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Building Counter-Terrorism Capacity Across Borders: Lessons from the Defeat of “Revolutionary Organization November 17th”

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Abstract

Since 2001, governments have made more resources available for building counter-terrorist capacity abroad, but performance has not matched the rhetoric. Lessons from the defeat of the November 17th terrorist organization in Greece suggest that political or material commitments are necessary but insufficient conditions of international counter-terrorist capacity-building. More important, but less acknowledged, are the organizational conditions. Governments should encourage more cooperative, less self-reliant cultures in their agencies, develop multi-laterally beneficial objectives, and prohibit activities unauthorised by the host country. Some of the lessons, such as adherence to the same rules of law by all stakeholders, confirm norms in security sector reform. Others, such as increased security sector powers, run counter to those norms.

Introduction

Counter-terrorist capacity is an increasingly important part of the security sector. Governments have made more resources available for building counter-terrorist capacity abroad since the Jihadist attacks on the United States of 11 September 2001 (9/11), but performance has not matched the rhetoric. Why does international counter-terrorist capacity-building succeed or fail?

Few terrorist organizations are ever unambiguously defeated. The "Revolutionary Organisation November 17" (henceforth 17N) is one of the few. 17N was an urban left-wing and nationalist guerrilla group that dominated Greek terrorism for almost three decades, a period of activity that we date from 23 December 1975 to 29 June 2002. 17N claimed responsibility for over fifty attacks, was probably responsible for at least another fifty, and murdered at least twenty-three people. Greek counter-terrorist efforts were largely ineffective for most of that period, until the dedicated involvement of British and American agents. Until then, successive Greek governments failed to arrest, injure, kill, or lift any prosecutable evidence against a single member of the group. US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agents were involved early on, after the murder of an American official, but their involvement ended in recrimination.

The assassination of the British Defence Attaché in Athens in June 2000 precipitated major changes. That assassination led directly to the involvement of personnel from British police and intelligence agencies and from the United States (US) Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The CIA was left out of the investigation. In June 2002, the first member of 17N was arrested, followed by sixteen more arrests in a period of two months. By then, 17N was effectively defeated (although their legal fight continued until May 2007, when their convictions were upheld by an appeals court).

Although unrepresentative, successful cases deserve special attention because they can inform our understanding of best practice. Greek counter-terrorist capacities improved dramatically with foreign assistance, in combination with a more permissive and focused public and political environment. This paper reviews the literature and uses interviews with some of the participants to better explain the role of foreign assistance in building Greek capacity. The first section of this paper reviews theoretical explanations for successful international counter-terrorist capacity. The second section examines the case of 17N, its history, ideological elements, and operational tactics. We then evaluate Greek counter-terrorist responses during the 1980s and the 1990s. We will explain the reasons for the ineffectiveness of those approaches before contrasting the different approaches used from 2000 onwards. The third and final section will offer lessons for best practice in international counter-terrorist capacity building. Some of the lessons, such as adherence to the same rules of law by all stakeholders, confirm norms in security sector reform. Others, such as increased security sector powers, run counter to those norms.

International Counter-Terrorist Capacity

Terrorism is "the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of use of violence in the pursuit of political change" (Hoffman, 1998: 43). "Counter-terrorism" (CT) describes defensive and offensive measures against political violence. ("Anti-terrorism" is usually considered to mean defensive measures alone). Counter-terrorism is difficult. Terrorist groups tend to be very secretive formations, not just to protect themselves but also to preserve surprise. A government or a counter-terrorist agency cannot defend everything of value at all times (Gray, 2002: 11). This can leave governments looking more reactive than proactive.

Successful counter-terrorist campaigns are few and far between. International counter-terrorism (involving the public agencies of at least two states) is fraught with problems. Although "terrorism" is statistically less risky than road traffic accidents, it strikes at the ego of governments and their desire to maintain their monopoly of violence. To seek foreign assistance, or even advice, is humiliating and gives other states insight into its most sensitive operations.

