

PCDA Assignment Two

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Essay one:

Evaluate the role of police in counter-terrorism policing, and examine how intelligence gained in the investigation of other types of criminality might inform counter-terrorism policing. Your answer must be based on academic research, although you may make reference to recent, relevant case studies.

Word limit: 2000 words.

Answer:

The impact of terrorism can alter a national landscape, in a range between economic decline, loss of public confidence in leadership and widespread behavioural change (Van Der Does *et al.* 2021). In response, global leaders drive change in a desire to protect against future threats, the impact however often involves military action as evidenced following the 9/11 attacks (Thomas, 2010). Nonetheless, threat and fear remain, where the United Kingdom (UK) alone has experienced thirteen fatal terrorist attacks since 2017, which have caused the death of almost forty people (Allen, Burton and Pratt, 2022). Notably, many view terrorist groups to have evolved their capability following 9/11, where relationships have formed within governments and organised crime groups to avoid detection and develop funds (Viano, 2020). To add complexity, within recent years the UK has also recognised a growing risk of individuals planning solo attacks, frequently in areas relatively near their upbringing in a risk factor entitled “lone wolf terrorism” (Hamm and Spaaij, 2017, p. 1). This essay will explore deeper into these areas, and detail key changes within the UK’s counter-terrorism approach, where worldwide terrorist activity has created a pressure for continual improvement (Innes, 2006). Furthermore, this essay will consider the value of police within counter-terrorism policing, and test the view that

neighbourhood policing is important to both deter activity and develop intelligence (Lambert, 2011). This essay will then examine the area of intelligence and build upon the view that relationships exist between terrorist groups and other forms of organised crime (Picarelli, 2012). Consequently, this will lead into the worldwide impact these bonds form, and opportunities they present to better inform counter-terrorism policing.

The challenge for the UK's counter-terrorism approach is great, where terrorists range from global networks to individuals who are influenced by such groups, in a radicalisation process which can lead to violent acts being completed alone and quickly (Counter Terrorism Policing, n.d.). Additionally, attacks such as the 7/7 bombings in London illustrate how public fear does not solely focus on foreign regions, where all four of the bombers for example lived within the UK (Rogers, 2008). Furthermore, networks and resources can include people in privileged positions, in an area branded an "insider threat" (BaMaung *et al*, 2018, p. 133). Here, the scale of opportunity is vast, where open online sources promote individuals to exploit employment within military, government, industrial and police occupations for example to open unique opportunities for terrorist groups (Naji, 2006). Content similar to this has led to examples within the UK such as Rajib Karim, a British aviation employee who was convicted for terrorism offences after supporting a plan to place an explosive device on an American destined airliner, whilst in regular contact with Al-Qaeda leaders (Bean, 2017). Specific to employee threats, the UK government has supported a response through the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) however the evolving tactics terrorists utilise pose a great challenge for UK counter-terrorism agencies (CPNI, 2021).

This complexity, risk, and reality formed pressure for the UK's counter-terrorism approach to improve, where developments and delivery have since created a long debated field. Factors which influenced this include the unpredictability of attacks, increased recognition of public fear, and knowledge that terrorist incidents reduce community cohesion (Innes, 2006). First introduced in 2003, a consistent strategy to the UK's counter-terrorism approach has been the CONTEST model, a partnership collaboration focus which remains in place today and focusses on four areas to prevent, pursue, protect and prepare for terrorist threats (HM Government, 2018). The CONTEST strategy however brought early criticism, with views that the approach lacked direction and governance (Rogers, 2008). Furthermore, this now experienced strategy has sustained public criticism for the lack of change it has embraced, which has increased pressure on partnering agencies to defend against increasing terrorist capability (Gearson, 2015). Within the counter-terrorism policing environment, one of the largest changes to improve partnership working occurred in 2006, where the Counter Terrorism Command (CTC) formed through the merger of previous specialist departments to support efficient collaboration with intelligence and government partners (Weston, 2009). Here, instead of each UK police force previously containing their own specialist terrorist unit, the UK moved to a model of eleven regional counter-terrorism units, which has been viewed to improve consistency and working relationships with security partners such as MI5 and MI6 (Halford, 2022).

Despite this vast structure including partnership agencies, many believe local policing holds a vital role, to improve community bonds, cohesion, and the identification of

local terrorist activity (Ben Jaffel, 2020). Across the CTC model, counter-terrorism work is viewed to fall under two categories of proactive and reactive areas (Innes, 2006). Indeed, the respect for frontline community policing to gain intelligence and deter terrorist activity, in support of the proactive perspective, has grown against the landscape of increased UK based attacks (Klausen, 2009). This has seemingly increased the perceived value of police within counter-terrorism policing in comparison with historic views of security services predominantly sourcing intelligence leads and police mainly responsible for the creation of legal cases (Masse, 2003). Further research into community based counter-terrorism policing has found similarity between both police and terrorist desires to build trust within influential members of the community (Spalek, 2013). Consequently, the UK has experienced development with the creation of departments such as the Muslim Contact Unit within counter-terrorism police agencies where success has been proven through interventions with youths who had been targeted by extremist groups (Lambert, 2011). This shows the increase in perceived police importance towards counter-terrorism policing, in a neighbourhood oriented focus to bring the community with the police, as opposed to the enforcement of processes which may incur resistance (Lambert and Parsons, 2017).

