Terrorism and the Olympics: 'THE GAMES HAVE GONE ON'

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One of the aspirations of Baron Pierre de Coubertin's revival of the Olympic Games at the end of the nineteenth century was that it would encourage international peace.¹ In this grandiose aim, which has since become part of the Olympic rhetoric, de Coubertin envisaged [male only] Olympic athletes as ambassadors for peace and the Olympic movement as a vehicle for positive moral influence.² Since that time, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has repeatedly espoused this ideal as one of its core philosophies. However, not everyone associated with the Games, including at times the IOC itself, has followed or even accepted these lofty, naive, and some would argue, duplicitous, ambitions. There have been numerous boycotts, protests and political crises associated with the event. While some of these have been caused by those with links to the Olympic Movement, other Olympic political problems have been caused by individuals with no association to the event. Both these groups have used the Games to further agendas unassociated with sport. As the modern Olympic Games have evolved to become a global spectacle, attracting international media attention, their prominence has also come to hold allure for terrorists, as a means to promote political agendas.³ This article traces the relationship between the Olympic Games and terrorism from 1972 to the present, and demonstrates how Olympic security has been affected by the 'precautionary principle', a concept summed up by the aphorism 'better safe than sorry'.

The precautionary principle has been described as a useful guide for decision making that 'legitimates decisions and actions in situations characterised by uncertainty'.⁴ It is based on the assertion that even in

the absence of scientific conviction about the existence or cause of a risk it is prudent to adopt measures to prevent possible damage or danger.

While application of the precautionary principle has predominately been associated with environmental issues, the principle has recently been used in counterterrorism planning. Since the terrorist attack at the 1972 Munich Olympics and its aftermath of negative publicity, the strategies used in security planning by Games organisers are reminiscent of the core tenet of the precautionary principle. As Richard Pound, a member of the IOC for over 25 years notes:

The biggest worry for organisers of modern Olympic Games ... is the threat of terrorism. It is a consuming challenge that occupies every waking moment — and probably many sleeping moments as well — of the hosts. They have to anticipate every form of attack, from within the country and from outside, devise a preventive mechanism and develop responses to any emergencies that may arise if the preventative measures fail. It is an awesome responsibility, especially in a world that faces increasing activities of this nature, and success is measured only by what does not happen.

This article starts by defining and highlighting trends in modern terrorism. It suggests that major sporting events may be desirable terrorism targets due to the relationship between sport mega-events and the mass media. After discussing sport and terrorism, this article focuses on the summer Olympics from 1972 to the present and their variable efficacy in applying the precautionary principle.

**Terrorism**

The central problem with defining terrorism is summed up by the adage: 'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter'. International agreement on what constitutes an act of terrorism has proven difficult, as definitions of 'terrorism' inevitably reflect the values and needs of their authors. Most definitions consider terrorism to be the premeditated, politically motivated use or threatened use of violence, against civilian or non-combatant targets. Terrorists are generally described as sub-national or non-state actors, attempting to attract attention to a cause or intimidate a population or government into accepting certain political demands. Regardless of the definition applied, 'terrorism' comes with 'powerfully negative emotional baggage' and labelling a group or individual as 'terrorist' involves passing a moral judgment about the legitimacy of that group or individual's motives and actions.

Chalk describes terrorism as the 'favoured instrument of the extreme and politically disaffected'. It can be an inexpensive, unpredictable and lethal tactic. Its use can allow non-state groups with diminutive
resources to influence far more powerful groups, such as governments. A fundamental feature of terrorism is that the 'success' of an operation, or threatened operation, hinges on the perpetrators' ability to produce and manipulate fear. As such, 'successful' terrorists operate as 'force multipliers', using minimal resources to create maximum effect. Significantly, a study conducted by Johnson, in the United States, found that there is a considerable gap between the perceived threat and the actual threat of terrorism. For this reason, terrorism has been described as a form of psychological warfare, and according to Merari 'the real battlefield of terrorism is public morale and public opinion'.

In an investigation of Australian media representations of sport and terrorism, Toohey and Taylor coined the term 'terrorism capital' to express the idea that the attributes of an event, individual, group or object could lead to it being considered a desirable target by terrorists. Applying an Eliasian approach, whereby broad historical context is seen to help elucidate contemporary social relationships, the 'terrorism capital' of contemporary major sporting events can be understood with reference to four factors. These are: trends in modern terrorism; globalisation; the rise of the media-sport production complex; and the precedent set by historical incidents of terrorism at sport. This article will address each of these factors in turn.

