

## Geopolitical Change, Populist Leaders and BREXIT: challenging times for the security industry

by Philip Baum

These are uncertain times for planet earth. Many would have thought we had learned the lessons of World War II and that never again would conflict envelope the globe. But such thinking is naïve. In 2016, whilst we are witnessing attempts by certain governments, from Colombia to the Philippines, to settle age-old scores with insurgent groups, the geopolitical landscape is exceedingly troubling. The Cold War, once deemed dead and buried following the collapse of the Soviet Union, is, if you'll excuse the pun, warming up; North Korea's rhetoric (let alone their missile tests) has become increasingly antagonistic; the degree of human suffering in Syria is reminiscent of previous conflicts thought unrepeatable; the scale of the migration crisis in the Mediterranean, and the associated staggering death toll of those prepared to reach European shores, has presented politicians with a nightmare in which they have to choose between acting humanely and addressing the needs of their own populations; and, despite the 'progress' made in the fight against IS, states around the globe now have to fathom out how to deal with returning foreign fighters, whose ideology is unchanged and who, as a result, could be seeking jobs and threatening societies from within.

Alongside the new challenges, long-standing conflicts in the Middle East and climate-driven poverty in Africa and Asia remain and are being exploited by religious zealots. The net result, in western society, are increasingly xenophobic attitudes and democracies electing increasingly far right candidates to office...in Greece, in Hungary, in Austria, and in France to name but a few. The current election campaign in the United States has stunned the world; whether Trump wins next week or not, the fact that he even came close to being the so-called leader of the free world has illustrated that we are nowhere near being the civilised society we purport to be. And it was in that vein that the British electorate went to the polls in June this year and voted to 'leave' the European Union. Some may have made their choice based on economic arguments, but we know that all too many did so because they felt that being outside the EU would enable Britain to regain control of its borders and keep the immigrants out.

Populist leaders in command, religious extremists swelling in numbers, racism surging thereby further alienating minority groups from society, and uncertain economic times are creating huge security challenges for us all. Whilst we must rely on the ballot box, our elected politicians and security services to maintain the set values we supposedly believe in, as individuals, industries and companies we must also learn to protect our own assets. There has probably never been a more important time for those responsible for ensuring security to gather, learn, purchase and deploy...and that is just what so many of the industry will be doing in London at the end of this month.



**UK Security Expo 2016** (30 November – 1 December) may now be an established event on the global security calendar, but never before have the range of issues to be tackled in the

conference halls, or the technologies and services being marketed by the more than 200 companies on the exhibition floor, been as timely. More than 30 international delegations are making the journey to London Olympia to attend one of six different conferences addressing terrorism as a global and national phenomenon, transport security, major event security, cyber terrorism and criminality, the ways in which we can better protect crowded places wherever they may be and how we can actively design out terrorism.



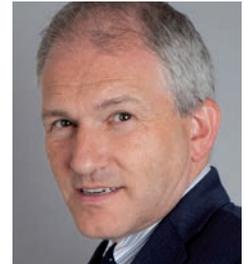
The scene setters at the main **Global Counter Terrorism Conference** will be taking delegates into the detail of what I have just scratched the

surface of. **Dr Dave Sloggett**, an independent academic, author and visiting research fellow at Oxford University, will not only be chairing the event but assessing the tumultuous events of 2016. He will be assessing the implications and providing a welcome global security assessment, highlighting the consequences of the tectonic changes we are witnessing on our television screens.



The Keynote address will be given by the former **Director General of MI5, Jonathan Evans** (Baron Evans of Weardale), who will be considering the security implications for the United Kingdom arising from its decision to leave the EU. This is a topic

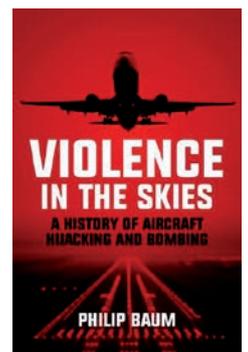
which will be explored in greater detail by **Professor Matthew Goodwin**, Professor of Politics and International Relations at the University of Kent and Visiting Senior Fellow, Europe, at Chatham House who will be explaining the dynamics of the BREXIT vote and its impact on community relations, migration and extremism.



