Committee/Council: Disarmament and International Security (GA 1)

Issue: Measures towards better intelligence coordination for the prevention of terrorist attacks within INTERPOL

Student Officer: Jason Singer

Position: Co-Chair

Introduction

These days, it has become almost commonplace to see terrorist attacks making the headlines of the news. The frequency of attacks in cities like London and Paris has increased dramatically over the past two years and the consequences of this phenomenon are felt by millions of people across the world. Besides the victims and their families, entire cities can be affected by attacks both through the minor inconvenience that increased security constitutes but primarily through the sentiment of a lack of security in their own town. It is such sentiments that multiple terrorist groups seek to generate in huge populations through the exploitation of individual rights and the use of scare tactics in the name of religious and/or ethnic extremism. Efforts to combat such groups of people have been undertaken largely on a national level and have thus-far proven to be inefficacious possibly due to their aims at protection than prevention. Because of the fact that many terrorist groups act in multiple countries, for prevention to ever realistically be successful, international cooperation is necessary as terrorist groups act in multiple countries. Among groups which tackle problems on an international level is INTERPOL is an international organization created to facilitate cooperation amongst national police forces, ultimately better combatting international crime. Unfortunately, often governments' secrets overlap with information crucial to the apprehension of terrorists or prediction of terrorist attacks. This, especially when paired with disparities in ideologies between countries, create a reluctance to transparency thus severely limiting the effectiveness of INTERPOL in preventing terrorist attacks.

There have been several terrorist attacks where authorities had been warned such as the Paris attacks of the 15th of November 2015. Attacks could be averted or at least be prepared for, thus mitigating their damage and possibly saving lives if national authorities use the information given effectively.[1] Naturally, such warnings are often red herrings or even diversions yet reactions to them can be better optimized. INTERPOL, a trusted international organization could set the guidelines

---

[1] Miller, Christopher. "The 'Massive Intelligence Failure' That Led to the Paris Attacks." Mashable, Mashable, 16 Nov. 2015, mashable.com/2015/11/16/western-intelligence-under-scrutiny-after-failure-to-stop-paris-attacks/.

for which warnings to be followed-up on by local police. It is such intelligence failures which need to be eliminated not in order to tackle the root cause, but to potentially save lives in the short-term.

Definition of Key-Terms

Intelligence Cycle

This term refers to the flow of information within a given organization and is particularly relevant to data oriented companies such as intelligence agencies (e.g. National Security Agency, INTERPOL). It consists of 6 ubiquitous components: requirements, collection, processing, analysis, consumption and feedback. Recommendation refers to identifying what information is important and hence to be collected by the organization. Collection refers to finding this information in the real world either through surveillance or by the personal input of non-affiliated persons. Processing refers to the filtering of the intelligence into what is worth moving into the analysis phase (unless an organization has many resources this is vital to the efficiency, and by extension, the efficaciousness of the organization). Analysis involves drawing conclusions from the troves of data collected and filtered which directly relate to the aims of the organization. Consumption involves the usage of these conclusions either to further theories about groups of people or acting on the analyzed information (e.g. evacuating a building after it has been determined that there is a bomb in it). Feedback constitutes a reflection on all the aforementioned processes and exists to ensure that they are optimized.

Intelligence Failure

If any part of the intelligence cycle described above malfunctions, it is considered an intelligence failure and can result in serious consequences such as the attack in Paris. Such failures manifest mainly in the processing phase where crucial information is often discarded.

Security Analyst

Security analysts are professionals tasked with the feedback phase of the intelligence cycle. They evaluate data management and are employed in all organizations involved in such matters including INTERPOL.

Intelligence Coordination

When intelligence is shared across organizations due to its being useful towards achieving different aims, there is said to be intelligence coordination. INTERPOL's database on wanted persons which is accessible to all its members is a good example of this as it is one of the key ways suspects are identified across borders.

Terrorist Attack

Terrorist attacks are illegal actions carried out to evoke fear in a population. Many have been carried out by radical religious groups but some are independent of religion, promoting political views or even as responses to other attacks as in London and in Barcelona this summer.