**Trends in Terrorism and Globalisation**

Some analysts suggest that contemporary terrorism is characteristically different from historical examples. Two trends in contemporary terrorism that differentiate it and have received considerable academic attention are modern terrorists' apparent aspiration to achieve high civilian death tolls and the increasingly amorphous, international nature of modern terrorism networks. A brief explanation of these trends helps account for the terrorism capital of major sport events.

Traditionally, it was believed that terrorists sought publicity through highly visible but relatively symbolic acts of political violence. In essence, terrorists wanted 'lots of people watching', but few fatalities. Attacks fitting this criterion include hostage takings, political assassinations and the bombing of buildings of economic, cultural or symbolic significance. However, many attacks in the last decade suggest that terrorists are now equally interested in making their mark through high civilian death tolls. Recent examples that appear to support this hypothesis include the attacks on the World Trade Center in the United States on 11 September 2001, the bombing of popular nightspots in Bali in 2002, and the bombings of peak hour commuter trains in Madrid, 2004, London, 2005 and Mumbai, 2006.

Another feature of contemporary terrorism is that it is increasingly international in its scope. In particular, globalisation, or the growing...
interdependence of societies around the world, can be viewed as facilitating contemporary terrorism. As Jenkins notes:

Jet air travel gave terrorists worldwide mobility. The development of radio, television, and communication satellites gave them almost instantaneous access to a global audience. The increased availability of weapons and explosives made it easy to arm. While the vulnerabilities inherent in our modern-technology-dependant society, from electricity pylons to Boeing 747s, provided ample targets.

With the assistance of these modern technologies, terrorist networks can now be loosely connected, transnational and flexible. These technologies have helped mobilise 'amateur terrorists', i.e., individuals with grievances who may lack the experience or resources to acquire sophisticated weaponry and attacks. These developments have created new security challenges at major sport events.

The abovementioned trends in modern terrorism help explain the terrorism capital of major sport events. If today's terrorists are less concerned about whom and how many they kill, major sporting events present ideal targets. As Nevin and Daley noted before the 2003 Cricket World Cup, sporting venues are easier to attack than conventional, well-guarded targets, like airports, embassies and military bases. Venues hosting major sport events are highly visible, accessible to the public and house tens of thousands of spectators in a confined space. These features have accounted for a number of recent terrorist plots at major sporting events. For example, in 2002, a car bomb exploded outside the Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid before a European Champions League match, injuring sixteen people. In 2004, 70,000 fans, players and officials were evacuated during a football match at the same stadium after a bomb threat. The same year British newspapers claimed police had thwarted a plot by 'Islamic extremists' to bomb a football stadium during a match. The feature of globalised sporting events most pertinent to raising their terrorism capital relates to what Joseph Maguire describes as the media-sport production complex.

The Media-Sport Production Complex and Terrorism

In the sporting arena, the impact of global flows is evidenced in the transformation of some sports from localised 'play' into highly marketable, international commodities. This transformation is particularly linked to the 'media-sport production complex' or the growing association between sport and the mass media, particularly television. Miller, Lawrence, McKay and Rowe consider this to be a symbiotic relationship, whereby sport and the media are able to provide each other with 'the necessary resources for development: capital, audiences, promotions and content'.

Similarly, the relationship between terrorism and the mass media has also
been described as somewhat symbiotic.\textsuperscript{36} The mass media can be regarded as modern terrorism's most important ally.\textsuperscript{37} Blondeheim and Liebes\textsuperscript{38} claim that terrorist organisations have learnt to 'hijack the screen', while Keinan, Sadeh and Rosen\textsuperscript{39} contend that terrorists choreograph 'shows of terrorism' for maximum impact. The media also benefit from the dramatic and unexpected nature of terrorist incidents. Media treatment of terrorism is often 'sensationalist', with coverage producing exaggerated fears by depicting terrorism as 'pervasive, overwhelming and an imminent personal danger'.\textsuperscript{40} Johnson commented that when it comes to terrorism, 'many in the media appear more interested in fanning the hysteria with misinformation rather than offering objective analysis'.\textsuperscript{41}