European counter-terrorism efforts against the many left-wing terrorist groups of the Cold War period involved little international cooperation. Domestic terrorist activities were seen to necessitate a domestic response. Although some "Red" terrorists did cooperate with their international counter-parts, they tended to target home democratic governments or symbolic capitalist targets. Additionally, Cold-War tensions made the exchange of information and intelligence difficult. Germany, for instance, even in the 1970s when it experienced acute difficulties in coping with national and international terrorist groups operating on its soil (such as Red Army Faction [RAF] or the Palestinian Liberation Organization [PLO] respectively), never asked for foreign help. This was largely true for the British regarding the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), the French regarding Direct Action (AD), the Spanish regarding *Euskadi ta Askatasuna* (ETA; Basque Fatherland and Liberty), and Italy regarding the Red Brigades.

The need for successful international co-operation had been suggested at the time (for instance: Laqueur, 1977). The *Achille Lauro* incident of 1985 prompted fresh European governmental attention to international counter-terrorism. The seizure of the cruise liner *Achille Lauro* violated the sovereignty and laws of one European country (Italy) in particular, but prompted an unsolicited US military response, which nevertheless failed to prevent the transfer of the suspects to an uncooperative African state (Libya) (Heymann, 1998: chap. 2; Hoffman, 1998:144-5).

At this point, the Europeans better understood that deliberate international cooperation would be necessary to prevent such poorly coordinated national CT responses in the future. This became more obvious in 1987, when the French succeeded in arresting four AD members, whom France linked with RAF and ETA. PIRA's ceasefires of 1994 and 1997 benefited from increased cooperation between Britain,

Ireland, and the US and international mediation, as well as domestic economic growth, political accommodation, and operational innovations. By the mid-1990's, most of Europe's left-wing terrorist groups had ceased operations, constrained by improved counter-terrorism and the collapsing appeal of their ideology. By the end of that decade, ETA was the only significant nationalist-separatist terrorist group still operational and 17N was the only operational left-wing terrorist group.

Since then, however, the rise of trans-national religious terrorism and "new terrorists," who are more networked and who take advantage of new information technologies in order to control their operations across borders, have made international CT more urgent. However, despite declarations of an international "war on terror," international CT since 9/11 appears as much rhetorical as substantive. At the least, we can conclude that political partnerships are not the same as real coordination between the involved organizations (Newsome, 2006).

There is surprisingly little theory on international counter-terrorist performance. Historically, inter-organizational coordination, beyond the formalities or rhetoric of diplomatic coordination, is rarely achieved. Previous research on inter-organizational coordination during peace operations suggests that coordination is not automatic but must be managerially pursued, but the topic of coordination during CT has received little attention (for instance: Davidson et al, 1996; Schoenhaus, 2002).

Motivations or mutual benefit do not explain successful cooperation. International CT would offer immediate benefits to two states fighting a terrorist group operating in both countries by, for instance, preventing a terrorist from escaping justice simply by crossing a border. Organizations often intend to cooperate and value the likely benefits, but nevertheless fail to cooperate effectively. 17N operated entirely in Greece, although it often targeted foreign persons or assets. The motivation for CT agents to cooperate across borders was clear early in 17N's history. For instance, CIA agents intervened after 17N's first murder, perpetrated on 23 December 1975, because the victim, Richard Welch, was director of the CIA station in Greece. The motivation to intervene is not an explanation of performance.

Domestic political systems are often used to explain CT campaigns. Democracies are often assumed to suffer constraints not suffered by non-democracies. So far as the European democracies are concerned, their CT tradition is justifiably described as a balance between robust CT and the "protection and maintenance of liberal democracy and the rule of law" (Wilkinson, 1986: 125). Their CT agencies were generally seen operating within the law, without abusing their powers. Greece had just returned to democracy when 17N started its campaign and remained democratic during the subsequent life of 17N. However, democratic constraints seem a poor explanation for Greek CT performance. A better explanation might be militarization. Most other European governments gave the police the lead over the military in domestic security. The Greek military had enjoyed a dominant role in fighting terrorism since the end of the Second World War, when government forces were faced by a

Communist insurrection, and remained unusually well-represented under democracy.¹ In retrospect, at least, this unusual militarization of Greek CT capacity was problematic. Most foreign activities focused on building civilian capacity. Those civilian agencies were, by British and American standards, unusually tightly overseen by the new democratic Republic. Thus, many foreign activities, in combination with more permissive domestic public opinion, focused on increasing their powers, contrary to the norms of security sector reform.

