Homeland Security comes to Europe

The legacy of the "war on terror" is a new way of thinking about security and a cash cow for the defence industry

by Ben Hayes

Introduction

As governments in the countries that were the main protagonists of the 'war on terror' seek to distance themselves from both the concept and the crimes committed in its name,[1] it is worth reflecting on the legacy of an era that has seen democratic states across the world accrue powers over their citizens that were unthinkable in the 1990s. Mandatory fingerprinting and comprehensive telecommunications surveillance; 'security detention' (without charge or trial), 'control orders' (akin to house arrest), and repressive border controls are among a host of new police and security agencies and powers have all been introduced in the name of 'counter-terrorism'. The states that have introduced these regimes clearly believe they are here to stay. While a plethora of new laws and policies have rightly preoccupied civil liberties organisations and the liberal press, profound structural changes in the way governments and state agencies approach 'security' have also been taking place.

What is both immediately striking and intimately linked to a desire to surpass the gung ho rhetoric of 'war on terror' is the way in which a mere mention of the word 'security' now serves to justify a range of policies and practices that once required more detailed articulation, from the vetting of visiting staff and students by universities to the suppression of protests against bodies like the G8/G20 (to provide recent examples from the UK). Even in Scandinavian countries, where security traditionally meant little more than the protective cushion provided by the state, it is rapidly becoming a byword for the state to deal coercively with all risks, real and imagined.

In the USA they call it 'Homeland Security', in Europe, plain old 'security'. This shift is more than rhetorical, and the parallels with Europe's security partners do not stop there. Created in Israel, re-branded and mainstreamed in the USA, the revolution that lurks behind the 'Homeland Security' paradigm can be likened to the so-called 'revolution in military affairs'. In the years that followed the Second World War, the defence apparatus of powerful countries changed beyond recognition. While those states still possess armies, navies and air forces, they no longer simply provide battalions, armadas or squadrons in the defence (or attack)

of land, sea or airspace. Rather, these forces are part of an integrated and super-high tech war machine capable – as the USA's invasion of Iraq demonstrated – of "full spectrum dominance" over "all elements of the 'battlespace" (to use more US terminology). No longer dependent upon conscription or the massive state enterprises that once armed them, these multinational war machines are fuelled by a private sector that provides everything from smart bombs and assault rifles, to peacekeeping and reconstruction services (what Naomi Klein has called the 'disaster-industrial complex').[2]

In the name of 'security', western governments are now going to great lengths to integrate their police forces, customs and immigration services into seamless national and international intelligence and law enforcement systems. Passport checks and immigration controls are being replaced by security fences and sprawling e-borders linked to dedicated border police forces; private security, high-tech surveillance and police intelligence is coalescing around the policing of mega-events (summits, protests, the Olympic games etc.) and 'critical infrastructure protection' (airports, financial centres, power stations etc.); 'policing' is becoming ever more 'proactive', based not on responding to crime and disorder, but identifying and neutralising security risks; a plethora of public and private bodies are being incorporated into the drive for more 'security'.

In the USA they call it "Securing the Homeland", in the EU, with its preference for interminably technocratic terminology, they call it "interoperability". Once again, the private sector is at the heart of this transformation: for 'military-industrial complex', read 'security-industrial complex'. Or as former EU Commissioner Franco Frattini put it:

> *security is no longer a monopoly that belongs to public administrations, but a common good, for which responsibility and implementation should be shared by public and private bodies.[3]*

Keeping up with Uncle Sam

The emergence of Homeland Security in the USA appears a relatively straightforward process. In the aftermath of 9/11, the Bush administration instituted a radical overhaul of the federal state apparatus, creating an overarching Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and new bodies like Customs and Border Protection ("secures the Homeland by preventing the illegal entry of people and goods while facilitating legitimate travel and trade"). The Bush administration also quickly installed what critics termed a "revolving door" between policy makers and what was then a nascent Homeland Security industry comprised largely of companies that also relied on Pentagon military contracts.[4] Following in the footsteps of Tom Ridge (the first US Secretary of State for Homeland Security) and *Ridge Global*, Michael Chertoff (the second US Secretary of State for Homeland Security) and the *Chertoff Group* are now seeking the piece of a global pie that is already said to be worth more than Hollywood and the music business combined.[5]