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We are already feeling the initial impact of the vote, with Sterling weakening. That, however, is currently a marketing windfall for the British manufacturers and service providers seeking to export their considerable expertise to the considerable number of overseas visitors to the Expo – not only will they be able to buy cheaper, but even their visit to London will be relatively low cost! But BREXIT may have far greater consequences, including to the viability of the United Kingdom, with a fresh referendum on Scottish independence being a distinct possibility and, longer term, even the unification of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland being on the cards.

Terrorism – and particularly the style exhibited by AQ, IS and their lone actor sympathisers – will, however, remain the dominant theme. And it's not only traditional terrorist acts that will be considered. Security professionals are having to take the threat of chemical and biological weapons usage extremely seriously, with such plots being interrupted with disturbing regularity. **Henrik Bliddal** is the Director, Science and Technology Committee and Director, Research Assistant Programme, of the **NATO Parliamentary Assembly** and he will be tackling the terrifying subject of CBRN terrorism and explaining how the rise of Daesh in Iraq and Syria poses a threat to the Euro-Atlantic community from home grown CBRN terrorism.



Religious fundamentalism is already a challenge within Europe. The attacks against Brussels and Istanbul airports this year have made landside security a talking

point, one which will be explored in the **Transport Security Conference**. Israel has long been renowned for its approach to airport security and there has been much reporting this year on Tel Aviv's screening of people and vehicles far away from the terminal buildings, at the entrance to the airport grounds. **Dvir Rubinshtein**, is Aviation Security Operation Centre Manager, Emergency, Security & Cyber Division – Israel, and he will be explaining that the Israeli approach is not exclusively behaviour-driven; new technologies are being deployed to enhance airport security and these will be illustrated. Other transportation hubs will continue to be potential targets and the **European Commission** will be looking at the future of rail and metro security and providing delegates with an overview of the outcomes from an on-going EU study on rail security.

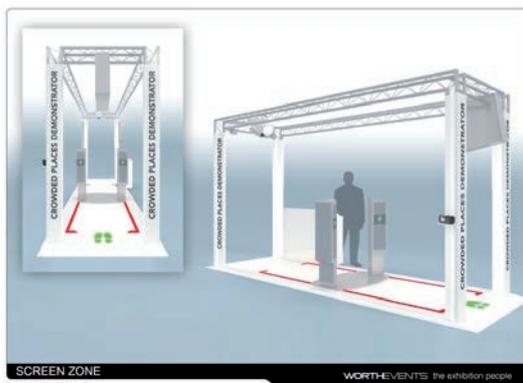


Major events have the challenge of generally being joyous, festive gatherings attended by people who are loathe to have their enjoyment inhibited by an excessive security presence. The events industry needs to adapt to embrace new security protocols and deploy

innovative technologies to better screen visitors and employees, whilst also facing the challenge of maintaining the festive atmosphere and not impinging on visitor facilitation. These are themes to be explored at the **Major Events Conference** during which **Martin Girvan**, an Inspector with the **Sports Grounds Safety Authority**, will be exploring how we can better integrate safety and security at sports grounds, yet also balance security, safety and the spectator experience.

The reality is that any place where people gather en masse can be a target. We have seen religious fundamentalists target tourists on the beaches of Tunisia (2015) and Cote d'Ivoire (2016), museums (Tunis, 2015), concert venues (Paris, 2015) and at public celebrations (Nice, 2016). Accordingly the **Protection of Crowded Places** will not only be a major theme at UK Security Expo 2016, but be the subject of a conference in its own right.

The UK's approach to protecting crowded places will be demonstrated in the conference itself and on the exhibition floor. Traditional checkpoints, as seen at airports, cannot be the solution in all locations – shopping centres, sports stadia, and museums, for example, are neither suited to nor appropriate locations for such deployment due to cost, delay, footprint, proportionality, or ease of use. Checkpoints cannot become chokepoints. The presentation will explain the concept behind the **Securing Crowded Places Demonstrator** 'Screen Zone' that many delegates will experience at the entrance to the Expo. It will seek to challenge delegates to set aside preconceptions about 'airport-style' checkpoints and instead take a fresh look at search and screening requirements for other applications.



It is impossible in one article to highlight all the presentations on offer to delegates. Indeed, such is the range of topics on the programmes, each visitor will have to decide which sessions they will attend in the various conferences. It's an appetising array of presentations on a, let's face it, unappetising subject to have to consider...but one, having reviewed the programmes, I'm relishing. I think this is one time all visitors will elect to 'remain' rather than 'leave'!

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