

## Article

# Unthinking extremism: Radicalising narratives that legitimise surveillance

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## Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine how Britain's Public Authorities, the intelligence community, and key members from the private sector have come to define common activists as terrorists. In short, newfound terms such as 'extremism' have been popularised to condemn the activities of groups such as al Qaeda and ISIS (Islamic State), but at the same time have been liberally applied to campaigners for the 'far less politically correct deterrence of dissenting public discourse' (Leman-Langlois 2009). This paper therefore argues that with the application of terms such as 'extremists' to Britain's campaigners, these signifiers have notably radicalised protest groups—not by virtue of their actions *per se*, but by way of the very deliberate repositioning of activists within counter-terrorism frameworks and national security discourse. Comparatively, this paper provides a response to Monaghan and Walby's (2012) call for further research into how "terror identities"... have become organising rubrics' which define how threats to national security are identified and shape the responses from local government and regional stakeholders to such problems. In this respect, the paper considers a number of policing operations, public policies, and the introduction of a strategic dialogue throughout the West, designed to provoke a unilateral response to terrorism, extremism, and radicalisation.

## Introduction

Some of the most recent debates in Surveillance Studies have examined the rise of multi-agency security organisations throughout North America that have become known as DHS fusion centres. Identified by Monahan (2009), Newkirk (2010), Monaghan and Walby (2012) as being comprised of local authorities, police agencies, security organisations, and members of the private sector, there were over 70 such centres operating in the US alone by 2014 (Jones 2014: 9). The fusion centres were established by the Department for Homeland Security following recommendations made by the 9/11 Commission's report into the lack of a cohesive security infrastructure in America leading up to the attacks on New York in 2001. DHS fusion centres were intended to serve as early warning networks to identify key threats to the US and coordinate a timely response to potential terrorist assaults. According to Monahan and Palmer (2009: 617), the Department for Homeland Security 'absorbed and restructured 22 federal agencies' from 2003 onward and now constitute well over 70 such groups across North America.

While descriptions of fusion centres vary from one case to another, there are a number of commonalities which remain cogent throughout. Firstly they are hybrid intelligence centres which fuse together 'public-private partnerships' (*Ibid*: 617-9). They operate at a federal/regional level and share a pool of resources, although they receive central direction for their efforts under DHS administration. Fusion centres are responsible for the local delivery of national counter-terrorism initiatives for the territories in which they operate—even though the scope of these activities includes other business areas as well. Notably, as their

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membership is relatively broad (i.e. not merely restricted to one administrative office or organisation), they hold the capacity to gather vast amounts of data from both public and private reserves. According to the Department for Homeland Security:

Located in states and major urban areas throughout the country, fusion centers are uniquely situated to empower front-line law enforcement, public safety, fire service... emergency response, public health, critical infrastructure protection... and private sector security personnel to lawfully gather and share threat-related information.

(DHS 2015)

In relative terms, this means that fusion centres have the capacity to tap into telecommunication streams, public transport records, state-run, or privately-owned ANPR (Automated Number Plate Recognition) systems, CCTV footage, and many other sources of intelligence gathered from public archives. Indeed this is situated explicitly for the purposes of providing an inter-agency response to terrorism-related matters, and to enable a better policing service for preventing serious organised crime. Nevertheless, what remains new about fusion centres is their relative autonomy from central government, working instead at a federal level and basing their operations on local jurisdictional matters. Furthermore, having received government start-up grants in a number of cases, they have become self-sufficient quangos that possess a comparative degree of independence from the state (Criminal Intelligence Coordinating Council 2008: 2).

However, an alarming trend in the uses to which fusion centre surveillance is being put relates to the ambiguity of their activities, to respective oversight limitations, and to the expansion of their interests into other areas that do not necessarily equate to terrorism. As Torin Monahan notes below, the ‘mission creep’ of America’s fusion centres has steadily ventured into a number of domains which have very little, or nothing at all to do with the War on Terror:

The primary goal of fusion centers is to engage in intelligence-sharing for counter-terrorism purposes. However, they have been used for a variety of other purposes, such as basic policing, spying on social movement organizations, or restricting legal public activities such as taking photographs.