The junction of the media-sport production complex and terrorism is well illustrated by the Tour de France, which has been effectively exploited by the Basque separatist group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) to gain media exposure for their cause. Palmer comments that: 'the iconography of Basque separatism frequently overshadows the action of the race itself, with campaigners particularly active when television cameras pass by.'\textsuperscript{42} The activities of Basque campaigners are usually designed to disrupt the race with no threat to human life. However, in 1992, this strategy changed when members of ETA placed an incendiary device under the car of leading British cycling commentator Phil Liggett. In another incident, in 1997, Spanish police found and detonated a four kilogram bomb that had been planted in a rubbish bin outside a bank in Pamplona during the race.\textsuperscript{43} The attraction of this event as a target for acts of protest and terrorism is its highly mediated nature. This helps to validate the assertions of Atkinson and Young that the high media profile and international flavour of many major sport events makes them ideal terrorism targets.\textsuperscript{44}

While the above examples signify that the threat of terrorism at major sport events is not restricted to the Olympics, the Games have been burdened by many terrorist threats and a smaller number of successful attacks. Counterterrorism has become a significant part of Olympic planning. This is understandable, given their prominence as the world's most significant multi-sport event. While the modern Olympic Games have been politicised since their inception, their association with non-state terrorism can be dated to 1972.\textsuperscript{45}

\textbf{'The Games Must Go On': Munich 1972}

The 1972 Munich Olympic Games were heralded by their German organisers as the 'Games of Peace and Joy'. This was a deliberate attempt to distance the Munich Games from the Berlin Olympics of 1936, where Nazi symbolism overshadowed other aspects of the Games. Despite the hopes of the Munich organisers, the 1972 Games have been remembered for the bloodbath caused
by eight Palestinian terrorists. The terrorists, from the Palestinian militant group, Black September, infiltrated the Athletes' Village, killed two Israelis and took nine Israeli athletes and officials hostage. The *Official Report of the Games of the XX Olympiad* noted that while several reports of disturbances and political action were received prior to the Games, no 'concrete' threat to the Israeli delegation had been anticipated.⁴⁶ In a drama that was played out in front of a television audience that Sanan estimates at 800 million viewers, the terrorists held police at bay and issued demands, including the release of Arab prisoners held by Israel.⁴⁷

Soon after, at a bungled rescue attempt by German authorities, at an airport outside Munich, all eleven athletes, a German policeman and five terrorists were killed. The three surviving terrorists were captured, and later released by the German government following the hijacking of a Lufthansa plane. This led to speculation that Germany had an involvement in the hijacking and further cemented in the public's mind the inadequacy of officials to deal with Olympic safety. Johnson argued that the Munich incident was a defining moment in the growth of modern terrorism, and that the international attention achieved by the attack explicitly suggested that the use of terrorism could be an effective tactic for insurgent groups.⁴⁸ This observation is justified by comments made by a senior Black September official, printed one week after the Munich attacks in *Al Sayad*, a Beirut newspaper:

> In our assessment, and in light of the result, we have made one of the best achievements of the Palestinian commando action. A bomb in the White House, a mine in the Vatican, the death of Mao Tse-Tung, an earthquake in Paris could not have echoed through the consciousness of every man in the world like the operation of Munich. The Olympiad arouses the people's interest and attention more than anything else in the world. The choice of the Olympics, from a purely propagandistic viewpoint, was 100 per cent successful. It was like painting the name of Palestine on a mountain that can be seen from the four corners of the earth.⁴⁹

Over 30 years later, in 2006, the Palestinian view of the attack has not altered, with one of the terrorists, Mohammad Oudeh, noting: 'Before Munich, we were simply terrorists. After Munich, at least people started asking 'Who are these terrorists? What do they want?' Before Munich, nobody had the slightest idea about Palestine'.⁵⁰

The attack was considered successful for a number of reasons, not the least of which was the extensive and ongoing global media coverage it received. Broadcasting of the Games had utilised satellite technology since the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, a move which had dramatically increased the event's international audience. In addition, according to McAlister, live television coverage was pioneered during the hostage taking crisis at the Games.⁵¹
The American Broadcasting Corporation ran a groundbreaking sixteen hours of live coverage from Munich. This coverage later won 29 Emmy awards and accolades from 'the Senate floor to the New York Times'. According to Serge Groussard, a journalist who was covering the Games in Munich at the time of the attack, even the terrorists were able to watch live footage of their actions and the response of German officials during the crisis. Unfortunately this access to the live television coverage hindered rescue plans, as the terrorists watched 'how the area was being sealed off, the mass arrival of the first batch of city police, and even the arrival of black-tarped trucks of the frontier guards, who, as TV commentators obligingly specified, included many marksmen'.