The potential dominance of US multinationals in this extremely lucrative, some say recession-proof marketplace,[6] is one of the principle reasons for Europe's silent

embrace of the Homeland Security industry. In 2003, the European Commission convened a "Group of Personalities" (GoP) in "security research". The GoP included the European Commissioners for Research and Information Society, plus, as 'observers', the Commissioners for External Relations and Trade, the High Representative for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy, as well as representatives of NATO, the Western European Armaments Association and the EU Military Committee. Also represented were eight multinational corporations – Europe's four largest arms companies (*EADS*, *BAE Systems*, *Thales* and *Finmeccanica*), and some of Europe's largest IT companies (*Ericsson*, *Indra*, *Siemens* and *Diehl*) – along with seven research institutions, including the sometimes controversial Rand Corporation.[7]

The Group of Personalities noted that the annual DHS budget included "a significant percentage devoted to equipment, and around $1 billion dedicated to research". The scale of US investment, suggested the GoP, meant that the US was "taking a lead" in the development of security "technologies and equipment which… could meet a number of Europe's needs". This was seen to be most problematic because the US technology would "progressively impose normative and operational standards worldwide", putting US corporations in "a very strong competitive position". In its final report, the GoP proposed that European security research should be funded at a level similar to that of the USA, and called for a minimum of €1 billion per year in EU funds to "bridge the gap between civil and traditional defence research, foster the transformation of technologies across the civil, security and defence fields and improve the EU's industrial competitiveness". And so was born the European Security Research Programme (ESRP).

The ESRP would not be launched until the end of 2007, as part of the EU's Seventh Framework research programme (FP7), which runs until the end of 2013. It was preceded by the €65 million "Preparatory Action for Security Research" (PASR), which ran from 2004-2006 and relied heavily on the involvement of the defence industry. Of 39 security research projects funded over the three years, 23 (60%) were led by companies that primarily service the defence sector. One third of the PASR projects (13) were led by *Thales* (France), *EADS* (Netherlands), *Finmeccanica* companies (Italy), *SAGEM Défense Sécurité* (part of the SAFRAN Group, France) and the *AeroSpace and Defence Industries Association of Europe* (ASD, Europe's largest defence industry lobby group). Together with *BAE Systems* (UK), these companies participated in 26 (67% or two-thirds) of the 39 projects funded over the three year preparatory action.

The European Security Research Programme

The FP7 programme (2007-13) has allocated €200 million per year for security research, with the same again allotted to space technology. Of 46 security research contracts awarded in the first year of FP7, 17 (or 37%) are led by defence sector contractors. The EU has also established additional budget lines for critical infrastructure protection, so-called 'migration management', IT security and counter-terrorism research. 'Security research' also crops up in other thematic areas of the FP7 programme – food, energy, transport, information and communications technology, nanotechnology and the environment, for example,

inevitably includes food security, energy security, transport security and so on. When national security research budgets are taken into account (at least seven member states have so far established dedicated programmes), the EU's investment in homeland security R&D is likely to be much closer to the Group of Personalities' demand for €1 billion annually than those outside the GoP had foreseen.

