By Petr Labrentsev

International migration, polyethnicity, and transnationalism are major trends intrinsic to modern globalization. They have increasingly affected the societies of major immigrant-receiving countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States. Do they affect these countries' national security? For instance, is ethnic espionage a rising major threat? This essay attempts to answer these questions. It does not intend to present solutions. Rather, by examining and correlating socio-cultural, security, and globalization dimensions, it intends to point out to the forthcoming security challenges modern liberal-democratic countries might potentially face.

Ethnic Nationalism vs. Civic Nationalism, and the importance of citizenship

Nations are classified in two types: civic nations and ethnic nations. Many countries correspond to both. Ethnic nations entail a core ethnicity shared by the majority of a country's nationals, - or citizens. Ethnicity means 'sharing a collective proper name, sharing beliefs about ancestry, sharing a particular history and operating within a common cultural framework, and with an enduring association with a particular place (the 'homeland).'[i] Yet because Western societies are becoming increasingly polyethnic as a result of growing immigration, the importance of citizenship and civic nationalism has come to the fore.

Modern liberal-democratic countries are essentially civic nations, because their core has less to do with one particular ethnicity, but rather with a common political membership, - citizenship. The latter not only entails citizens' allegiance (or patriotism) to a country, but also guarantees equal rights regardless of citizens' origins, socio-cultural, or religious practices. Since citizenship represents a sense of belonging and patriotism of an ethnically diverse population, and establishes mutual trust between the nation and the state, it is the foremost guarantor of civic nations' integrity and cohesion. For instance, the American nation is a clear example of civic nationalism.

Yet increasing transnationalism 'from below', which entails 'activities that are the result of grass-roots initiatives by immigrants and their home country counterparts'[ii] has reinforced numerous citizens' multigenerational identification with their ethnic nations and ancestral homelands. Cheaper, faster and widely accessible transport and communications offer immigrants and their descendants the possibility to maintain close links with their countries of origin. The possibility to hold double citizenship on the principle of jus sanguinis further strengthens immigrants' multigenerational ties not only with original nations, but also with the states accommodating them. This effect of transnationalism on citizens of immigrant origin brings about their concern about the ancestral homeland development and mobilization around it. Such a state of affairs is often intrinsic to modern diasporas. Noticeably, together with international migration and polyethnicity, transnationalism is also an increasing trend.

However, increasing transnationalism not only bolsters closer socio-cultural links with foreign nation-states, but also emphasises particular communities' ethnicity, both of which play a role in a gradual emergence of ethnic nationalism amongst these communities. Contrary to some trendy views asserting that globalization and transnationalism lead to an increased cosmopolitanism, or to an increased number of the so-called 'world-citizens', I take the view that the pressures of globalization on socio-cultural distinctiveness, and the subsequent threat posed to specific ethno-cultural identities, along with the possibilities both to openly express the latter and to maintain close links with the country of origin leads to a favouritism of the ancestral culture over that of the host country. As Rosenau stressed, people tend to retreat into 'their own intellectual haven or emotional (usually ethnic) heritage. [Their] emotional needs for identity with, and support from others sharing the same heritage lead them to seek exclusion behind the walls of ethnicity, nationality, religion, language [that] may bring psychic security.'[iii] Whilst this often arises concerns about the fading of national identity within the mainstream societies of civic nations, it would be an overstatement to say that ethnic nationalism per se represents a threat to liberal-democratic countries' national security. Markedly, ethnic nationalism provides ethnic minorities a sense of self-identity and psychological security in a diversified society, which in turn adds to their confidence and facilitates their long-term integration into the mainstream society. Hence, as long as ethnic nationalism does not lead to hostile action on behalf of foreign states, there is no reason to regard it as a threat. However, considering that ethnicity, when associated with ethnic nationalism, might be translated into a sense of moral duty – or patriotism – to a(nother) nation and country, it might be a significant factor for an individual's resolve to engage in hostile actions on behalf of an ancestral homeland.