Organizational structure is an important, but historically neglected, explanation for poor counter-terrorist performance. Organizational explanations have received more attention since US Congressional investigations into the 9/11 attacks blamed structural redundancy and lax coordination across the many US CT agencies. Redundant or competing agencies obstruct each other, perhaps unconsciously, at least in the former case. In any case, organizations face practical constraints on coordination, limits imposed by communications, for instance, although recent advances in information technology make such technological excuses harder to sustain. Human perceptual limitations, professional preoccupations, misplaced priorities, individual irresponsibility, and laziness are continuing constraints on coordination that can never be perfectly solved by technology. Both the Greek and the US CT agencies involved in the campaign against 17N suffered from competitiveness and cross-purposes, examined more fully in the next section.

Culture is another important explanation. CT agencies act within organizational norms and procedural priorities. For instance, CT agencies tend to be unusually self-reliant. Domestic security tends to be a defensive, reactive, domestic, and public enterprise. Government agencies may suffer from national biases too. Some public agencies may choose to operate abroad without the cooperation of their foreign equivalents, but, in doing so, they usually violate local and international laws and they certainly forego local resources. The US CIA approached 17N as a threat to US interests rather than a shared problem, mistakenly assumed that 17N was part of an international terrorist alliance, used very different investigative techniques to the FBI, failed to share information with the FBI or with its Greek counter-parts, and violated Greek laws. By contrast, in 2000 and thereafter, the FBI and the British agencies pursued mutual benefits, demonstrated professional respect, and acted within Greek laws, as described in more detail below.

The Case of 17N

17N was the most long-lived left-wing terrorist group in Europe. It continued operating without significantly altering its means or methods of attack, even when global patterns of terrorism were changing. It survived the largely domestic CT of the mid-Cold War period and the more international CT response of the 1980s and 1990s. Now, 17N has the distinction of being the first terrorist group to be eradicated in Europe since 9/11.

The end of the Greek Civil War (1946-1949) did not solve a long-running ideological confrontation between the political Right and Left. Rightist governments launched an anti-communist campaign. They outlawed the KKE (the communist party). The Greek police kept files on all citizens, using the files to decide on the issuance of civic-mindedness certificates, which were required in almost every aspect of everyday life. Indeed, until the establishment of the Third Hellenic Republic in 1974, all Greek citizens were categorised into *ethnikofrones* ("healthy" nationally-minded citizens) and *kommounistes* (communists and sympathisers). The military dictatorship (1967-1974) engaged in open political repression, of communists in particular. On 17 November 1973 a student uprising in the Athens Polytechnic was brutally suppressed by the Greek Army, with the deaths of at least twenty-four civilians. The event helped activate popular resistance that led to the fall of the junta in 1974.

The establishment of the Third Hellenic Republic in 1974 was seen by many communists as "a fresh start." KKE was recognised as a legitimate political party. In 1981, the electorate elected its first socialist government; the Socialist Party (PASOK) has dominated Greek politics since then. The Socialist government included many who had advocated "armed struggle" in the past, including Andreas Papandreou, leader of PAK (Panhellenic Liberation Movement) in 1973, later founder and president of PASOK, and Prime Minister from 1981 onwards (Papahelas and Telloglou, 2002: 45).

Others did not abandon armed struggle. 17N, named after the date of the student's uprising at the Athens Polytechnic, announced an "armed popular struggle" against capitalism and the US. (The group's anti-Americanism was not exceptional. On 21 April, 1975, demonstrators protested outside the US Embassy against US support for the military dictatorship, which had taken power eight years previously to the day. Some demonstrators temporarily occupied the first floor of the embassy.) 17N executed its first attack on 23 December 1975, when Richard Welch, the CIA's Station Chief in Athens, was assassinated.

During the first ten years of 17N's terrorist activity, the group carried out ten successful assassinations. Greek counter-terrorism floundered. In 1975, the Greek government contained no formal Greek counter-terrorist branch. The Greek parliament and public did not want an intelligence agency or a police service, which could spy on political opponents or the people, as had been the case under the military regime. Human rights and personal privacy were the new priorities. Parliament legislated restrictions on the Greek police and intelligence service in relation to data collection, surveillance, and other counter terrorist techniques, restrictions considered excessive elsewhere in Europe.