At the heart of the ESRP is a structural conflict of interests arising from the failure to separate the development and implementation of the programme. By creating various "stakeholder platforms" bringing together government officials, security 'experts' and companies selling homeland security products to advise on the development of the ESRP, the EU has effectively outsourced the design of the security research agenda: inviting corporations and other private interests to shape the objectives and annual priorities and then apply for the money on offer.[8] The very same corporations have then been funded to elaborate high-tech, homeland security strategies for the EU.[9]

The ESRP has five core "mission areas": (i) border security, (ii) protection against terrorism and organised crime, (iii) critical infrastructure protection, (iv) restoring security in case of crisis and (v) integration, connectivity and interoperability. For each of these apparently distinct topics, the R&D agenda is strikingly similar: introduce surveillance capacities using every viable surveillance technology on the market; institute identity checks and authentication protocols based on biometric ID systems; deploy a range of detection technologies and techniques at all ID control points; use high-tech communications systems to ensure that law enforcement agents have total information awareness; use profiling, data mining and behavioural analysis to identify suspicious people; use risk assessment and modelling to predict (and mitigate) human behaviour; ensure rapid 'incident response'; then intervene to neutralise the threat, automatically where possible. Finally, ensure all systems are fully interoperable so that technological applications being used for one mission can easily be used for all the others.

Full Spectrum Dominance

Some examples speak volumes. The €20 million TALOS project will develop and field test "a mobile, modular, scalable, autonomous and adaptive system for protecting European borders" using both aerial and ground unmanned vehicles, supervised by a command and control centre". According to the TALOS project brief, specially adapted combat robots "will undertake the proper measures to stop the illegal action almost autonomously with supervision of border guard officers".[10] Participants include the defence giant *Israel Aerospace Industries*, whose "operational solutions ensure that you detect, locate and target terrorists, smugglers, illegal immigrants and other threats to public welfare, swiftly and accurately, 24 hours a day".[11]

A further €30 million has spent on R&D projects into high-tech border surveillance, including STABORSEC (Standards for Border Security Enhancement), which recommended no less than 20 detection, surveillance and biometric technologies for standardisation at the EU level; the OPERAMAR project on the "interoperability

of European and national maritime surveillance assets"; the WIMA2 project on "Wide Maritime Area Airborne Surveillance"; and EFFISEC, on "Efficient Integrated Security Checkpoints for land, border and port security". Among the key beneficiaries are *Sagem Défénsé Sécurité*, *Thales* and *Selex* (a *Finmeccanica* company). In effect, the EU is outsourcing the development of the planned integrated EU border surveillance system ('EUROSUR').[12]

EU legislation mandating the collection, storage and inclusion of biometric data in travel documents is also supported by a number of security 'research' projects. Having taken the decision to introduce compulsory fingerprinting in EU passports and visas, the development of the framework for the implementation of biometric identification systems is effectively being outsourced to the companies and lobby groups promoting the technological infrastructure. Among the main beneficiaries of numerous EU R&D projects on the implementation of biometric identification systems is the *European Biometrics Forum*, an umbrella group of suppliers "whose overall vision is to establish the European Union as the World Leader in Biometrics Excellence by addressing barriers to adoption and fragmentation in the marketplace".[13]

Prominent multinational corporations have also played a central role in the development of Galileo (the EU's GPS and satellite tracking system) and Kopernicus (the EU's earth observation system). Galileo was once lauded as the world's first would-be civilian GPS system, but military objectives are now central to its development and deployment. Kopernicus began life as the EU's GMES (global monitoring environmental security) system but its scope has also recently been extended to cover law enforcement and military applications. Among the principle recipients of the contracts under the EU's space programme are the two largest European space-industrial actors: *EADS* and *Thales Alenia Space*.

The EU has also funded what amounts to a covert programme favouring the introduction of UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles or 'drones') for military, law enforcement and civilian purposes. More than a dozen research projects and studies championing the development and implementation of UAV systems have been commissioned by the EU, despite the current ban on using them in European airspace and in the absence of any public debate whatsoever about the legitimacy or desirability of subsidising their introduction. Among the primary contractors are world-leading suppliers of combat UAVs like *Israel Aircraft Industries, Dassault Aviation*, *Thales*, *EADS* and *Boeing*.