Background Information

November 13th 2015, Paris
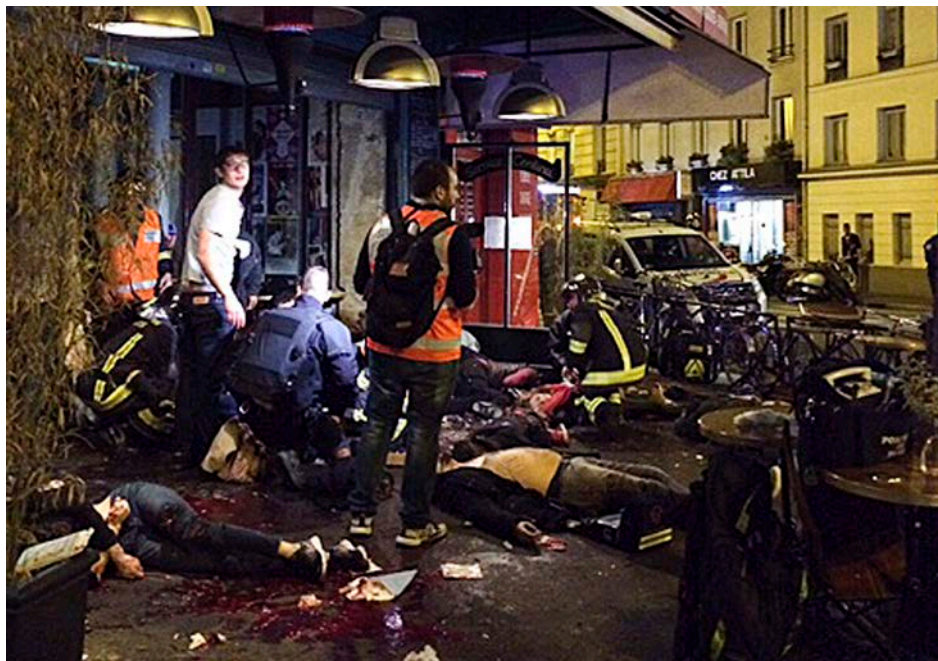
Figure I first responders on the scene November 13th 2015

The attack in Paris in November 2015 constitutes a prime example of intelligence failure and has been identified by multiple organizations including NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). There were multiple flaws in the way the intelligence cycle was carried out by the French authorities and the 192 deaths could have been avoided, or at least the loss could have been minimized.

The first flaw can be attributed to anchoring bias in the structure of the police. This is an example of a bias inherent to human behavior but one which needs to be reduced if effective threat management is to be achieved. The French police did not prioritize the dangers they were warned of because they were already dealing with other threats which turned out to be red herrings. Whilst the credibility of the warnings was assessed, the temporal sequence of them played a big role as resources had already been allocated to specific areas of the city. This narrowing of

the focus of the authorities is exactly the flaw exploited when diversions tactics are used as in the 2016 Istanbul terror attack with a suicide bomber.

Secondly, there was failure of surveillance. Three of the terrorists involved in the attack were on a list of 11,000 suspects on high alert of the French authorities and yet flew between Syria and France unnoticed and plotted the multifaceted attack that took place. They managed to collect all the necessary resources for an organized attack. The French and Belgian police organizations lost track of their top suspects and this could be attributed to incompetence or a lack of resources but it should also be considered that both Belgium and Paris are parts of the Schengen zone which means that travel across borders is not regulated.

Finally, and the reason most relevant to the topic, there was a failure of information sharing between France and Turkey. The two countries have cooperated in view of criminal convictions for decades, it is therefore hard to explain why France did not heed Turkey's warning concerning Omar Mestefai, one of the suicide bombers. Turkey identified this suspect and notified France of his presence twice and yet nothing was done.