(2009: 617)

While significant attention should be paid to the changes that these institutions have brought about (especially in the context of policing activities, mass surveillance, and for matters of public administration), of greater concern is their capacity to create new risk categories which follow the same form and level of threat as mass-casualty acts of terror. As suggested by Monaghan and Walby (2012: 133), modern ‘intelligence agencies have blurred the categories of terrorism, extremism and activism into an aggregate threat matrix’. Indeed this has also been noted by the British Government who stated in a 2009 review of national security policy that, in the war against terror, ‘the lines between terrorism, subversion and legitimate dissent and protest may become increasingly blurred’ (TSO 2009b: 78). And this has most certainly been the case for Canada, the United States, and in the UK.

The new terror identities that have been created in response to this ‘aggregate threat matrix’ are depicted in their Canadian context as being acts of ‘Multi-Issue Extremism’ or rather, as ‘MIEs’ (according to Monaghan and Walby 2012: 133). However, beyond the above conceptualisation of the term, the notion of Multi-Issue Extremism has been used extensively by the Canadian authorities since at least 2008, with a number of variations seen throughout the Western Hemisphere in recent years. In this respect, online activist group *Stewatch* has reported that:

In June 2010, the US, EU and its Member States issued a ‘Declaration on Counterterrorism’ which called for ‘an effective and comprehensive approach to diminish

the long term threat of violent extremism,’ and highlighted ‘the importance of countering the threat of home-grown violent extremism and of the sharing of lessons learned and best practices.’

(Jones 2014: 2)

Respectively, both the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) and the Integrated Threat Assessment Centre (ITAC) make reference to such classifications in public-facing reports on the nation’s strategic response to terrorism. It can be claimed then, that the deployment of terms such as “‘multi-issue” extremists’ (CSIS 2012: 14), or even ‘multi-issue groups’ (Government of Canada 2013: 6) illustrates a change in thinking, from perceiving terrorism as something ordinarily undertaken by radical actors from overseas, to the pursuit (and prevention) of domestic or political threats instigated by dissidents from within the homeland (Jones 2014: 2).

MIEs are therefore designed to provoke an equivalent national security response to terror attacks, far-left and right-wing acts of extremism, and for politically motivated campaigns that use direct action as a means to facilitate dissenting public discourse. But most worryingly of all they are being imposed upon legitimate protest groups—irrespective of First Amendment or European Human Rights laws. In this respect, Monahan comparatively states that:

Fusion centers have also been implicated in scandals involving covert infiltrations of nonviolent groups, including peace-activist groups, anti-death penalty groups, animal-rights groups, Green Party groups, and others.

(2010-11: 89)

Although the threat of international terrorism remains a very real and pressing matter for all members of modern society, the combination of interests and values represented by fusion centres in the US has enabled these networks to stigmatise and surveil protest groups who pose an economic threat to their stakeholders. In the run up to the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics for example, ITAC ran a campaign to discredit amalgamated opposition to the games under the ‘No Olympics on Stolen Native Land’ banner (Monaghan and Walby 2012: 144). This indicates that fusion centres, such as ITAC, deliberately confusate and reinvent security classifications to meet financial or political aims—especially where core members of these intelligence communities are local contractors or sponsors of the events in question (*Ibid*).

So not only do fusion centres represent a blurring of lines between terrorism and legitimate dissent, but they also highlight a conflict of interests between the state (its corporate associates), and their subjects by defining domestic threats on an equivalent scale to international terrorism. To further this concern, Walby notes that the reclassification of campaign groups as MIEs was legitimised by risks perceived to the provision of domestic utilities, economic institutions, and commercial operations in Vancouver 2010. Indeed such factors remain central to how counter-terrorism discourse is being mobilised to align acts of terror with public protest throughout many Western states. This can be seen especially in the UK, in which ‘language concerning critical public infrastructure’ (*Ibid*: 141) has been used to legitimise the surveillance of campaigners and the mobilisation of multi-million pound public order actions by the police (Gabriel 2007).

This paper therefore argues that MIE terror identities are not unique to Canada or the United States, but instead form part of a wider international effort to initiate cross-border security networks, share relevant information among the intelligence community, and disseminate key strategic solutions to acts of terrorism and multi-issue extremism. Indeed the ultimate aim of such practices is to rationalise all forms of extremism (including public acts of dissent), for their capacity to incite civil unrest *via* the disruption of state-sanctioned activities. Fundamentally speaking, while significant work has been undertaken by

leading academics in Europe, Canada, and the US, relatively little is known about Britain's security infrastructure in this context. As such, this paper examines how a comparative fusion intelligence complex has, on an equivalent scale, sought to reclassify acts of dissent under the rubric of counter-terrorism discourse for the purposes of maintaining national security in Britain.