The Official Report of the Games of the XX Olympiad provides some insight into how the crisis occurred. Games organisers had made a deliberate effort to downplay the security presence in order to ensure the creation of a 'friendly', 'carefree', 'unconstrained, happy' and 'peaceful atmosphere'. At the memorial ceremony held for the victims of the terrorist attack, then IOC President Avery Brundage pontificated:

> It is a sorrowful fact in our imperfect world that the greater and more important the Olympic Games become, the more they become the victim of economic, political, and now criminal pressure.

Moore described the 1972 terrorist attack as the 'modern Olympics great loss of innocence', and, as Pound notes, 'Munich changed the landscape of Olympic security' for all subsequent Games.

**After Munich**

After the terrorist incident at the Munich Olympics there was a revision of Olympic security planning and the application of the precautionary principle to planning for the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games is evident. While the Games organising committee recognised that 'no security system of any kind can keep a determined individual from committing an isolated crime which may have serious international consequences', it developed a strict security framework based on an appraisal of what went wrong in Munich. In the Official Report of the Games of the XXI Olympiad it was noted that:

> the special security problems at the Munich Olympic Games may have been caused by an anti-police or even an anti-military reaction. This attitude could have led the organising committee to keep their security forces out of sight, lest they attract criticism from the press and the general public. But, in so doing, they might have left the way clear for those who committed the infamous attacks. That is why it was felt that the police and the military had to be conspicuously present at Montreal.
Richard Pound, the secretary general of the host NOC, the Canadian Olympic Committee, during the 1976 Games, noted that prior to the Munich Games, 'security generally meant crowd control, and the fences around the Olympic Village were essentially to keep the curious from bothering the athletes'. However, for the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games, McIntosh suggested security was so extensive that 'the Olympic Village might well have been a prison camp'. Gary Lautens, reporting for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, remarked of the hundreds of 'young boys' guarding the Olympic Village, 'they may look friendly, but they've all got real mean guns'. The Games passed without any terrorist incident and the security planning at Montreal became a basic template for subsequent Olympic security operations.

At the height of the Cold War and following the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union, the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games will be remembered more for boycotts than the threat of terrorism. Information about the security preparations for this event is scarce. However, nations boycotting this event warned those nations attending that 'in the absence of established military superpowers', like the United States, hostile attacks on Westerners could take place during the Games. In response, the Soviet media warned of a plot from the American Central Intelligence Agency to employ Western Olympic spectators as spies, and agents to distribute bacterial weapons and explosives disguised as toys. The Soviet Union also led a retaliatory boycott of the following Games, held in Los Angeles, similarly citing security concerns. Despite the boycotts and inflammatory claims, the 1980 Moscow Olympics passed without a terrorist incident.

For the 1984 Games, the Los Angeles Olympic Organising Committee (LAOOC) was a privately run and financed corporation. Consequently, it possessed no law enforcement capabilities and faced the difficult task of coordinating more than 50 local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to ensure the Games were secure. According to Kenneth Reich, the Los Angeles Times Games reporter and biographer of LAOOC president Peter Ueberroth, 'in the long years of preparing the Games, fears that they could be ruined by a terrorist incident or some other security breach were rife'. This was not assisted by what Reich describes as the 'single worst episode of press irresponsibility' in the lead up to the Games. The May 1983 edition of Playboy magazine published A Terrorists' Guide to the 1984 Olympics', which described in instructive terms such scenarios as: sniping at the yachting events; discharging automatic gun fire on cyclists during competition; and launching grenades at equestrian events. Harmon also noted that before the Games there were terrorist threats posed by a white supremacist group, The Order, and a nationalist group, the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia.
Despite terrorism related fears, there was an attempt by LAOOC to ensure the security presence at the Games was balanced so that it was neither unobtrusive nor off-putting for spectators. As noted by Paul Ziffren, chairman of the Organising Committee:

We are not a police state. We are a free society. We had to take our chances, and up until the closing ceremonies were over, we never did breathe a sigh of relief. We never knew when there might be an incident. We never knew when some crazy man might throw a bomb. But this was a risk you had to take. We had what we considered to be appropriate security, and we did not want it to be so overwhelming as to give the United States a bad image, and if you have too overwhelming a presence you also tend to stir up problems.\(^{73}\)

