

ILLEGAL MIGRATION AND “LONE WOLF FIGHTERS” IN EUROPE

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In the first decade of the 21st century, terrorism remains a major issue for national and global security. The events of September 11, 2001 in the United States, of March 11, 2014 in Madrid, of July 7, 2005 in London, and of July 18, 2012 in Burgas provide an indication - if not proof - of the inefficiency of those responsible for the distribution and analysis of information to be utilized in the fight against international terrorism.

Intelligence-sharing cooperation continues to be problematic when it comes to information analysis due to the existence of a Net Centric world that facilitates terrorist groups with ethnocentric perceptions [1].

European leaders find difficult to comprehend the consequences of uncontrolled migration and cannot solve the security crisis that has erupted in southern Europe (mainly Greece, Italy and Spain), and thus ask the United States to facilitate intelligence-sharing in order to deal with illegal immigrants attracted by Greek islands with increasing pace on a daily basis.

The terrorist attack in a Thalys train by a 26-year old Moroccan from Amsterdam to Paris has alarmed intelligence agencies of European countries due to the weakness of authorities to monitor prospective European Jihadists and create psychological profiles assessing their activities and character [2].

Based on Open Source Intelligence (OSINT), it is estimated that over 800 ISIS fighters who are trained for terrorist acts, are located in countries of the

European Union as they have returned from Syria and Iraq. It is assessed that many among refugees and illegal immigrants, who enter uncontrollably into Greek soil, which is European territory, are ISIS fighters [3].

The need for exchange of information (intelligence sharing) among the intelligence and security agencies of the European Union and North Africa countries, the US and NATO is imperative to prevent future terrorist acts conducted mainly by the so-called “lone wolves” lurking on European soil [4].

The value of intelligence sharing can be evidenced in the successful cooperation of the Spanish and Moroccan intelligence agencies which resulted in the arrest of 14 people in Spanish capital of Madrid and the Moroccan cities of Casablanca, Nador, Al Hoceima, Drew and Fez. All arrested belonged to a network that recruited and sent foreign fighters to join the ranks of ISIS.

At this point, Greece needs to prioritize and proceed with the evaluation of capable executives in the intelligence and security agencies who will exchange information and swiftly coordinate so that they undertake operational activities with the least bureaucratic rigidities in order to address the problem of foreign fighters who either reside or cross Greek territory.

In Greece particularly, the operational revival of the Center for the Collection and Analysis of Operational Information (KESYDEP) would be vital for the Greek Security Authorities [5]. The Center would be responsible for the collection, processing and distribution of information material per segment of security [6], and in cooperation with the Counter Terrorism Service, the State Security, the National Intelligence Service (EYP) and the Intelligence Directorate of the Coast Guard would contribute significantly to the effective intelligence sharing and information management among all security agencies which is necessary for the prevention of terrorist attacks within Greek territory.

NOTES:

[1] John M Nomikos (2013), “Combating Illegal Immigration, Terrorism and Organized Crime in Greece and Italy”, International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence, 26:2, pages: 288-303, (USA).

[2] Matthew Holehouse (Brussels) and David Blair, (2015), “French train attack: Gunman known to “three European intelligence services”, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11818048/French-trainattack-Gunman-known-to-three-European-intelligence-services.html>

- [3] Tim Lister and Ioannis Mantzikos (2015), "Add this to Greece's list of Problems: It is an emerging hub for Terrorists", CNN, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/25/europe/greece-terrorism-hub/index.html>
- [4] "Arrests in a Counter-terrorism Operation in Conjunction with Spain and Morocco" (In Greek, 2015). <http://www.protothema.gr/world/article/503075/14-sullipseis-se-aditromokratikiepiheirisi-me-sunergasia-ispantias-marokou/>
- [5] Ioannis M. Nomikos (In Greek, 2010), "DHS and Prosecution of Criminal Offenses: Center for the Collection and Analysis of Operational Information (KESYDEP)", <http://www.rieas.gr/research-areas/greek-studies-gr/1362>
- [6] Marinos Stagakis (In Greek, 2012), " National Information Management System and Security Environment in Greece", <http://www.rieas.gr/research-areas/greekstudies-gr/1718-2012-03-04-10-07-40.html> Also Marinos Stagakis (2012), "Does Greece Need a Reforming Operational Information-Analysis System?" <http://www.rieas.gr/research-areas/editorial/1726-does-greece-need-a-reforming-operational-information-analysis-system>