In this respect, the paper will aim to meet the following outcomes; to define the UK's equivalent fusion intelligence complex, and examine its operational remit in relation to MIE discourse and public order actions. In order to achieve these objectives (and examine how strategic narratives are disseminated to permit such activities), the paper will need to examine a number of coercive actions and the organisations through which they have been policed. A retrospective study of post-9/11 counter-terrorism policy will identify key stakeholders in the delivery of the UK's strategy against terrorism, and outline how threats are communicated to security providers at a local level. In other words, to examine how terror identities created by national intelligence agencies shape the surveillance projects of police agencies and regional government at a local level. In a much broader context the paper also aims to analyse how the strategy of using MIEs to legitimise policing actions is now a widely established practice in the UK and will increasingly shape counter-terrorism discourse throughout central Europe in the years to come.

### **Britain's Fusion Intelligence Complex**

Since 9/11, counter-terrorism and contingency programmes (such as CONTEST and UK RESILIENCE), have paved the way for a radical overhaul of Britain's National Security infrastructure. In addition to post-war intelligence organisations such as MI5 (the Security Service), MI6/SIS (the Secret Service), and Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), HM Constabulary has taken on a variety of counter-terrorism roles as with seats of local government, national, and local industry partners. Relatively speaking, new workgroups and intelligence organisations have also been established post-9/11, to monitor and mitigate risks perceived to each regional catchment. Today, there are a number of organisations in England and Wales who are comparative to the DHS fusion centres acknowledged by Jones (2014), Monahan (2009), Monaghan and Walby (2012). Many fit the widely considered paradigm of being comprised of public-private interests, and they all promote counter-terrorism initiatives in some context or another—whether this relates to enacting direct responses to the terrorist threat, policy formation, intelligence gathering and surveillance duties (to which they all contribute), or even to the front-line policing of Britain's streets. However, the central repository for counter-terrorism intelligence is the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (also known as JTAC), which is alleged to be the UK's only such facility.

Established in 2003, JTAC is responsible for coordinating the UK's counter-terrorism manifesto, as set out in the CONTEST strategy (*Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare*, TSO 2009a). JTAC aligns intelligence from a number of streams and distributes the content to its main partners MI5, MI6, GCHQ, and HM Constabulary, in addition to relevant government departments and national transport providers.

The establishment of JTAC brought together counter-terrorist expertise from the police, key government departments and agencies. Collaborating in this way ensures that information is analysed and processed on a shared basis, with the involvement and consensus of all relevant departments... JTAC works especially closely with the International Counter Terrorism branch, which manages investigations into terrorist activity in the UK. This enables it to assess the nature and extent of the threat in this country. JTAC operates as a self-standing organisation comprised of representatives from sixteen government departments and agencies. It forms a key element of the National Intelligence Machinery.

(MI5 2015)

The Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre has been heralded by the wider intelligence community as a being a beacon of good practice in terms of its ability to coordinate complex information at a cross-agency level. According to Svendsen (2012: 35), the US ‘invested in a similar model’ during 2002 (the Terrorism Threat Integration Center, which later became the National Counterterrorism Centre in 2004), with many European states following suit thereafter. However, while the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre remains indicative of fusion centres in their most explicit multi-agency context, it is still a national coordination hub—as opposed to being a federal, regional, or commercial provider. According to Jones (2014: 10), JTAC is the UK’s first and only fusion centre—although it is believed that there are plans to expand the programme across the UK and throughout Europe during the next few years (*Ibid*: 4). Nevertheless, a significant proportion of the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre’s intelligence capabilities are outsourced among its key members, including the Counter Terrorism Command unit at London’s Metropolitan Police, and this is where the network of capabilities extends in the UK to reach a broader number of stakeholders.

Within the Metropolitan Police Service, Counter Terrorism Command (also known also as Special Operations Group 15, or SO15), forms part of the Nation’s wider network of similar organisations. SO15 is the lead branch on counter-terrorism duties in the UK and, according to the sub-divisional North East Counter Terrorism Network, represents just one in a federation of five such institutions (North East Counter Terrorism Unit 2015). Overall the Counter Terrorism Network is responsible for intelligence gathering activities and preventing ‘incidents of terrorism and domestic extremism’ (*Ibid*). The five partners report their findings back to Counter Terrorism Command, and thereafter to the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, thus forming a network of major regional forces and their respective subdivisions. According to the North East Counter Terrorism Unit, it ‘is largely self-sufficient and can effectively coordinate enquiries and operations, without compromising the commitment of local forces to day to day policing’ (*Ibid*). Indeed the capacity to work with relative financial and executive autonomy resembles the DHS fusion centres earlier defined by the Criminal Intelligence Coordinating Council (2008: 2).