INTERPOL

Founded in 1923 under a different name, this intergovernmental organization exists for intelligence cooperation among national police forces. Over the past years the organization has been using criminal databases accessible by all its members to coordinate intelligence on particular suspects and groups. INTERPOL has also a counter-terrorism program training individuals to be able to fight this particular type of crime more effectively and thus limiting the effect that a limited infrastructure and/or amount of resources in a particular country can have on the ability of its police force. This is in the best

Figure II INTERPOL logo

interest of all countries because oftentimes terrorist groups are created through the radicalization of citizens of less developed countries. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), one of the most powerful terrorist groups in the world which has organized attacks in countries including, inter alia: the United Kingdom (March 2017), France (April 2017), Australia (June 2017), is based in a war-torn nation, Syria, which has few resources to effectively combat it. In fact, the conflict between the Syrian State and ISIL is one of the biggest conflicts at the moment and demonstrates how powerful a force is required to suppress big organizations.

Following the Manchester attack in May 2017, INTERPOL assisted the UK police coordinating their response to the attack. After declaring it a crisis situation, a notification was sent to all INTERPOL members to apprise the National Central Bureau through secured channels of any information concerning suspects. The role of INTERPOL in this case was to 'streamline' the process of intelligence cooperation so that local police could focus on their own investigation rather than their resources be stretched by trying to coordinate information sharing across 190 countries.

Disparities of National Interest

Due to the organization having members representing almost every country in the world it is often the case (although rarely explicitly stated) that countries are reluctant to share information even when the means to do so are available. This is a natural result of a lack of confidence within the international community and only slow, long-term growth of trust could eliminate the problem. For example, especially after Donald Trump's reversal of measures taken by the Obama administration concerning Cuba in June 2017, Cuba (member since 1952) and the USA (member since 1923) are not willing to be entirely transparent and this hinders the effectiveness of INTERPOL as a whole.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

International Police (INTERPOL)

Intergovernmental organization connect the national police forces of over 190 countries. It recommends actions and convenes for the debate of ideas towards achieving its aims of "preventing and fighting crime through enhanced cooperation and innovation on police and security matters"[2]. It has a specific program for counter-terrorism.

Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF)

Created by the United Nations Secretary General in 2005 and supported by the General Assembly, the CTITF consists of 38 independent international entities such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank which contribute to the strength and coherence of United Nations efforts to counter terrorism.

Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC)

Founded by the UNSC as a body specifically tasked with terrorism which creates regulation to, inter alia, criminalize the financing of terrorism suppress support for terrorists, and promote the sharing of information to governments whose countries are under terrorist threats. This is done through reports that each Member State has to publish (a list of them can be found here). Notable ones are

---

[2] "Overview." Overview / About INTERPOL / Internet / Home - INTERPOL, www.interpol.int/About-INTERPOL/Overview.

those of France which stress the importance of cutting the financing of terrorist organizations.

Countries

        There are no specific countries which this issue refers to, as terrorism's consequences are felt by the entire international community. That being said, there are some countries which collect more intelligence on individuals such as the United States of America (USA), China and the Russian Federation. As leaked by Edward Snowden, the United States' National Security Agency collects troves of data about individuals all around the world. In China and in the Russian Federation, the importance placed on the online behavior of citizens requires closely monitored activity and this too could be useful if analyzed correctly.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1914	First International Criminal Police Congress (the first ever effort for international cooperation on law enforcement)
1959	Interpol is officially created
1971	The United Nations recognizes INTERPOL as an international organization
1990	Digital Databases and communication is implemented at INTERPOL
11th September 2001	9/11 Al Qaeda attacks
28th September 2001	CTC was established
2005	Joint Special Notices issued by INTERPOL and the UN concerning Al Qaeda
2005	CTITF proposed by Secretary General Kofi Annan

November 2015	Terrorist attacks in Paris kill 192 people (intelligence failure)

Relevant UN Treaties, Resolutions and Events

SC/Res/1373/28 September 2001

Drafted after the 911 attacks this resolution attempts to highlight the main areas of the fight against terrorism which need to be strengthened including international cooperation, funding of groups and its relationship with international crime.

SC/Res/11580/24 September 2014

This resolution attempts to tackle the issue of lack of border control allowing the movement of terrorists. It refers to the territories of each country as well as international borders.

GA/Res/71/291 June 2017

Welcomes the incentives of the Secretary General, a figure of crucial influence in the matter after the establishment of the CTC, about moving UN terrorism-concerned agencies to the Office of Counter-Terrorism.