The police (ELAS) and the Secret Service (KYP, later renamed to EYP; in English, usually NIS or National Intelligence Service) were unsure to whom they should report the findings of CT investigations. Some left-wing politicians (at least off the record) suspected political bias. They warned against "an attempt by the conservative government to polarise the Greek political scene and to create a conflict". They argued that "anti-dictatorial fighters should be above all suspicion in relation to terrorist

activity" (Papahelas and Telloglou, 2002: 79). Additionally, Greek officials, surprised by the professionalism of the first assassination, tended to dismiss it as a case of international counter-espionage. 17N's subsequent targets were less easily dismissed. In 1976, 17N assassinated Evangelos Mallios, formerly a police Captain during the military regime. The assassination of Pantelis Petrou, another police officer, showed that 17N was settling old scores. About ten days after the Mallios assassination, the French daily newspaper *Liberation* published a message from 17N, which the Greek CT agencies failed to trace, even though the message had passed through the hands of a well-known French philosopher – Jean-Paul Sartre.ⁱⁱ More than twenty-five years later, foreign officials helped Greek agents to use the "Proclamations," which were frequently issued by 17N to justify their actions, as evidence, since some of the original documents were printed on a printing machine recovered from a 17N "safe house."

Prior to 1985, 17N carried out six attacks. Five of these were successful assassinations. The sixth operation was an attempted assassination of a US serviceman. These attacks resulted in the death of eight people (two of whom were American citizens). Seven of the victims were shot with the same .45 calibre weapon. By using the same "signature" weapon, especially in the early operational stages, 17N ensured that no other group could take credit for its operations, but should have helped investigators identify the perpetrators.

With the Nikos Momferatos assassination of 1985, 17N moved into a new operational phase. Whereas the first phase can be referred to as one of low activity, with only a limited number of operations, the second phase was characterised by an increase in the number, sophistication, and lethality of attacks. In the period from 1985 to 1990, 17N carried out 40 attacks, which resulted in the deaths of five people and injured 48 others. Statistically, this five-year period accounted for 87% of all the group's operations since 1975.

The ELAS response remained ineffective. From 1981 to 1986, KYP was given the lead on counter-terrorism, but neither agency succeeded in grooming a single informant, thereby failing to gain any intelligence of real value. As late as 1991, commentators despaired over the lack of information about 17N's membership, internal dynamics, or operational capabilities.ⁱⁱⁱ Inter-agency jealousies contributed. For instance, an EYP agent, Daniel Kristalis, was arrested by the police in 1985 and accused of placing a bomb in central Athens. When the police regained their primary responsibility for counter-terrorism, EYP set-up a shadow 17N in an attempt to muddy 17N's message. The project backfired when a newspaper refused to publish an obviously fake announcement of 17N's dissolution. Our interviews with Greek officials suggest that the "Kristalis Case" poisoned EYP's relations with ELAS for years.

Meanwhile, when ELAS finally secured an informant, they flunked a historic opportunity to arrest 17N members. In March 1992, ELAS received information that 17N was about to carry out an attack on *Louizis Riankour* street in central Athens. ELAS succeeded in putting 17N members under surveillance, only to lose them without securing a single

photograph. ELAS' own DAEEB (Directorate for Countering Special Violent Crimes) and EKAM (Special Containment Unit) failed to properly coordinate the operation.^{iv}

Overall, domestic CT responses from 1975 to 2000 were ineffective, even negligent. For instance, a veteran security officer remembered that "there was only a basic investigation going on for two or three weeks after a terrorist incident; from the communiqué that was published by the press it was verified that it was 17N and the case was in essence closed" (Papahelas and Telloglou, 2002: 128). The inability of counter-terrorism agencies to reach a breakthrough affected the way in which the public perceived 17N. For the best part of twenty years, the Greek people regarded the terrorist group as a mystical "phantom organisation," even though most Greeks opposed the group. Yet, in the space of about two years (2000-2002), Greek counter-terrorist capacities would be transformed and 17N would be absolutely defeated - a remarkable testament to the willingness of later Greek politicians, prosecutors, and police officers to learn from and work with their British and American counterparts.