In relation to the idea of localised DHS fusion centres described by Monaghan and Walby (2012), the North East Counter Terrorism Network certainly fits the bill with regards to regional law enforcement activities. But in other respects (such as collusion with the private sector) it falls short of Monahan and Palmer’s earlier model (2009: 617). There is limited evidence of public-private interests participating therein, or rather, of being directly embedded within these specialist centres. However, the JTAC does draw reference to the integration of its services with public and commercial bodies, such as those seated within Britain’s UK Visas and Immigration controls, and public transportation centres—many of which were privatised during the 1980s, such as the rail networks. While the Security Services and HM Constabulary (in their combined role as JTAC) are instrumental in the identification and ongoing surveillance of severe threats to the nation, there are additional commercial stakeholders who play a significant part in the delivery of counter-terrorism and MIE doctrine. Indeed these will be discussed in due course.

### **MIE Discourse and Radicalising Narratives**

The *Terrorism Act 2000* and *Civil Contingencies Act 2004* set the die from which all counter-terrorism, subversion, and public order narratives have been cast in the UK. Indeed many such notions are situated within the UK’s main counter-terrorism strategy, known as CONTEST, as with comparative programmes in North America (see *Building Resilience against Terrorism*, Government of Canada 2013). The CONTEST programme began in 2003, following which Britain’s public authorities endeavoured to PURSUE terrorists, PREVENT violent actions, PREPARE and PROTECT the nation against those who might commit such acts in the UK. However, in terms of understanding CONTEST’s public order remit, it is the PREVENT strand of the programme which becomes of most interest here. PROTECT of course, has been the focus for the above considerations regarding risk aversion policies. The PURSUE strand of CONTEST allows civil contingency stakeholders to enact surveillance over the population and identify

those who would do the nation the most harm, and PREPARE is rather self-explanatory, dealing with a number of contingency planning scenarios for emergency responders.

Under PREVENT, the key factors that were believed to lead either to Islamist (or any other kind of) radicalisation became the most important part of the nation's predictive strategy against violent extremism. The main tenet of PREVENT sought to challenge both the radicalising factors behind terrorism and undermine the narratives that promote international 'brands' such as al Qaeda (TSO 2009a: 153). Notably, the Global War on Terror had not been an especially successful one, so a new direction was taken. As such, a number of think tanks in Whitehall dreamed up a publicity campaign (or, rather, a programme in counter-terrorism propaganda), which would set the context for future political projects in policing as well. Working with a number of overseas allies (particularly the United States and Canada), the Research Information and Communications Unit (RICU) helped deliver a paradigm shift that was expected to tackle terrorism at its roots. Almost overnight, the Global War on Terror (GWOT) became the Global Struggle against Violent Extremism (GSAVE), and again this would have a monumental impact on domestic affairs in the UK (Inskeep 2005).

The RICU represents an amalgamation of interests between Whitehall, the Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Office, Communities and Local Government, and functions in a similar context to Michael Heseltine's DS19 workgroup of the 1980s.<sup>1</sup> In a similar respect, the RICU was set up exclusively to provide a consistent and strategic response to the threat of terrorism by regulating all public-facing communications. In other words, the Research Information and Communications Unit determines what messages are to be received by the general public, and how such discourses might then be interpreted. The shift from GWOT to GSAVE (as articulated by the RICU), repackaged terrorists as being violent extremists for the simple fact that using terms such as a 'conflict of cultures' or 'Jihad' reiterates anti-Western sentiment (ACPO 2008: 56). It was considered that these particular ideas were among the main factors adding to the legitimacy of terrorist acts, and would otherwise lead susceptible individuals towards radicalisation.

As a result of the wider dissemination of key counter-terrorism narratives in the UK, mainly through public sector and domestic media outlets, the RICU has gained a vast and unsuspecting audience. In what became known as Britain's Strategic Dialogue against terrorism, CONTEST stakeholders, such as local government authorities, members of local and national industry, and the police, deliver GSAVE narratives to the general public (O'Brien 2008: 1). By virtue of the British Constabulary's remit to PREVENT acts of terrorism, the 'Strategic Dialogue' has also become a useful tool for legitimising public order actions as well, particularly in relation to acts of multi-issue extremism.