Despite the respect of police engagement by some, others believe there is a continued suspicion from young people at risk of radicalisation (Spalek, 2013). Furthermore, instances such as the closure of the Muslim Safety Forum, perceived to be a strong partnership example, have led to a view that police engagement with communities has not fully achieved the potential (Lambert and Parsons, 2017). Another highlighted area of concern is a view that after 9/11, frontline and visible

counter-terrorism policing has disproportionately focussed attention towards Muslim communities, which has consequently increased resistance to police in areas and questioned political focus (Spalek, 2013). Accordingly, a study across UK mosques found that whilst a large consensus agreed extremism is a societal focus, the majority were supporting the area without police involvement, which resulted in unknown information and intelligence (Innes *et al*, 2011). Findings such as these pose thought to the value the security services bring to counter-terrorism, where agencies such as MI5 and MI6 hold global fame for their history (Irons, 2008). The importance of the security sector is further supported by the reality that terrorist communication increasingly utilises the online world (Palasinski and Bowman-Grieve, 2017). The more hidden and secretive nature however of intelligence and security sectors mean studies and published results are more limited compared to police based literature.

Despite the different views on the UK's counter-terrorism effectiveness, the importance of taking proactive action against terrorist groups when required is widely regarded (Sandler, 2005). As a result, when action is taken, the performance of the UK's counter-terrorism strategy is judged on a case by case basis, where the selection of the most appropriate agency and approach is crucial based on the circumstances. Balance therefore forms a factor, where whilst this essay has detailed a resistance towards high visibility policing in areas, studies have also found high levels of hidden surveillance also harm the relationship between communities and the police (Kundnani, 2009). Partnership working therefore continues to be vital, where relationships, ability to share information and network across all areas of the

CONTEST model provide the foundation to the UK's counter-terrorism approach (Wong, 2022).

The use of intelligence to defend against terrorism within the UK is an area which has also experienced great change, where historic perceptions have progressed from a secretive detective image to that of frontline police officers (Ben Jaffel, 2020). The sharing however of intelligence between police, intelligence agencies and other supporting partners has not always been successful, where some view poor information sharing to have been a failure prior to the 7/7 London bombings for example (Field, 2009). This has led to the development of new systems such as the national common intelligence application however further concerns still exist (Halford, 2022). One such study finds that police officers display caution to trust intelligence from civilian based employees due to a perception of reduced validity (Cope, 2004). Equally, organisational culture differences are viewed to form relationship and intelligence sharing barriers (Sheptycki, 2004). In exploration of intelligence systems, not all partners within the CONTEST model share a consistent structure which adds complexity and lack of consistency (Halford, 2022). Furthermore, theorists view there to be a difference in the direction of intelligence between police and the security sectors, where security agencies tend to focus upon wider pictures whereas police inputs are more directed towards specifics and future legal proceedings (Treverton, 2003).

Despite these challenges, the bond which exists between other forms of criminality, particularly organised crime groups and terrorism creates the increased activity of terrorist groups. These relationships are long respected, where historical events

such as the fall of the Soviet Union highlights terrorist requirements for funding, supplies and partnership support (Dishman, 2001). Furthermore, in more recent times terrorist and organized crime groups have become so embedded within areas of the globe alongside corrupt governments it means investigation and action experiences great difficulty (McCulloch and Pickering, 2005). Revenue is viewed to be one of the basic needs for terrorist groups, which leads them to complete criminal activity themselves in addition to forming partnerships with existing organised crime groups (Clarke and Lee, 2008). These relationships span worldwide, where at times the requirement for funds outweigh their political views and delay other terrorist operations (Benson and Decker, 2010). A strong example of the global scale for revenue generation is Al-Qaeda's reported involvement within the West Africa diamond trade (Farah, 2004). In addition, the worldwide impact is demonstrated by the repeated kidnapping of Nigerian schoolchildren by terrorist group Boko Haram, where studies suggest links are formed with the increasing presence of Nigerian gangs in Europe, and the transportation of Nigerian females into the European prostitution environment (Viano, 2020).

Areas still to be completed.

- How intelligence gained in the investigation of other types of criminality might inform counter-terrorism policing. – 300 words
 - How thorough investigations of other crime types require officer awareness of potential terrorist links - How terrorist attacks can involve far more people than those who complete the physical attacks.
 - How the Prevent element of the CONTEST strategy places a statutory duty on civilian professionals (NHS, schools etc).

- Joint Extremism Unit (JEXU)
- MAPPA support via the management of offenders
- Mental Health Team support
- Challenges investigations face, bringing the view back to community based policing being important
- Conclusion – 175 words

Word Count – 1713 at present (will be kept under 2200 limit once complete)

Essay two of the assignment (2000-word essay) not yet complete.

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