While the 1984 Games avoided major acts of terrorism, The Official Report of the Games of the XXIII Olympiad records that 645 security incidents were reported during the Games, 61 of which were bomb threats. The Official Report describes the two most serious incidents. The first involved a police officer working at Los Angeles International Airport, who placed an explosive device in the wheel well of a bus belonging to the Turkish delegation. The Official Report notes 'at first, the officer was credited with discovering and disarming the device, but within 24 hours his duplicity was uncovered'.\(^{75}\) On another occasion, an unescorted athletes' bus was followed by a suspicious vehicle. According to the Official Report, a security guard reported the vehicle to authorities and 'within minutes, two law enforcement helicopters and three ground units had the suspect under surveillance'.\(^{76}\) The vehicle was searched to reveal that the suspect was carrying home-made explosives. These incidents suggest that the motive to disrupt the Games through acts, or threats, of terrorism existed.

In addition to reported bomb threats, in his account of the Los Angeles Games preparations, Reich recounts an unreported bomb scare. Just before the start of the Opening Ceremony it was discovered that the lock had been broken on the door to the Olympic cauldron lighting apparatus in the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. With 90,000 spectators in the stadium, this detection left Games organisers and the security forces in a 'high state of alarm'.\(^{77}\) Only an hour before the Olympic cauldron was due to be lit, as part of the ceremony, it was discovered that the lock had been broken by American Broadcasting Corporation technicians when they were wiring areas of the stadium for their television coverage of the Opening Ceremony. Despite the threats and scares, as Reich concluded 'after all the worry, all the careful planning and all the bureaucratic infighting, the Games themselves were an anticlimax as far as security went'.\(^{78}\)

The 1988 Olympic Games were awarded to Seoul, South Korea. Richard Pound, who was then a member of the IOC, noted that this decision was viewed by many as 'risky', if not 'recklessly foolhardy', due to the immense
tension between the opposing regimes of North and South Korea.\textsuperscript{79} The
president of the Seoul Organising Committee, Park Seh-Jik identified the
following threats to the 1988 Games: military provocation instigated by North
Korea; international acts of terrorism; conflicts among the athletics teams of
countries hostile to each other; and attempts by leftist elements in South Korea
to create social disorder.\textsuperscript{80} The threat of terrorism was a key consideration in
the security preparations, especially after a Korean Airlines flight was blown
up in 1987. In light of this situation, it was claimed that: 'The Seoul Olympics
will be the most heavily guarded event in the history of sports'.\textsuperscript{81}

The insider accounts of the Games by Pound and Seh-Jik detail the key
facets of the security preparations for the Seoul Olympics and reveal how the
precautionary principle was applied. Of particular importance, South Korea
worked to maintain diplomatic ties with Japan, as Japan was a major transport
hub via which international visitors would enter Korea. In relation to security,
Seoul's international airport was also described as 'the front line', particularly
as two days prior to the Tenth Asian Games, hosted in Seoul in 1986, a
bomb had exploded there, killing several people.\textsuperscript{82} While the Games were
celebrated without major incident, several known and suspected terrorists
were arrested or denied entry into South Korea. Organisers were also alerted
that about twenty terrorists from the Japanese Red Army had left a base
in Lebanon, aiming to attack American and Israeli athletes participating
in the Seoul Olympics. While security planning for the 1988 Games was
stringent, Seh-Jik commented that one of the key challenges for the Games
Organising Committee related to the fear that if there was a noticeable
emphasis on security 'many visitors and participants might remember only
the unpleasantness and unfriendliness of Korea'.\textsuperscript{83}

At the next Olympics, in Barcelona, 1992, the threat of terrorism was also
imminent, with particular focus on the activities of the Basque separatist
group ETA.\textsuperscript{84} Prior to the Olympics, ETA launched a campaign attempting
to disrupt Games preparation and gain an international platform for their
grievances.\textsuperscript{85} While ETA bombed electricity pylons, a Marxist group, Grupo
de Resistencia Antifascista Primo October (GRAPO) also bombed a gas
pipeline outside Barcelona. While both attacks caused minor inconvenience,
they were unsuccessful in gaining widespread international attention and
consequently did not have their intended impact. While the Barcelona
Olympics passed without incident, during the following Games, in Atlanta,
the effects of terrorism were much greater.