Of course, not all the projects funded under the ESRP are of such a coercive or possibly controversial nature, but even in areas like crisis management and emergency response, European defence and IT contractors can often be found playing a leading role. The radical reorganisation of security forces that has happened in the USA is also slowly taking place in the EU. There are now strong similarities between the national security strategies of the USA, UK, Germany and France, and the international security strategy of the EU. All envisage 'interoperability' and a new 'public-private partnership' in security, all adopt the wide definitions of security and ranges of 'threats'.

Turning the guns on ourselves?

Fuelled by a new politics of fear and insecurity, the corporate interest in selling security technology and the national security interest in buying security technology has converged at the EU level. In the absence of any meaningful democratic control, the ESRP is promoting the development of a range of technologies that implicitly favour the demands of government over the rights of individuals, and could engender systematic violations of fundamental rights. These systems also include surveillance and profiling technologies, based on an apparently infinite desire to collect and analyse personal data for law enforcement purposes, automated targeting systems, and a range of satellite and space-based surveillance applications. These high-tech surveillance systems are also seen as potentially ubiquitous, covering everything from law enforcement to environmental monitoring to earth observation; from border control to crowd control, traffic to fisheries regulation.

Despite the often benign intent behind collaborative European security 'research', the EU's security policy is coalescing around a high-tech blueprint for a new kind of security. It envisages a future world of red zones and green zones; external borders controlled by military force and internally by a sprawling network of physical and virtual security checkpoints; public spaces, micro-states and 'mega events' policed by high-tech surveillance systems and rapid reaction forces. It is no longer just a case of "sleepwalking into" or "waking up to" a "surveillance society", as the UK's Information Commissioner famously warned, it feels more like turning a blind eye to the start of a new kind of arms race, one in which all the weapons are pointing inwards.

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Footnotes

1 See "'War on terror' was wrong", David Miliband (UK Foreign Secretary), Guardian, 15 January 2009 and "Obama administration says goodbye to 'war on terror'", Oliver Burkeman, Guardian, 25 March 2009.

2 Klein, N. (2007) The Shock Doctrine. London: Penguin (page 322).

3 "Security by design", Homeland Security Europe, based on a speech by Commissioner Frattini to the EU Security Research Conference in Berlin, 26 March 2007:
http://www.homelandsecurityeu.com/currentissue/article.asp?art=271247&issue=219

*4 "Former Bush Security Chiefs Find Terrorism Obsession Can Be Profitable", Tom Barry, 25 August 2009, available at: **http://americas.irc-online.org/am/6382***

5 Klein, N. (2007) The Shock Doctrine. London: Penguin (page 306).

6 Visiongain Market Research (2009) Global Homeland Security 2009-2019 ($2,481.00), see ASD reports: http://www.asdreports.com/shopexd.asp?ID=1442

7 "The Experts Looking Out for Europe's Security", Intelligence Online° 468, available at: http://www.intelligenceonline.com/NETWORKS/FILES/468/468.asp?rub=networks

8 "European Security Research Programme 2010 – Call for proposals", available at: http://www.statewatch.org/docbin/k_ct_201001_en.pdf

9 See for example the ESSTRT project on "European Security, Threats, Responses and Relevant Technologies"; the FORESEC project on "Europe"s evolving security: drivers, trends and scenarios"; the CRESCENDO project on "Coordination action on Risks, Evolution of Threats and Context assessment"; the STRAW project on a "reviewed taxonomy for Security"; the DEMASST project on "mass transportation security"; the GLOBE project on "an integrated border management system"; and the OPERAMAR project on an "Interoperable Approach to European Union Maritime Security Management"

10 http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/security/doc/fp7_project_flyers/talos.pdf

11 See IAI website: http://www.iai.co.il/Templates/Homepage/Homepage.aspx?lang=en

12 "European Commission Communication on the creation of a European border surveillance system (EUROSUR)", COM (2008) 68, 13.2.08: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0069:FIN:EN:PDF

13 See European Biometrics Forum website: http://www.eubiometricforum.com/

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