Ethnic espionage: a major threat?

Reports of large-scale overt and covert human intelligence (HUMINT) collection by the Chinese Ministry of State Security (MMS) in the West seem to hit the headlines more than ever before. The Cox Report, and numerous press releases on the Chinese espionage have emphasized ethnic recruitment of Western citizens of Chinese descent as a common practice of the MMS.[iv] It is claimed that along with financial remuneration, Beijing also plays the 'shared ancestry' card.[v] According to Eftimiades, the MSS not only has recruited Chinese immigrants who have access to high-tech and military data, but also has encouraged Chinese students to remain abroad to act as long-term penetration agents.[vi] Furthermore, Chinese-American scientists from U.S. nuclear weapons design laboratories, while staying abroad, have been 'cultivated' by PRC organizations to assist in providing highly valuable scientific information. To sum up, it is possible to conclude that PRC espionage efforts are underpinned by a high regard for the ethnic factor as a valuable asset for HUMINT operations abroad.

Despite the end of the Cold War, Russian foreign intelligence service (SVR) has visibly increased its activities in the West. According to deGraffenreid, the high rate of Russian immigration is one of the primary reasons for such a trend.[vii] While using émigrés for intelligence collection has been a long-established practice of the Soviet and Russian intelligence services,[viii] one has to recall Chapman's remark that patriotism or loyalty to the motherland 'mean a great deal to most Russians.'[ix] Moreover, the Kremlin has taken a greater control over national mass media, which has resulted in an increase of patriotic rhetoric largely based on antagonism with the West - reminiscent of the Soviet period - in order to revive

Russian national pride, which was badly damaged by the collapse of the Soviet Union.[x] It is a means to unify the Russian youth, and to mobilize it around national ideals. Hence mass media is a marked factor supporting the sense of patriotism among Russian immigrant communities. Given the present-day latent rivalry between Russia and the West, one might suggest that a desire to somehow contribute towards the ancestral homeland getting the upper hand by covert means might arise from such nationalist feelings among the Russian émigrés. As Kalugin has stressed, the practice of nurturing patriotic feelings among Russians abroad is now 'fully restored' and used as a means for their recruitment.[xi]

Is it possible then to assert that ethnic espionage is an emerging trend, and a major threat to national security of traditionally immigrant-receiving countries? Is there a correlation between the impact of transnationalism on polyethnic societies, and citizens' will to covertly act on behalf of their ancestral homelands? I suggest that the answer to both questions is negative. However, as I will later assert, another threat is lurking beneath such assumptions.

Firstly, espionage is a heavily punishable crime. Inasmuch as most people are not criminals, most citizens of immigrant origin are certainly not spies. Secondly, most people migrate for economic and safety reasons. Being aware of the numerous difficulties they have to struggle with to achieve success in the receiving countries, it is doubtful that most of them are willing to endanger their wellbeing by engaging in espionage as a means to support their homeland. Thirdly, most people do not consider themselves apt to engage in tradecraft.[xii] Therefore, even if one might want to assist his/her ancestral homeland, it is implausible that espionage would be considered as the most viable way of doing this. Finally, ethnic recruitment as a major trend would inevitably bring about counterintelligence services' focus on citizens of a particular ethnicity, which would undermine foreign intelligence efforts in the first place. Recruiting agents by means of money or blackmail therefore remains a more productive option.

Yet should ethnic espionage necessarily become a major trend for security services of liberal-democratic countries to engage in a generalized scrutiny and targeting of citizens according to their ethnicity or ancestry? Perhaps it is not a far-fetched view.

Targeted ethnicity: the principle of contingency in dealing with threats to national security

Liberal-democratic stance relies on citizenship as a guarantor of individual rights and freedoms that prevents ethnic discrimination in civic nations. Yet in times of crisis, do states' responses to threats correspond to this stance? More often than not, states act on the principle of contingency, putting aside fundamental democratic principles when security priorities arise.