\textbf{Atlanta 1996}

Security preparations for the Atlanta Olympic Games were influenced by
a terrorist incident in Japan in 1995. The millenarian cult, Aum Shinrikyo,
released sarin nerve gas in a Tokyo subway, killing thirteen people and
injuring hundreds more. It became a defining moment in academic and governmental discussion of terrorism, as it was the first time an independent, non-state group had manufactured and used a biochemical weapon in an act of terrorism.\textsuperscript{86} In response to this attack, the organisers of subsequent Olympics applied the precautionary principle for this new type of threat and took steps to mitigate the effects of a biochemical incident.\textsuperscript{87} Medicines were stockpiled in Atlanta to counter the release of chemical nerve agents, as well as potential outbreaks of diseases like salmonella and anthrax.\textsuperscript{88}

The Science and Technology Center set up in Atlanta to assist in preparation for a potential incident of biochemical terrorism, identified the use of a conventional explosive as the most likely method of terrorist attack to threaten the Games.\textsuperscript{89} Their assessment was correct. At the Atlanta Games, a pipe bomb exploded during a concert at Centennial Olympic Park, directly killing one bystander, causing another to have a heart attack and injuring over one hundred more.\textsuperscript{90} Eric Rudolph, the anti-abortionist who was later convicted of the crime, provided the following rationale for his actions:

> In the summer of 1996, the world converged upon Atlanta for the Olympic Games. Under the protection and auspices of the regime in Washington millions of people came to celebrate the ideals of global socialism ... the purpose of the attack on July 27 was to confound, anger and embarrass the Washington government in the eyes of the world for its abominable sanctioning of abortion on demand. The plan was to force the cancellation of the Games, or at least create a state of insecurity to empty the streets around the venues and thereby eat into the vast amounts of money invested.\textsuperscript{91}

Again the Games' popularity was a defining reason for the choice of target. In the 24 hours following the pipe-bomb explosion more than 100 reports of suspicious packages were received, causing several costly and inconvenient evacuations.\textsuperscript{92} This bombing was also a turning point in Olympic terrorism. Its importance lay in the choice of target, and it confirms the premise of modern terrorism. Instead of focusing on symbolic targets, such as athletes and national teams, the bomb targeted an area designed for spectators. This widened the terrorism threat and subsequent security precautionary planning to encompass all Olympic celebrations, including cultural events.

Despite the Atlanta incident, the \textit{Official Report for Games of the XXVII Olympiad} reveals that planners of the 2000 Sydney Olympics considered the threat of terrorism during the Games to be low, as historically Australia's experience with terrorism had been 'mild'.\textsuperscript{93} Despite this, the application of the precautionary principle was again evident in the Games' preparations. Following the precedent set in Atlanta, in the lead up to the 2000 Olympics, the Australian government started a national medicines stockpile, including medication to counteract the effects of biochemical agents such as sarin
nerve gas. Australian emergency and armed services also took part in a series of terrorism simulations and practice runs to test response times and overall readiness. The 2000 Sydney Olympic planners experienced a real terrorism scare when New Zealand police foiled a suspected plot to target Lucas Heights Nuclear Reactor during the Games. Similarly, in the lead up to the Games, Australian police arrested a man whose home near the Olympic Village was found packed with explosives. Others had considered targeting the Games. Two years after the Games, a spiral bound notebook belonging to Jack Roche, Australia's first convicted terrorist, was seized by ASIO. In it Roche apparently claimed that Al-Qaeda had planned an attack in Australia during the Sydney Olympics, targeting the Jewish community. Despite these incidents the Games proceeded unaffected by terrorist disruptions.

11 September 2001

While the preceding review of security issues signifies that the threat of terrorism has been an ongoing issue in Olympic organisation, recent developments have brought the issue further to the fore. According to Merari, on 11 September 2001, 'terrorism made a quantum leap from being simply a nuisance to being a major threat to world order'. The attack, colloquially referred to as 9/11, spectacularly managed to achieve the primary aim of terrorism: it incited widespread fear. This culture of fear had a marked impact on the character of world politics as nations joined or rejected coalitions seeking to advance global counterterrorism capacity. In response to the attack, the United States, with allies, including Australia, initiated military conflict in Afghanistan. The operation became the first stage of a pre-emptive, global 'war on terrorism', launched by the president of the United States, George W. Bush. This pre-emptive strike provides an example of the application of the precautionary principle in a geo-political context. Since 9/11, the issue of terrorism has received unprecedented and enduring media exposure and has had ramifications for many areas of society, including sports events.

