

Olympic Effort

Lessons learned help secure sporting events

The images of the carnage caused by four bombs detonated by homegrown terrorists in July 2005 are still fresh in the minds of most Londoners. The suicide bombers, all British citizens, attacked unprotected targets to protest British involvement in the Iraq war. They killed 52 people and injured more than 770. As London prepares to host the 2012 Summer Olympics, there are concerns that another attack may occur.

International sporting events such as the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup are magnets for athletes and sports fans across the globe. With extensive media coverage of the events, they are also attractive targets for violent extremists determined to inflict damage and make strong statements to a worldwide audience. Ensuring the safety of participants and visitors at these huge sporting events is a growing challenge.

'The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games promise to be the greatest sporting event in U.K. history, and quite possibly the greatest security challenge that the U.K. has faced since the Second World War.'

— Alan West
British Security Minister

Attacks against “soft targets” — unprotected, mostly civilian sites — are not new. The Olympics, with large numbers of fans and easy access, have been a target for violence since 1972, when Palestinian gunmen held hostage and killed 11 Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics. The 1996 Atlanta Olympics were the target of a U.S. terrorist who detonated a bomb that killed one person and injured 111. More recently, terrorist attacks in New York and Washington in 2001;

Madrid in 2004; London and Bali, Indonesia, in 2005; Mumbai, India, in 2008; and Jakarta, Indonesia, in 2009, underscored the threat extremists pose to soft targets.

The committee organizing the London games is particularly sensitive to the threat of terrorism because of the July 2005 bombings, which took place the day after the International Olympic Committee, or IOC, awarded the games to the city.

“Since that tragic event, the U.K. has continued to face a high level of threat from terrorism,” West told Euronews. “We expect this threat to remain come the summer of 2012.”

Keeping Up

The security aspects of organizing international sporting events present a growing challenge because of the constantly changing landscape of violent extremism. Since it is common for extremists to experiment with new and improved tactics, security organizations



Two German police officers move into position on a building in Munich where Palestinian terrorists held Israeli Olympic team members hostage in September 1972.

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must continually adapt technologies and training to anticipate and prevent attacks. Consequently, the costs of securing sporting events have increased dramatically. It was an issue Canada faced while preparing for the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, British Columbia.

“Security will not be compromised for financial reasons,” read an e-mail statement from the Canada Public Safety Ministry to the Ontario newspaper *Brockville Recorder and Times* in January 2009. The cost of security for the Vancouver games escalated from a starting budget of 122 million euros to nearly 700 million euros. The Vancouver security budget paid for deployment of about 15,000 police, private security and military personnel; airspace restrictions covering 30 miles around the city and competition venues; border security; surveillance cameras; hand-held equipment for screening people entering venues; nuclear and biological threat scanning devices; and H1N1 vaccinations for security officers, according to public records.

The London games organizers have set aside about 700 million euros for security. Experts say Britain should be spending at least twice that amount, according to Euronews. The British say they are making every effort to stage secure games, while at the same time being fiscally responsible in light of the international economic downturn.

There is a close link between the London games’ security planning and Great Britain’s counterterrorism strategy. During security planning, officials are assessing a wide range of risks that will undergo constant review through the start of the 2012 games. Organizers recognize the need to strike a balance between effective and visible security and providing a welcoming and friendly atmosphere for all involved in the games.

“The U.K. police service has a well-deserved reputation for ensuring that major sporting events pass off safely. Staging the Olympics is a tremendous honor, and the police will be playing their part in ensuring that the games are safe and secure so that spectators and participants can really enjoy this unique event,” said Chris Allison, assistant commissioner of the Greater London’s Metropolitan Police Service. Allison is head of the force’s central operations and is working with the upcoming games.

Police officers and security advisors are working with the Olympic Delivery Authority to build security into the design of Olympic and Paralympic venues, according to the

French police train with Brazil’s Special Operations Battalion at João Havelange Stadium in Rio de Janeiro in November 2009, in preparation for the FIFA World Cup in 2014 and the Olympic Games in 2016.

U.K. Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism. Builders are applying standards from Secured by Design, an initiative by the country's Association of Chief Police Officers to help minimize crime and security risks. As an added protection from extremist threats, the design scheme provides for using hand and iris recognition technology. This allows entry only to authorized personnel at the construction sites of the Olympic venues and especially the Olympic Park, currently the largest construction site in Europe. In addition, organizers are considering using unmanned aircraft over Olympic venues for surveillance, road and railway monitoring, search and rescue support, harbor security, event security, communication relays, major incident assessment and frontier security, according to the Guardian.