We may face challenges from non-state actors—whether motivated by ideology or not—who employ the methods and tactics of terrorists but do not conform to historical models of terrorist groups.

(TSO 2009a: 78)

Therefore the terminology of GSAVE came to encompass undesirable activities against the state under the banner of PREVENT, and euphemised insubordinate political interests as being potential acts of terrorism. Under PREVENT, terrorists became violent extremists, and as of 2004, direct-action activists became known as domestic extremists. While this may seem a tertiary definition at best, the power which can be summoned from this term is now undeniable, as with Walby and Monaghan's notion of MIE in its Canadian context. Domestic extremism is simply Britain's variation of an MIE discourse within a

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<sup>1</sup> Defence Secretariat 19 was a sub-division of Whitehall designed to provide counter-subversion propaganda to the CND's campaigns against nuclear weapons. DS19 sought to discredit the CND and also Britain's National Union of Miners, by affiliating them with communist interests in rogue states such as the USSR or Iraq.

comparative aggregate threat matrix. Indeed, according to the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service, ‘Domestic or “multi-issue” extremists’ remain a very serious threat to the Canadian state, and are regarded on a comparative level to Islamic terrorists (CSIS 2012: 14).

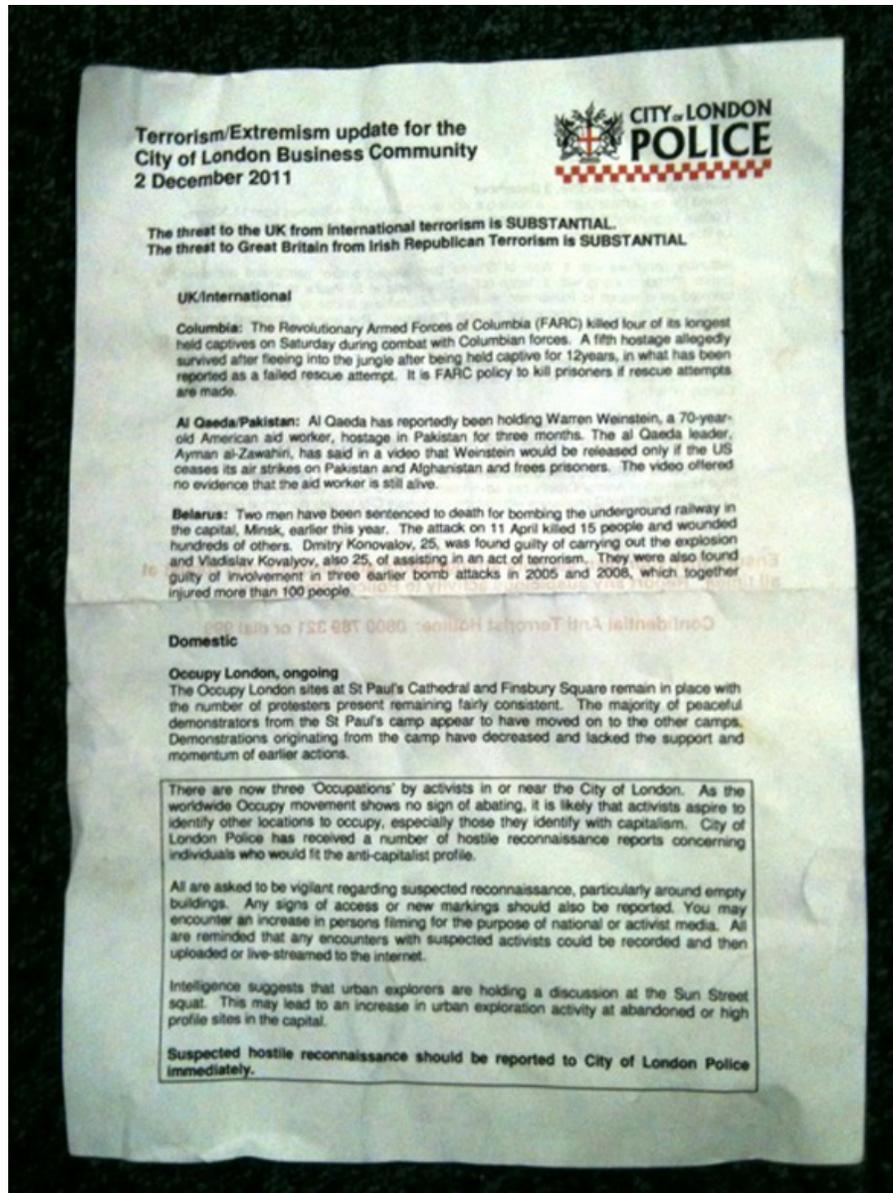
So how does such a term find political agency if the government has published a volumetric amount of material on the subject in the public domain? Well, in the first instance, all of the public sector and private interests who identify and mitigate risks to the broader population have come to use it, ostensibly for the wider condemnation of activists as extremists, but far more conventionally to criminalise the activities of terrorists. Indeed this is notably how the term has been popularised by Britain’s fusion intelligence centres, in what can otherwise be determined as the mission creep of counter-terrorism doctrine in the UK. Moreover, evidence exists that Britain’s emergency responders regularly make use of the Strategic Dialogue when defining political or environmental actions, and it is the sheer regularity of the term from which it derives its potency. According to the *Guardian* newspaper:

