highlighted the significant influence of the 9/11 on the Private business in general and PSS in particular. After the war on Iraq, the PSS was involved in securing the environment for the technical and building companies to

resume its function in the rehabilitation of the country. In terms of security guards' numbers, surprisingly they were slightly declined after 9/11 due to the high cost of insurance involved against terrorism which forced many companies to abandon the market (Bailes & Frommelt, 2004).

In Countering Violent Extremism efforts (CVE) the governments have to ally with the private sector and community alike in order to achieve their goals. Millar asserts that the social media and technology companies have contributed to counter the propaganda of terrorist group on the internet through removing the contents that incite hatred. This was part of productive cooperation between tech firms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google and national security advisers in the United States of America. Also, many private companies have lost billions of dollars in the new wave of terrorism in 2015 the economic cost of terrorism reach \$89 Billion and Some 10 percent of U.S. travelers canceled trips to Egypt in awake of the terrorist attack in 2017 (Millar, 2017).

Millar (2017) argues that tourist places around the world have been heavily affected by terrorism. As many countries economy relied on tourism as a huge income revenue, terrorists have exploited this vulnerability by investing attacks in these sectors, as well as attacking tourist places in some countries would have affected all tourists' destinations around the world. Tourists are very vulnerable and easy reach targets for terror groups and they could be a substantial

alternative, Australia, for example, lost 88 lives in Bali terrorists attack in 2002.

Other literature has discussed the role of PSS in protecting the critical infrastructure as hardening the security would be the first line in defeating and thwarting terrorist's attacks. Although defining which of the facility could be considered critical infrastructure still debatable, the UN estimated that 80% of critical infrastructure of western states are owned and operated by the private sector. The high number of infrastructure and the shortage in police or military units to protect these infrastructures have forced many governments to use private security contractors to carry out this duty. In addition, international research reveals that premises with security guards have a lower rate of crime than non-protected premises. The role of the PSS in counter-terrorism strategy around the world has gradually grown; the UK program for CT called CONTEST has acknowledged the importance of involving the PSS in CT.

The UK government has realized that without the integration of this sector in CT the strategy would suffer shortage. The importance of PSS has increased in line with the development of the CONEST versions, for example in 2006 the government dedicated one page to the PSS role in CT, however, in 2013, and multiple references have indicated the role needed by PSS involvement in CT efforts. In the USA after 9/11, Andrew stated that private security became as the preventive measures against terrorism which enable the police and other counterterrorism forces to focus on other areas of CT. In 2005,

New York's city council announced that private security officers displayed great courage and professionalism as they risked their lives to maintain order, evacuate thousands and help save lives (Howie, 2014).

It is worth notice that the PSS in the United States has many differences than the PSS in Australia in terms of the jurisdiction and scope. While in the USA the PSS has the authority to restrain people as well as they have access to information and technology, in Australia the security sector authority has the same of a citizen's right (Morris, 2006).

Australia's counter-terrorism governance was established after the attack on the two towers in the United State of America in 2001 and after the Bali bombing in 2002. Table 1 below shows the documentation included in this analysis consists of; counter-terrorism, plans, statements, policy strategies and white papers, issued between 2010 and 2018 by the Australian Federal, Victoria state governments and the NSW state governments. One of the most important tools to ensure that all the government tiers are working on the same page and coordinate their efforts in publishing government documents that enable all involved parties to understand their role in the crisis and for reassuring the public of the potent of their government.

In CT, the federal and local government are usually produced papers to regulate and coordinate the efforts of the government agencies in CT. The study has closely examined these publications

between 2010 and 2018 to investigate how the government has perceived PSS in its publication. The federal and local government have always stated that the CT efforts need to mobilize all the country's sectors and communities in order to succeed in eliminating or at least minimize the effects of any terrorist's incident (Asio, 2018). The security officers have presences in all Australia areas rural and urban. Through foot and mobile patrol, CCTV monitoring and alarm, they can respond to incidents in a matter of time, although, their current duty is just to report incidents. They are also in all Australia 174 airports while the police cannot be in all these critical places because of the restraint on a budget (Bergin et al., 2018).