The Aftermath: The Impact of 9/11 on Sport

Kratcoski points out that a significant characteristic of terrorism is the flow-on effect it can have on those who are not directly involved in an attack. The events of 9/11 had a considerable effect on the sporting community. Within days, most major sporting competitions in America and several international events were cancelled or postponed. The security of major sporting venues, events and participants became a significant issue and subsequently the cost of hosting and insuring major sporting events rose dramatically. The fear generated by 9/11 resulted in an upgrade of security plans for the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics, bringing the total security budget to more than $US300 million. For this event there was a particular emphasis on
air security, however after an anthrax scare in the United States following 9/11, additional spending focused on countering potential incidents of bioterrorism. The security presence at these Games was obvious, both at Olympic venues and also in the host city. A press statement, released by the Whitehouse, entitled Preparing for the World: Homeland Security and Winter Olympics, outlined an approach to security best summed up as 'highly visible equals highly secure'. While the impact of 9/11 was evident during the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics, the Games passed without interference from terrorism and were overshadowed by the extensive efforts to secure the 2004 Athens Olympic Games.

**The 2004 Athens Olympic Games**

The Athens Olympics were described as the 'biggest — most expensive — peace time security operation ever' and prompted Wilstein to comment: 'How bizarre the world has become when sporting events seem like war zones'. Security for the Athens Olympics cost in the vicinity of an unprecedented one billion euros. Athens' Major Dora Bakoyianni commented 'we are paying the price for September 11'.

In the planning and operational phases of the 2004 Athens Olympic and Paralympic Games a total of 70,000 personnel were employed directly or indirectly to help secure the two events. During the Olympic Games 34,737 staff were employed in roles that ranged from securing venues, to protecting and escorting VIPs and delegations. In addition to these staff, security included: border surveillance systems, port security systems, mobile crisis management centers, airborne facilities (helicopters, aircraft, airship) and weapons and equipment to detect and mitigate chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear attacks. Greece also accepted assistance from the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, as well as planning, training and intelligence advice from the first ever international Olympic security advisory group, made up of representatives from Britain, the United States, France, Germany, Israel, Spain and Australia.

Despite this extensive and well-publicised preparation, Greek officials were continually called upon to reassure the world of their security preparedness. This was particularly the case after a police station was bombed in Athens prior to the Games. The perpetrators claimed that the attack aimed to highlight gaps in security planning. The Australian government issued warnings against traveling to Greece, causing an altercation with Greek officials who deplored the move, describing it as 'damaging to the Olympic Games'. While the Australian public was warned against traveling to Greece, elite Australian athletes received reassurance that the Australian Olympic Committee was 'confident in the security measures in place'. Despite this intense build-up, the Games passed without major terrorist incident.
Applying the Precautionary Principle

The size and global prominence of the Olympic Games has seen it used as a platform for political sparring and hostility on numerous occasions throughout its history.\textsuperscript{119} For the most part, the Olympic Games have experienced unsuccessful terrorist plots. However, on two occasions in the period under investigation, terrorism has directly caused fatalities and left an indelible mark on the event. The Games are an attractive target due to: the international media coverage they receive; the congregating of tens of thousands of people in a small area; the movement of thousands of people through public areas such as airports, train stations and nearby public spaces; and the challenge posed by the aspiration of organisers to maintain a security presence, whilst retaining the event's festive atmosphere.

While the precautionary principle has not been articulated as an official policy of Olympic organisers, there is evidence to suggest that it has been applied in varying degrees since the 1972 Munich Olympic tragedy. Prior to the 1972 Games, security operations were predominately focused on Olympic venues. Post 1972, application of the precautionary principle has seen Olympic terrorism-related security planning extended to cover a widening geo-political area. For the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games, counterterrorism activities extended beyond Olympic venues to include the monitoring of entry points into Korea, including Japan. The activities of suspected terrorists as far away as Lebanon were also scrutinised. The terrorist incident during the 1996 Atlanta Olympics signified that cultural events held in conjunction with the Games were also a target. And finally, the organisers of the 2004 Olympics drew on the assistance of NATO and a specially created international security advisory council to help protect Greece's vast exposed coastline, airspace and Games venues.

Application of the precautionary principle has also resulted in an increase in the potential threats organisers attempt to counteract. For example, the 1995 Aum Shinrikyo sarin nerve gas attack saw subsequent Olympic security preparations include medical stockpiles in an attempt to cover potential acts of biochemical terrorism. The task and cost of reducing the risk of terrorism is complicated by the trend towards more transnational, flexible and creative forms of contemporary terrorism. A comparison of the terrorism related security planning for the 1972 Munich Games and the 2004 Athens Olympics suggests the extent to which the precautionary principle has influenced Olympic organisation. Perhaps the clearest indicator of the influence of the precautionary principle is the rising cost of Olympic security.