The term ‘domestic extremism’ is now common currency within the police. It is a phrase which shapes how forces seek to control demonstrations. It has led to the personal details and photographs of a substantial number of protesters being stored on secret police databases around the country... Senior officers describe domestic extremists as individuals or groups ‘that carry out criminal acts of direct action in furtherance of a campaign. These people and activities usually seek to prevent something from happening or to change legislation or domestic policy, but attempt to do so outside of the normal democratic process.’

(Evans, Lewis and Taylor 2009)

Most recently still, the City of London Police has been accused of using the Strategic Dialogue to undermine anti-capitalism campaigners in the UK’s capital. In a letter circulated to members of London’s business district, police warned traders to remain vigilant following a series of terrorist attacks. The communication informed them of three high-profile assaults that were likely to have repercussions around the world, and cited the most substantial risks to those in the city as being posed by international groups and from Republican interests in Ireland. The memorandum contained an account of militarist incursions in Pakistan, Belarus and Solano, by factions such as al Qaeda and The Revolutionary Forces of Columbia, but what was most surprising was that the document held a relatively small group of demonstrators who were camped out on the steps of St Paul’s Cathedral as posing the greatest threat of all to British society (City of London Police 2011).

The following letter (see figure 1) typifies how domestic and violent forms of extremism are depicted as being part and parcel of the same MIE problem. Despite a nominal attempt by the police to differentiate between international and domestic concerns, the *Terrorism/Extremism Update* situates both public order and international affairs within the same MIE narrative—because terrorism equates to extremism, and extremism can be used to describe any form of dissenting public action or violent activity:



**Figure 1:** Memorandum detailing threats to London's business district (City of London Police 2011)

The question over this operational ambiguity also forms the focus for this paper—for the deliberate blurring of 'lines between terrorism, subversion and legitimate dissent' are the radicalising narratives that have come to legitimise surveillance (TSO 2009b: 78). It is essential then, to re-examine the concept of multi-issue extremism, for under the remit of CONTEST, Britain's Strategic Dialogue seeks to stigmatise campaigners before any offence has been committed. Indeed under the UK's *Terrorism Act 2000*, counter-terrorism programmes such as CONTEST, PREVENT, and RESILIENCE depict Animal Rights activists as being terrorists. Evidence to corroborate this claim can be found in *Animal Welfare—Human Rights*, which typify the way that Britain's public authorities aim to discredit campaigners (HMSO 2004: 10). In this respect, according to the Home Office, the activities of animal rights activists are often 'considered to be acts of terrorism' (*Ibid*). Indeed, the government's thinking on the matter quite clearly states that 'animal rights extremists, are organised in a quasi-terrorist cellular structure across the country', thus legitimising links between political action and terrorism (*Ibid*: 9).

Nevertheless, it is not merely animal rights and anti-capitalism activists who are being discredited as extremists under the UK's counter-terrorism laws, for a good number of single-issue, human/civil rights, and multi-issue causes have also been subjected to similar levels of scrutiny and police intervention. But it is important to understand both how and why such groups have been positioned within these counter-terrorism frameworks, in relation to the values they oppose.

### **Civil Contingency Planning and RESILIENCE**

Britain's institutional affair with risk-aversion politics began in 2001 with the introduction of the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS), which was designed to assume a number of roles previously conducted by the Home Office. The CCS was principally formed to moderate significant risks such as those posed by international terrorist groups and those which may arise as a result of cataclysmic industrial incidents. Yet, it was also intended to ensure the ongoing services (and political integrity) of centralised government, which aligns its particular area of expertise with managing volatile or subversive threats to society. In terms of crisis management, the Civil Contingencies Secretariat works alongside collaborative partners such as the police, the Security Services, and the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism, to develop resilient scenarios for a number of proposed threats to the UK.