US Involvement

The emergence of 17N was a shock for the CIA. The Welch assassination was the first assassination of a CIA agent by terrorists. For the Agency, the need to find the perpetrator was a matter of pride and duty. The CIA response was unusual in that it focused on potential international links. The CIA examined the role of KYP and a possible link with Greek Cypriots fighting for the unification of Cyprus and with several Middle Eastern terrorist groups. In doing so, CIA agents operating in Greece took information from indigenous informers. However, the information could not be filtered adequately, because the CIA's investigation was separate and unacknowledged to the formal Greek investigation. American agents who were trying to discover whoever delivered the communiqué to Sartre found out the answer by "buying" Sartre's personal archives and diaries and by obtaining information from a Greek employee of the newspaper *Liberation* (Papahelas and Telloglou, 2002: 92). The Americans did not wish to share their information with their Greek counterparts, mainly because this would expose the unauthorised ways by which the information was gathered. In effect, there were two parallel investigations going on after the death of Welch and those investigations were not sharing information.

The CIA's investigations into 17N's potential foreign links reflected organizational biases and were unrealistic. If 17N was linked with foreign terrorist groups, its targets would have reflected those links. However, 17N never attacked outside the greater Athens area. Nonetheless, the CIA tried to link the PLO and Abu Nidal Organisation with 17N. In addition, by linking a few PASOK members to Libyan training camps during the years of the military junta, the CIA tried to tie PASOK to 17N in an international anti-American socialist campaign (Papahelas and Telloglou, 2002: 155).

When an FBI squad arrived in Athens in order to help coordinate Greek and American efforts, local CIA agents betrayed prejudices against their FBI counterparts. An unnamed CIA agent has been quoted saying that "we knew how to buy info and people, [while] they [the FBI agents] were mere bureaucrats" (Papahelas and Telloglou, 2002: 89). Yet it was the CIA that lost out. When a Greek DAEEB officer was found providing top-secret reports to CIA agents for \$400 a month, the Agency was asked to leave the country altogether. The FBI remained and succeeded in establishing a reputation for more law-abiding intelligence gathering (Papahelas and Telloglou, 2002: 164).

Despite the FBI's efforts, intelligence gathering by foreign agencies in relation to 17N contributed little until 2000. The CIA's biases took their investigation in the wrong direction; its tense working relations with the FBI interfered with US inter-agency cooperation, while its insistence on self-reliance ultimately led to its exile from Greece

British Involvement

On 6 June 2000, 17N assassinated the British Defence Attaché in Athens, Stephen Saunders. This incident turned out to be the turning point for CT efforts against 17N. The Greek government was particularly worried about the country's reputation in the run up to the Athens Olympics. Greek citizens organized mass demonstrations against terrorism, such as public moments of silence and broadcasts. Heather Saunders, Stephen's widow made several televised appearances, during which she asked for the help of the public in fighting terrorism and tracking down her husband's killers. The media helped to mobilize the Greek public against 17N, as well as to put pressure on the public to reveal information.

Meanwhile, the Greek government worked on improving CT legislation. In April 2001 (prior to the spate of foreign anti-terror legislation that followed the 9/11 attacks), the Greek parliament passed a new Anti-Terrorism Bill. This Bill allowed for DNA testing, amnesty for members of terrorist groups, immunity from prosecution for CT personnel who had infiltrated terrorist groups - even if they had taken part in attacks, the creation of a special jury-free court to try terrorist cases, rewards for witnesses who turned in terrorists, and the creation of a witness protection program. Much of these new initiatives were the direct result of long and detailed discussions between senior officials from the British Embassy and Greek Government officials in the Ministry of Public Order and the Ministry of Justice. Some of these measures are opposed by normative security sector reform, which is normally concerned with increasing oversight and transparency, but Greek democratization had already placed unusual restrictions, by British or American standards, on the security sector.

Three British agencies (the Metropolitan Police, mainly its Anti Terrorist and Special Branches; and Secret Intelligence Service and the Security Service, MI5 and MI6 respectively) were invited to assist in the investigation of the Saunders murder. The Greeks regarded the British as

experienced (having driven the PIRA to its most consequential ceasefire in 1997), cooperative (having worked well with many foreign agencies already), and professional. Many Greeks compared Britain's less patronising and coercive attitude to previous CIA behaviour. For instance, one Greek Police Officer reported to us that the "Americans never trusted us as they wanted to be in control at all times. The British left the initiative with us. They listened, they learned the problems and the local habits and built everything from thereon".^v Another advantage for the Greek police and intelligence agency was the close cooperation already enjoyed between the Metropolitan Police and the FBI. Subsequent to the Jihadi terrorist attacks in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, a close cooperative alliance had been formed between British Anti Terrorist Branch officers and their FBI counterparts in both New York and Washington. These personal relationships provided the mutual trust and understanding that led to a collaborative effort with the Greek police and intelligence agency. In addition, the Metropolitan Police had an excellent professional relationship with MI5 and MI6, which ensured that police officers and personnel from the security and intelligence agencies working in Athens worked as a team and not as rivals.