In CT context the security guards can be of valuable supporters to intelligence and CT forces, they can observe identifying unusual behavior and report it. These are the most important tasks to intelligence in order to early intervene and discover blots. Government security agencies usually train its enlisted personnel in surveillance techniques on watching unusual behavior and spend time and money to qualify those persons to work in intelligence, whilst security guards can do these duties as part of their daily job. Namely, the lack of protective security in Egypt airport in 2015 was the reason for the Russian plane crash after one of ISIS operative plant a bomb in the cargo (Mendick et al., 2015).

3. THE UK: A CASE STUDY

Security sector role in CT has been underestimated not only in Australia but in many countries as well. In the United Kingdom, the private security sector has suffered neglecting not only from the

government but also from the researcher of CT. While substantial scholarly have been written on different terrorism fields of study such as psychology, criminology and social sciences, few studies have discussed the role of private security in CT efforts. However, here the majesty government has realized the importance of addressing this issue by including this sector in its comprehensive efforts to tackle terrorism. It has appointed a Director – Security Industry Engagement within the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (OSCT) at the UK Home Office. The justification for such a step is that the CT decision-makers have recognized the growing role of private security in the CT.

Rosemont illustrated how the role of PSS evolved in the UK counterterrorism strategy (CONTEST), in the early edition of CONTEST the government devoted only one page to PSS in its strategy. By contrast, the growing role of this sector forces the government in CONTEST to refer to this sector in multiple times and in a different type of business which was in related to PSS. These developments in the role of PSS in CONTEST depict the effectiveness of this sector. The government should deal with this as fact and it should be considered a core rather than a subsidiary aspect of CT strategy. This has led the UK government to appoint a director for a new position of cooperation and coordination between the government and the private security sector. A director with responsibility for engaging with the security industry.

It read in the white paper 2012 in the security sector, we are evaluating the potential benefits of appointing a Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) within Government to head up a security authority and the merits of developing a UK Security Brand. The aim of this position also is to capitalize on private security success in protecting and managing security events such as the Olympic Games and soccer league. It is not only this success in enhancing the UK as secure and strong but also enhancing the economy and prosperity that follow sports gathering. In addition, such events reinforce the partnership between PSS and law enforcement. For example, after the Olympic Games conducted in the UK in 2012, a Home Office hosted a conference in March 2013 security and policing exhibition one-panel session describe the partnership as:

The final session will look in more detail at how the Government's relationship with the security industry may develop, including using Games security success to promote the UK's world-leading CT, policing and security capabilities. This is a growing agenda within the Home Office, with clear support to work more closely with the security industry to boost UK security exports (Rosemont, 2014: 10).

The security and policing partnership is becoming an annual conference conducted in the UK each year in March. This marked a new era of advance mutual understanding between the public sector and private security sector in enhancing the country economy and promote the security industry which will rank the UK as leading in this industry (www.securityandplocing.co.uk). Although the UK appointed someone in 2013 to be Director – Security Industry Engagement which

was the most important function to this office is to support the government interaction with private security and enhance the export of this industry to benefit the UK economy, security guards are part of this industry. Even though the responsibility of this department does not mention specifically the security guards' role in CT, it will definitely be part of the police and security engagement.

In addition, the police in the UK is constantly working on raising the awareness of terrorism among the whole private sector and security officers in particular. The Attend a Counter-terrorism briefing (ATC) is an initiative awareness and invitation for all private business sector to protect buildings, business, and their surrendering neighborhoods from the threat of terrorism. As part of this constant awareness campaign, counterterrorism security advisers are regularly delivered briefings across the country about terrorism, they meet security officer, managers, private and public sector to share the latest advice regarding the development of terrorism. This briefing is available online as well in order to reach as many people as it can, the campaign has developed a dynamic website. Any company whether security or any other sector can register online and have its own password and account so it can pass it to the security officer to attend an online briefing which could be available 24/7.

4. RESULTS

The insurance of public safety and security are the ultimate goals of all governments and territories. For this noble cause, the federal and local government cannot remain in ignorance of the

capabilities and capacity of the PSS for a long time. The development in terrorism technique operation required an innovative solution not only on advanced technology but to mobiles all private sector in line with government and public sector to work in harmony to face the terrorist threat. First, the federal government should take a necessary step before laying a strategy for cooperation between the PSS and government bodies. It has to work towards minimize or eliminate the jurisdiction inconsistencies in security legislative between the states, the legislative in all the local governments and territory should be equal and the same in order to prevent people from avoiding hard training by getting their license from fewer requirements to state.