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, we have learned about the high cost of counterterrorism. The need for an immediate response to effectively protect Western societies against further attacks not only has led to more stringent security measures, but also brought about a somewhat stereotypical public perception of the threat. In the heat of the moment, public opinion often has failed to differentiate al-Qaeda and the Islamic Jihad from the major Muslim community. Other attacks implicating U.S. and British citizens of Egyptian and Pakistani origin, and descendants of Muslim immigrants who were born in the U.S. and the U.K. contributed to a

generalized terrorist profile, which associated Arab and Punjabi ethnicity with radical Islamism.[xiii] Subsequently, numerous American and British Muslims became a target of security services, with disastrous consequences for social cohesion, human rights, and the counterterrorism effort itself. As security services adopted such an inclusive Jihadist profile (which later proved to be misleading),[xiv] and states' took advantage of the generalized public view towards the (apparently) sudden terrorist campaign, many citizens of Arab and Pakistani origin or ancestry became heavily scrutinized by both the security services and by the larger society.[xv]

Counterterrorism not only has proven to be highly costly to human rights and to citizenship, but it also has highlighted the fact that states tend to respond to threats on the principle of contingency. In other words, in order to assure national security, states' security measures are often disproportionally superior to the threat. As Herman puts it, 'intelligence [services] ... often exaggerate [threats].'[xvi] Markedly, mass media and public opinion are a crucial driving force behind states' contingency approach in times of crisis. The overreaction to threats not only tends to bolster these same threats – by radicalizing otherwise peaceful Muslims – but also to sustain a climate of social risk, due to harsher security policies, and the fear of 'others among us' within the society. Polemic articles highly influence public opinion, and easily portray rather isolated cases of terrorism, but also ethnic espionage, into what is turned into a major phenomenon. Often, policymakers are reluctant not no consider widespread public views, and end up capitalize on them for political gains. Therefore, even if a threat is not as great as it actually is, it might be inflated by the cycle of 'state's security response - mass media - public opinion - inflated perception of risk.'

Given this rule of thumb, should we expect liberal-democratic states whose nations are both civic inasmuch as they are polyethnic, and which are increasingly affected by transnationalism, to react in an inflated way to an increasing trend in ethnic espionage? Markedly, because polyethnicity and transnationalism are progressively increasing phenomena, more, not less cases of ethnic espionage are to be expected. Will this compel states and mainstream societies to differentiate 'safe citizens' from 'unsafe citizens', the latter being those whose ethnicity socio-culturally mirrors another nation? During the Second World War, American Chinese used to wear a button saying 'I am a Chinese', in order not to be taken for Japanese and end up in an internment camp.[xvii] Can we then conceive that U.K. or U.S. citizens of Japanese or Korean ancestry will be compelled to do the same, fearing to be taken for Chinese? Clearly, such a state of affairs not only badly damages an individual's dignity, but also one's status of citizen. And although the counterargument might be that people are detained when there is evidence of their involvement in hostile activities, the U.S. 'war on terror' has proved the opposite, as thousands of innocent people were arrested, interrogated and tortured for months, and then released without charge.[xviii]

Conclusion

One should consider such perspectives today, so that further disruption of civic nations by tomorrow's potential response on the principle on contingency can be avoided. The reaction to ethnic espionage might be as inflated as it has been to terrorism. Perhaps a triggering event is all what is needed or not, as the case may be. Citizens' ethnicity might be targeted, badly

damaging the status of citizenship, and ultimately posing a serious threat to integrity of civic nations. Noticeably, foreign states' hostile involvement will definitely become an issue. Certainly, it is far-fetched to suggest that ethnic espionage might lead to national collapse, or to a state of war between states endorsing it and preventing it. Yet, until it happened, so were the 9/11 attacks, and the Afghanistan war.

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