The British police started their investigation on 17N from scratch, betraying few prejudices or prior assumptions. The British police worked with their colleagues from MI5 and MI6 as one team. They recall an open and frank exchange of information, theories, and evidential leads.

The British police team members from the Anti Terrorist Branch and Special Branch were supplemented by Greek-speaking British police officers and police staff, some very junior in service, as well as fingerprint and forensic officers and a variety of trainers. The intention was not only to assist with the investigation into the Saunder's murder, but also to increase the operational and effectiveness of the Greek Police, from the first investigative officers at the scene of the crime through to the forensic scientists at the police laboratory. The British Police found that their Greek counterparts were more "Crime Reporters", than "Crime Investigators." The Greek Police did not offer the experience or knowledge to conduct comparative crime scene analysis or detailed analysis of the evidence recovered from crime scenes. The British influence was immediate, helping to improve forensic techniques at the crime scene itself.^{vi} ELAS soon showed investigative capacities that had been absent in past investigations (Lambropoulos, 2002).

DAEEB and the FBI continued their established relationship. The FBI was responsible for data evaluation and for logistical support to the investigation. The FBI's main investigative contribution was used a profile of 17N's leader, derived from profiling techniques. The FBI was responsible also for gathering evidence for a possible prosecution of those terrorists who had fired a rocket at the US Embassy in Athens. All of the other offences were outside the statute of limitations.

In parallel to the evidential investigation by the police, British intelligence services began to look for potential members of 17N. The British intelligence agencies cooperated with EYP on intelligence gathering, focusing particularly on knowledge management. The British

intelligence agencies quickly discounted the CIA's assertion that that 17N and PASOK were linked.

Although the intelligence agencies contributed positively to the investigation, the MI5, MI6, and CIA are not law enforcement agencies. The key to the detection and successful prosecution of 17N was the increased efficiency of the Greek Police and the Prosecutor. Once an effective relationship had been developed between the British Police and their Greek counterparts, there was a dramatic change in the attitude and professionalism of the Greek Police. British Anti-Terrorist Branch trainers were keen to impart an approach to suspects, which was described as a "friendly, informal basis." This approach proved useful in gaining information without driving suspects further underground. An examination of the Greek Police files disclosed that there were evidential opportunities and links between different crimes that had been overlooked. The combined British-Greek investigative team collected DAEEB data into an electronic database. They chronologically categorised all data within the database in order to create a "terrorist tree," which tied persons to events and to each other. Once that process was completed, examination of newspapers, archives, and a few academic studies proved useful in gaining secondary but important clues on the roots of 17N.

The first 17N member detained by the police was Savvas Xiros, injured when his own bomb exploded prematurely at the end of June 2002. Significantly, following Saunders' murder, Greece had enjoyed its longest period to date between 17N attacks. The police acted very professionally to round up the whole gang. Once the name Giotopoulos or Giatropoulos emerged from the data more than once, ELAS quickly arrested Alexandros Giotopoulos, the leader of 17N, followed by further arrests in July and August of 2002, which effectively eradicated 17N.

In summary, the post-2000 investigation was successful because the domestic agencies benefited from new capabilities derived from new domestic legislation but also from foreign agents working without the prejudices, self-reliance, and uncooperativeness displayed by the CIA agents who had intervened years earlier.

Conclusion

Greece's failure to arrest a single member of a wholly domestic terrorist group over nearly three decades is a shocking indictment of Greek CT capacities during that period. Prior ideological confrontation and political and public discomfort with the security agencies left the new democratic government of 1976 with confused and uncooperative CT agencies. The government initially lacked a single CT agency and then, in the 1980s, rotated civilian CT responsibilities between the police and the secret service. The police and secret service often failed to coordinate with each other and sometimes disrupted each other's operations. Military personnel remained unusually integrated in the civilian agencies.