Despite the regulators of security licensing in all jurisdictions meet on a regular basis to discuss important issues concerning security sectors, the underlying problem such as the different legislative, training and licensing, and vetting remains unsolved. Second, police in all states are encouraged to include security sectors in planning big events in line with the other involved parties. The police usually reluctant to include PSS in planning because they perceived PSS as unprofessional, however, police have downplayed the capabilities and resources that PSS enjoyed. In the CT as well police have a concern of the sensitive information regarding CT but that can be overcome by appropriate vetting (Bergin et al., 2018). Third, in order to increase the productivity of security guards and to attract qualified persons, the government should work to improve the economic condition of this sector by imposing more laws to observe and ensure that the payment of security industry is at the national level of award rate.

That could be only achieved by a set of procedures and mechanism to observe the security contracts between security providers and business owners. In addition, training of security guards should be monitored by the same entities that issue the security license. Many security guards left the industry but still have renewed their license or work casually when it suits them, however, this could affect the permanent employment. This job should be permanent, not casual. Furthermore, the security companies which are abided by these rules should be awarded in the annual festival to encourage other companies to follow their steps. Fourth, in terms of security guards training, this important challenge should be addressed on the national level. The government should work to keep security training up to date and monitor that through its channels. Similar to the UK, Australia could make online training yearly or biannual to security guards to ensure they are informed and aware of their role in community safety.

Drawing on the case study from the UK, the study suggests this issue is moving to a national level instead of local governments as the same challenge for this industry remain unsolved for a long time despite many meetings at the middle level. The UK has succeeded in implementing new department attached to the home office. The main responsibility for this department is to coordinate and interact between the security industry and government sector. The fruit of this cooperation has been started immediately through conducting meetings and conferences and team up their efforts not only to benefit the CT sector but also the whole country's economy. Australia can do the same by appointing a coordination body to work as a point of contact and to

focus on the challenges that remain unsolved. In addition, the cooperation should include all PSS in CT efforts through including them in the strategy document and practical exercises. It will also work to promote this industry internationally.

While Australia has no presence on the international map of the security industry, the new position should work to ensure this presence which definitely would enhance the PSS productivity in Australia. The new department should have the responsibility to regulate PSS similar to the police or other security agency in terms of scope of work and authority. The purpose of this function and the jurisdiction should be outlined clearly after mindful discussion with the affected parties obviously, there will be many implications for implementing such department which will eventually replace the many licensing bodies in all jurisdictions. One of his responsibility is to attend CT meetings and work as representative to PSS in the coordination efforts to include PSS in the CT process (Kuznetsova, 2019).

5. CONCLUSION

This article has sought to investigate the underlying assumptions behind the government underestimated the role of PSS in protecting Australia against the threat of terrorism in line with other private sectors. PSS provides a diversity of security services to the public beyond the police capacity. In addition, in many parts of the world, this sector has protected lives and assets which could otherwise have

devastating consequences on the wellbeing of these countries. The relation between government security agencies and PSS is insufficient to tackle any terrorism or mass causality incidents. The government through its many publications and documents on CT has claimed that the role of protecting the country in the face of terrorism is a shared responsibility between the government and private sector. While this publication has mapped out the detailed role of the government agencies and some other sectors in CT, the PSS has been neglected.

These publications have been closely examined to illustrate if the government considered PSS as part of the country efforts to CT. Unfortunately, the outcomes were negative. The Government has only mentioned this sector in its last publications regarding protective security measures against the armed offender in crowded places. Although the study unpacks some of the reasons behind these underlying assumptions such as the lack of basic and ongoing training, low paid, and the legislative, all these reasons could be eliminated or minimized if the government willing to do so. The study then sought the to examine other countries experience in PSS inclusion in CT, the UK was one of the best countries which sought not only for engaging this sector in CT but also promote the PSS internationally through conferences and security Police cooperation which was benefited the country's economy as well.

This study recommends that in order to carry out the strategies of CT, PSS should be included but this will not be attained unless a new dedicated department implemented to boost the cooperation

between the private sector in general and PSS in particular with the government sector.

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