Part of the initial role for the Civil Contingencies Secretariat was to define a number of institutions and operational systems without which the nation would become vulnerable to attack. The result of the Secretariat's examination of national security protocols resulted in the *Civil Contingencies Act 2004*. The *Civil Contingencies Act* replaced obsolete programmes in civil defence, and provided new legislative grounds from which a state of national emergency could be declared, such as the Civil Defense Act 1948 (HMSO 1948). Under the *Act*, a number of stakeholders would come to define the greatest threats to their constituencies in a similar context to the DHS fusion centres identified by Monahan and Walby (*et al*). Key members from both the public and private sectors became officially responsible for maintaining Local Risk Registers, in which any perceived threats to their regions were identified and kept under close surveillance. According to the British Government, these regional registers are compiled into a nationwide dossier, in which:

The National Risk Register of Civil Emergencies... provides an updated government assessment of the likelihood and potential impact of a range of different civil emergency risks (including naturally and accidentally occurring hazards and malicious threats) that may directly affect the UK... It also provides information on how the UK government and local respondents such as emergency services prepare for these emergencies.

(*Gov.UK* 2015)

Under the *Civil Contingencies Act*, the grounds upon which a State of National Emergency could be declared include risks to the provision of power, the supply of food or money, and the distribution of petroleum products. Ostensibly this criminalises environmentalists and anti-globalisation campaigners who try to disrupt such vital services, and posits them within Britain's National Security framework as domestic/ multi-issue extremists. In comparison to Walby and Monaghan's earlier considerations regarding Canada's 'critical public infrastructure', the notion of protecting Britain's Critical National Infrastructure has astounding similarities—especially where public dissent now constitutes a form of extremism (2012: 141).

The *Civil Contingencies Act* enabled Britain's governing authorities to establish a series of networks that fused together both private and public interests who identify and mitigate the risks posed to each individual catchment. Britain's Local Resilience Forums (LRFs), document threats to each region according to the function of local and national government, the strategic value of industries based therein, and the overall maintenance of services to the general public; such as fuel, power, healthcare, money and

so on. Britain's Regional Risk Registers are compiled into one nationwide dossier, under which threats such as extreme weather, animal or human-borne pathogens, terrorist attacks and even public demonstrations constitute the many threats conceived to the general public. There are 38 LRFs in England and Wales, and while their preliminary remit is to ensure the regional delivery of RESILIENCE, they are not specifically terrorism analysis centres for their scope is much broader (Cabinet Office 2013). However they are largely responsible for the dissemination of counter-terrorism narratives under the PREVENT manifesto, and it is under this rubric of risk aversion and contingency planning that MIE categories are identified to shape the response of local emergency responders.

NORTH YORKSHIRE LOCAL RESILIENCE FORUM

NOTES OF THE JOINT OPERATIONS GROUP

Held 4 October 2006 – Pink Room, County Hall, Northallerton

PRESENT: NYCC Emergency Planning Unit  
 Tees East and North Yorkshire Ambulance Service  
 Environment Agency  
 Government Office Yorkshire & the Humber  
 North Yorkshire Police  
 North Yorkshire Police  
 NYCC Emergency Planning Unit  
 Harrogate Borough Council  
 Scarborough Borough Council  
 NYCC Emergency Planning Unit  
 NYCC Emergency Planning Unit  
 NYCC Trading Standards  
 EA, York  
 RAF Linton on Ouse  
 North Yorkshire Police  
 NYCC Emergency Planning Unit

Apologies: RAF Linton on Ouse  
 Scarborough Borough Council  
 Yorkshire Water (replacement)  
 NYCC Emergency Planning Unit  
 NYCC Communications Unit  
 Military Liaison  
 City of York  
 Fire & Rescue Service  
 RAF Linton on Ouse  
 British Transport Police

7. Camp for Climate (Operation Harmony) Feedback

NYP – gave a report on the Operation which had been the first time domestic extremism took place against national infrastructure in the county. The response to the event went well from the community style policing carried out by the many assisting forces, to interaction by all involved agencies. NYP particularly thanked Health for their medical support to the camp and North Yorkshire County Council for their assistance in catering for the many police officers. The entire operation cost in the region of £4.5 million.