Collaboration a Must

A positive trend in the organization of international sporting events, and one that helps host countries better manage the complexity and cost of security, is the ongoing collaboration between past and future host countries. This partnership helps organizers streamline their processes and apply best security practices from past events.

While preparing to host the 2008 games, for example, China worked with the Greek Center for Security Studies, the organization solely responsible for security at the 2004 Athens Olympics, according to the Chinese news site People's Daily Online. The British police, in turn, are studying how the Chinese handled security with the intention of using some of the information to prepare for the 2012 London Olympics, according to the Homeland Security News Wire. "Some" is a key word here because the British deem some of the Chinese tactics too intrusive and, therefore, off limits. A Scotland Yard report related to the use of Chinese-style security tactics in London stated that a "balance must be maintained between the use of technology to support security requirements and individual rights to privacy."

Chinese security practices in 2008 included installation of miniature microphones in thousands of taxis, Homeland Security News Wire reported. Passengers' conversations were transmitted to a police control room, where officers could stop the cabs if they suspected criminal activity. Another practice was the use of microchips on tickets and passes, allowing security officers to track athletes, visitors and journalists. In addition, Beijing's 300,000 closed-circuit TV cameras were linked to software capable of recognizing the faces of known criminals and terror suspects.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of China's security tactics was the use of its people. Beijing enlisted its 15 million residents as antiterrorism eyes and ears. Security officials used an antiterrorism manual covering 39 different potential terrorist threats — such as bombs, arson, shootings, hijacking, chemical, biological and nuclear attacks — to educate Beijing citizens about possible threats and to prepare them to respond appropriately, according to the Chinese Xinhua News Agency.

Organizers of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa

SECURING SPORTS EVENTS NOT CHEAP

Terrorists keep reinventing tactics, forcing security officials to spend more money to stay ahead of them. At international sporting events, security costs have skyrocketed:

- **Atlanta 1998: 68 million euros**
- **Salt Lake City 2002: 210 million euros**
- **Athens 2004: 700+ million euros**
- **China 2008: Cost undisclosed; government dispatched more than 100,000 security officers**
- **Vancouver 2010: Nearly 700 million euros**

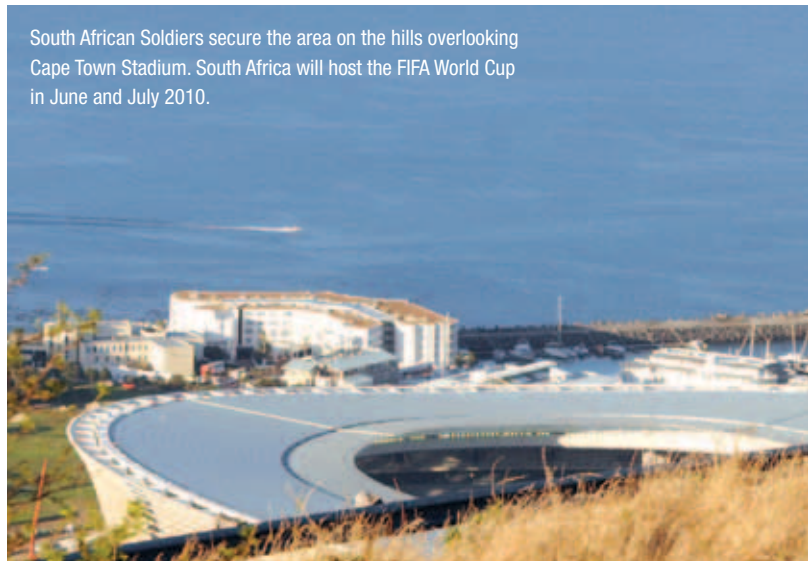
sent their security forces to train at the World Cup in Germany in 2006, the Union of European Football Associations Euro 2008 tournament in Austria and the Beijing Olympics, said Danny Jordaan, chief executive of the 2010 South African World Cup Organizing Committee. The FBI, Germany's Federal Criminal Police Office and Scotland Yard will also help keep the World Cup safe, FIFA President Joseph Blatter told dpa, the German news agency, in October 2009. In addition, a group of police officers from each of the 32 participating countries will serve as liaisons between the host-country police and the teams. South African security forces also intend to use "spotters" to help identify suspicious social behaviors.