Like the Greek CT agencies, their US partners suffered from competitiveness and cross-purposes. The CIA approached 17N as a threat to US interests rather than a shared problem, mistakenly assumed that 17N was part of an international terrorist alliance, used very different investigative techniques to the FBI, failed to share information with the FBI or with its Greek counter-parts, and behaved in unauthorized ways. By contrast, the FBI and the British agencies earned better reputations for cooperating with foreign agencies, pursued mutual benefits, demonstrated professional respect, and acted within Greek laws and mutual agreements.

The post-2000 campaign against 17N benefited from domestic changes too. The Greek government publicized the terrible consequences of terrorist activity, succeeded in gaining public support for a fresh start against terrorism, invited foreign involvement, passed effective new CT legislation, and increased security sector powers, for instance, by instituting jury-free trials. Increased security sector powers run counter to norms in security sector reform. However, in combination with increased adherence to the same rules of law by all stakeholders, increased security sector powers were popularly accepted.

Foreign cooperation was a necessary condition of the defeat of 17N. The foreign agencies provided a fresh start, capacity building, and a model of effective coordination, which inspired better coordination between the Greek agencies. The foreign agencies introduced new investigative techniques, such as softly-softly interrogation techniques, data mining, and profiling projections. The FBI and British agencies earned a reputation for CT capacity and international cooperation, professional collegiality, pursuit of mutual benefits, and an explicit division of labour that matched skills to tasks.

Today, in response to 9/11, we are many years into an unprecedented international effort against terrorism. CT agencies are increasingly salient parts of the security sector. What can the new effort learn from the case of 17N?

Governments should encourage more cooperative, less self-reliant cultures in their CT agencies and train their CT personnel in deliberate inter-agency coordination techniques. Dedicated liaison officers help, but they are often reduced to symbolic roles in the absence of an organization-wide commitment to inter-organizational coordination. Agencies should invest in their reputations for cooperativeness, which help not just the current international operation but future operations too. Such reputations can be established by capacity building abroad even before any home citizen or entity has been attacked. Home agencies should be willing to act in mutual interest, going so far as to eradicate a common threat rather than simply investigate crimes against home nationals. Covert operations abroad in violation of the host country's laws destroy trust and can lead to the expulsion of covert operatives. Governments should pass legislation that helps agencies cooperate by, for instance, holding their agencies accountable for behaviour not authorised by the host government. While improving adherence to the rules of law, oversight, and accountability, security sector reform could justifiably

include well-chosen new security sector powers if they genuinely improve capacity without challenging democratic and liberal norms.

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ⁱ Until 1974, the army was heavily involved in the secret service or national intelligence service, at least indirectly. The secret service was overseen by the Ministry of Interior, but its head was always a top army officer who was "transferred" there. Even today, many military officers are transferred to secret service.

ⁱⁱ Although the editor of the paper never declared so, the communiqué had passed through Jean-Paul Sartre. See Papahelas and Telloglou, 2002: chap. 4.

ⁱⁱⁱ Such was the distrust about ELAS's ability to follow a competent counter-terrorism policy with pragmatic results, that many commentators of 17N sounded pessimistic about the prospects of the eradication of the group. For example, see Corsun, 1991.

^{iv} As admitted by the then Chief of ELAS, Stephanos Makris, during the trial of 17N members, in *The trial of the century - Weekly transcripts*, issue 18, 28 May 2007, p. 643. (In Greek)

^v Anonymous ELAS officer, interviewed on February 7, 2003.

^{vi} Both journalists and policemen were seen touching the car of the victim, thus spoiling important forensic data (especially fingerprints). The British insisted that the ELAS block the road at the place of the attack until forensics were completed. The British persuaded the ELAS to lay a special blanket on the road in order that any elements such as hair or munitions not be lost after the car was removed. The Greek Ministry of Public Order requested the presence of a British liaison in the collection and evaluation units, in order to prevent such mistakes from recurring. Later on the same day, when the motorcycle used by the terrorists had been found, a British officer saw a Greek policeman wiping it off. When asked what he was doing, the policeman replied that he was cleaning the motorcycle in order to take it to the police station in a clean state. In a private discussion with a Greek official, Alan Fry, the head of the British counter-terrorism branch, said of the people who shot Saunders: "these people are amateurs, they are no match for us" (Papahelas and Telloglou, 2002: 199).