A lot of lessons were learnt and there are areas where improvements could be made. There was excellent team work with all involved and NYP thanked NYCC for all his help.

**Figure 2:** LRF feedback on 'Operation Harmony' (North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum 2006)

While UK RESILIENCE does not specifically list protests as posing an inherent threat to public safety, a more regionally-focused search for the criteria which constitute a civil emergency reveals that a good number of Local Resilience Forums list protests as a severe risk category (see Brentwood Borough Council's LRF review 2009: 25). Indeed this programme functions in a similar jurisdictional context to the way in which DHS fusion centres in America identify their own agendas at a local level. In this respect, the LRFs consider public acts of dissent as a pressing issue for sensitive commercial sites, which are to be protected at all costs from terrorists and from other malicious threats. To corroborate this notion, the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum performed a review of Operation Harmony in 2006, which was a coordinated effort between Local Government Authorities and emergency responders to contain a mass environmental protest in Selby (see figure 2). The joint operation was a coordinated public order action at Drax Power Station, which according to North Yorkshire Police, was the 'first time that domestic extremism had taken place in the county'.

However, what the report does not allude to is the nature of collaborative efforts between private industry and the public sector in relation to RESILIENCE planning. According to the Civil Contingencies Secretariat, 'energy services in the UK are wholly privatised and therefore a range of private companies and government organisations are involved in emergency planning for the sector' (2013: 36). Naturally, RESILIENCE efforts will include utilities providers, Local Government Authorities, and emergency responders. However, in relation to the management of key infrastructure sites, it is also commonplace for private security firms (employed by commercial stakeholders), to be briefed on any forthcoming matters. For example, during Operation Median at Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station in 2009, G4S Gurkha Security Services and E.On were extensively consulted in the planning stages of the dispute, which also involved undercover operatives on loan from London's Metropolitan Police (Nottinghamshire Police Tactical plan 2009).

### **Conclusion—MIE Discourse as an International Concern**

While evidence from international scholars suggests that MIEs are being created under the subterfuge of national security discourse for policing public protests (as criminal acts against the critical public infrastructure), there are clear and evident links to be found between public-private interests within the fusion centres of the UK, Canada, and US. Following the programme of privatisation that took place during the 1980s, Britain's former national industries now constitute a substantial part of this programme. In the UK at least, the bulk of organisations comprising the Critical National Infrastructure are commercial ones, although they are joint stakeholders as with seats of Local Government and Emergency Responders. In one respect, that alone might justify the fusion of state and private interests that now monitor the terrorist/ extremist threat to the UK. However, the capacity of these organisations to radicalise protest groups under the same rubric as the UK's counter-terrorism doctrine seems all too convenient to their commercial or political aims. What serves as a greater concern, though, is the premise that there now seems to be a unilateral effort in the West to combat all forms of extremism under the same banner of MIE/terrorism, with limited oversight at local, national, or even at a continental level (Monahan and Palmer 2009: 628).

While this study further articulates Walby's earlier conceptualisation of MIEs (and their use by fusion centres to control acts of dissenting public discourse), what remains outstanding is to lay the groundwork for future research into similar PREVENT programmes across mainland Europe. For sure, it has already been noted that Canada, the US and the UK have comparative fusion centres already in existence, or those which are currently emerging. Yet, this is only the start of what promises to be a coordinated effort across the Western intelligence community and beyond. Indeed Jones shares these concerns, stating that:

In 2012, Europol and the DHS began to cooperate on the issues of ‘countering violent extremism’ (CVE), and setting up and maintaining ‘fusion centres’. This cooperation has taken the form of reciprocal visits, meetings, briefings and training sessions and makes up a small but potentially significant part of EU-US cooperation on ‘radicalisation’. Work on ‘fusion centres’—information-gathering and analysis units—seems to be a new area for transatlantic discussion.

(2014: 4)

To further develop Europe’s emerging network of fusion centres, examples of current establishments include the UK’s Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, Denmark’s Centre for Terror Analysis, the Joint Centre for Countering Extremism and Terrorism (GETZ) in Germany, and Spain’s National Centre of Anti-Terrorist Coordination. These unilateral fusion centres have established a clear dialogue with other transatlantic and continental partners such as JTAC and the DHS, but evidently far more research needs to take place in terms of the central effort to police terrorism and counter the threat of multi-issue extremism. Further avenues for research should in this respect, consider joint forums for sharing good practice such as the Club de Madrid group and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue.

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