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

In the UN

The committees and organizations mentioned above such as the CTITF and the CTC, although not specifically created for the intelligence coordination for the prevention of terrorist attacks within INTERPOL, have greatly aided in this goal. One of the 6 main aims of the CTC involves sharing information between governments and even though some measures were taken towards this goal, they have, as shown by Paris 2015 and the fact that terrorism continues to be rampant, not been enough.

Within INTERPOL

INTERPOL has created safe communication channels both between countries and for individuals to warn authorities about potential attacks with 24-hour response. INTERPOL has shared databases with details on specific suspects accessible by everyone. It has a group of security analysts who look at specific terrorist attacks and attempt to identify flaws in the intelligence cycle of both the country in which the event took place and the international community which could have led to the inability to respond. This group of analysts constantly improves the aforementioned infrastructure to fit changes in the methods used by terrorists. INTERPOL has its own response teams and forensic scientists who (as in the case of

the Manchester attack) help local authorities to better deal with the aftermath of a terrorist attack and ensure that no local police force's resources are strained enough to be ineffective. INTEPROL even has multi-year programs such as that for counter-terrorism training in Southeast Asia (2014-2017). Through such programs, countries are given guidelines tailored to their regions for the combatting of terrorism by experts in the field.

Whilst the infrastructure already in place could be adequate for facing terrorist threats, it requires the cooperation of all countries. Efforts to promote trust and transparency in such issues are of vital importance yet rare at the moment and, as such, the infrastructure detailed above is not optimally utilized.

Possible Solutions

As you may have ascertained from the description of the issue, intelligence cooperation regarding terrorism has manifold complications and the solution is not necessarily for countries to keep closer tabs on their citizens. Even though surveillance can and should be debated in this context, the information often exists but is lost due to flaws in the intelligence cycle. Delegates should consider how GA1 can influence both INTERPOL as well as specific countries to be more transparent.

This may involve the exclusion of specific countries from the intelligence shared as this would encourage more transparency among the others. This, however, has the obvious drawback of potentially aggravating said countries as well as missing out on information crucial to the savior of lives. This would also constitute an international stance against specific countries and thus would have to be extremely specific and in clear good faith.

Additionally, guidelines as to the prioritization of intelligence by INTERPOL members should be specified possibly with a distinction made for that which is communicated by other countries as it would have already been processed and analyzed. Further support organizations for immediate responses to terrorist activity could be created or dedicated parts of government tasked with the analysis of terrorist threats, messages and more broadly: intelligence. Border control, especially in areas of free borders, such as the Schengen zone which has been exploited time and time again by terrorists, could be reconsidered. Of course, this would also affect law-abiding, well-intentioned citizens and should be treated with caution. Finally, the expertise of counter-terrorist personnel employed in national police forces could be audited by INTERPOL ensuring that the technologies available are used to the best of their abilities (and by extension in the best interest of the global population). If delegates deem this too intrusive, reports to INTERPOL could be considered as well but their validity can be questioned.

Bibliography

"Overview." Overview / INTERPOL Expertise / Internet / Home - INTERPOL. INTERPOL, 2017. Web. 06 July 2017.

"History." History / About INTERPOL / Internet / Home - INTERPOL. INTERPOL, 2017. Web. 06 July 2017.

"Failure in the Intelligence Cycle." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, 14 June 2017. Web. 06 July 2017.

"About the Task Force | Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force." United Nations. United Nations, n.d. Web. 06 July 2017.

"About the Counter-Terrorism Committee" United Nations. United Nations, n.d. Web. 06 July 2017.

"COUNTER TERRORISM." United Nations. United Nations, n.d. Web. 06 July 2017.

Review, NATO. "The Paris Attacks. A Case of Intelligence Failure?" NATO Review. N.p., n.d. Web. 06 July 2017.

"II.F.33 United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 (On Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts) (28 September 2001)." International Law & World Order (n.d.): 1-3. Web.

"Statement Attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office for Counter-Terrorism Secretary-General." United Nations. United Nations, n.d. Web. 06 July 2017.

"List of Terrorist Incidents Linked to ISIL." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, 02 July 2017. Web. 06 July 2017.

Figure I

Figure II