Another trend is a movement to allow more countries outside Western Europe and North America to host international sporting events, which has proven successful for China, Russia, India, South Africa and Brazil. Some experts note that providing opportunities to more countries is noble and fair, but it puts those events close to the most volatile parts of the world — the Caucasus, Afghanistan and Pakistan, ungoverned parts of Africa, even crime-infested Brazilian favelas, or slums — which some experts say unnecessarily increases the risks for everyone involved.

High Stakes

Flawless execution of an international sporting event is a matter of prestige and the goal of every host country. But the stakes are particularly high for countries hosting

South African Soldiers secure the area on the hills overlooking Cape Town Stadium. South Africa will host the FIFA World Cup in June and July 2010.



international events for the first time. China, India, South Africa, Brazil and Russia want to prove they, too, can stage a world-class event without serious incidents.

In Russia's case, for example, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin is working closely with the organizing committee to make sure preparations for the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics stay on track and on budget. In November 2008, Georgia voiced concerns about security at Sochi because of its proximity to the Georgian border (50 km) and the breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, backdrop of the August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia.

IOC chief Jacques Rogge, who has been inspecting Russia's preparations, told Agence France-Presse in December 2009 that he was confident Russia could prevent any terrorist threat and stage a completely safe event.

"The Russian authorities are fully aware of the need to have a secure games environment," Rogge said at a ceremony unveiling the Sochi games logo. "They are doing all that is needed, and we trust them completely."

South Africa faces similar scrutiny as it prepares to host Africa's first-ever World Cup. Organizers are pulling out all the stops to organize a safe event amid concerns related to the high crime rates that have plagued the country, and threats by al-Qaida and its Somali franchise, al-Shabab, according to defenceWeb.

"Our security plan, which has been approved by FIFA and which we have been implementing in phases, is fully prepared for any occurrence," Sally de Beer, director of the South African Police Service, told The Voice of the Cape Web site.

Temporary aviation restrictions over South African venues are already in place. Security will be beefed up at all points of entry, including airports, harbors, hotels and event sites. The 41,000 police officers deploying to protect the World Cup will rely on helicopters, unmanned aircraft, water cannons, 100 new BMW police cars for highway patrol, mobile command vehicles, body armor and high-tech bomb disposal equipment. Mobile command centers will receive video feeds from closed-circuit cameras and aircraft.

Brazil is preparing to host the 2014 FIFA World Cup and

the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics, the first in South America. Both events are a source of great pride for the country. But just weeks after learning it would host the Olympics, Rio rode a deadly wave of drug-related violence that left 40 people dead, including three policemen killed when drug gangs shot down their helicopter in October 2009.

The Brazilian government has budgeted 360 million euros for security leading up to the Olympics. The money will go to police training, patrolling, upgrading technology and establishing "peacemaking police units" intended to maintain order in high-risk areas, particularly in Rio's slums, the IOC reported. Brazil also brought in former New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani to serve as a security advisor for the games and to help Rio tackle its crime problem. During Giuliani's 1994 to 2002 tenure as mayor, New York City saw a 57 percent drop in overall crime and a 65 percent decrease in murders. Credited with the improvement was Giuliani's zero-tolerance stance on crime, which he intends to apply to Rio's favelas.

Security research conducted by Stratfor, an American intelligence company, also suggests that to effectively fight terrorism, security forces must adopt a proactive and protective intelligence approach to the problem — one that focuses on "the how" of violent attacks instead of just "the who."

Prevention Strategy

In the traditional, reactive approach, in which authorities respond to a crime scene after a violent attack to find and arrest those responsible, it is necessary to focus on "the who" — the person or group behind the attack. And while prosecuting those who commit violent crimes is necessary, preventing attacks is more important. Thus, prevention requires a proactive approach, in which "the how" becomes crucial.

Prevention is based on the fact that successful terrorist attacks don't just happen out of the blue. Terrorist attacks follow a discernable planning cycle. There are critical points in that cycle when an outside observer is most likely to detect a plot. By studying the tactics, tradecraft and behaviors associated with violent extremists, security experts can identify those behaviors before an attack takes place.

NATO reported that officials in various European countries have stopped at least 19 major terrorist attacks since 9/11. One was in London, where two policemen stopped an Algerian man who was acting suspiciously as he filmed with his cell phone, Britain's Times Online reported. After examining the man's telephone, police found it contained 90 minutes of footage of train stations, security cameras and shopping centers.

No matter how complete efforts to secure sporting events may be, security experts warn to always expect the unexpected. That is not to say security plans at international sporting events are useless, but organizers must also consider unforeseen problems. They must establish and maintain clear channels of communications so they can learn from the experiences of partner security organizations. □



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