The cost of applying the precautionary principle to secure the Olympic Games has been borne by the event's organising committees, rather than the IOC. The one exception to this is an insurance policy purchased by the IOC in 2004 to cover the possibility of cancelling future Games due to terrorism,
Commenting on this policy, current IOC President Jacques Rogge noted, 'taking out a policy to manage the risk associated with one's core business is standard, prudent behaviour for any modern organisation'. While this set an expensive precedent for insuring against a potential, but not fully calculable or controllable, risk, the insurance was purchased for less than seven million dollars. This is in stark contrast to the security cost shouldered by the Athens Organising Committee, estimated to be around one billion euros. Past IOC Vice President, Richard Pound excuses this differential on the grounds that 'there is not much the IOC itself can do about security, other than seek such assurances as it can from the government of the host country that security must be a priority'. While Pound notes that one 'legacy' of hosting the Olympics 'is a significant upgrade in [the host nations] knowledge and experience in matters of national security', it comes at a high price.

Could the potentially huge expense of applying the precautionary principle have implications for attracting cities to host the Olympic Games in the future? Could attempting to protect against such an amorphous threat diminish the financial feasibility of hosting the event? As summed up by the organisers of the Montreal Olympics in 1976, it would be impossible to develop a security plan that guaranteed zero risk. For the 2004 Athens Olympics organising committee, attempting to meet the demands of the press, foreign governments and teams proved extremely expensive. The 2004 Games set a precedent for the extent and expense of security planning and for seeking international assistance through the formation of a security advisory committee. This leaves future Games organisers with a predicament. If they do not meet, or exceed, the security precautions applied by the Athens committee, what damaging criticism will the hosts encounter if a terrorist incident does occur? On the other hand, could it be possible to host a safe Olympics without incurring a security debt of around €1 billion? There is already speculation about the prohibitive cost and type of security for the 2008 Beijing and the 2012 London Olympic Games.

Notes


17 Hoffman, 'Rethinking Terrorism', pp. 303-16; Stern and Wiener, 'Precaution Against Terrorism', pp. 393-447.
19 Toohey and Taylor, 'Here be Dragons', pp. 71-93.
26 Cronin, 'Behind the Curve', pp. 30-58.
27 Jenkins, 'Terrorism and Beyond', pp. 321-27.
34 Maguire, *Global Sport*.
44 Atkinson and Young, 'Terror Games', pp. 53-78.
45 Although the 1968 Mexico City Games were subject to political influences and a number of citizens demonstrating against the Games were killed by Mexican authorities, the commonly accepted definition of terrorism now excludes acts of state violence. For a more detailed account of these Games see Kristine Toohey and A. J. Veal, *The Olympic Games: A Social Science Perspective*, CABI, Wallingford, 2007, p. 88.
52 McAlister, 'Television, Terrorism and the Making of Incomprehension'.
55 Organising Committee for the Games of the XXth Olympiad, Munich, 1972, *Die Spiele*, p. 32.
56 Organising Committee for the Games of the XXth Olympiad, Munich, 1972, *Die Spiele*, p. 38.
58 Pound, *Inside the Olympics*, p. 95.
65 Atkinson and Young, 'Global Olympics', p. 274.
67 Atkinson and Young, 'Global Olympics', pp. 259-94.
70 Reich, *Making it Happen*, p. 192.
71 Reich, *Making it Happen*.
73 In Reich, *Making it Happen*, p. 194.
74 Los Angeles Olympic Organising Committee, 'Organisation and Planning'.
77 Reich, *Making it Happen*, p. 191.
78 Reich, *Making it Happen*, p. 207.

82 Seh-Jik, *The Seoul Olympics*.


92 Johnston, 'A Brief Overview of Technical and Organisational Security'.


97 B. Hickman, 'Plea to Double Roche's Sentence', *The Australian*, 10 September 2004, p. 4.
99 Hoffman, 'Rethinking Terrorism and Counterterrorism', pp. 303-16.
101 Kratcoski, 'Terrorist Victimisation'.
106 Office of the Press Secretary, 'Preparing for the World'.
110 Lui, Vlahou and Roberts, Olympic Insecurity, p. 22.
113 Athens 2004 Organising Committee for the Olympic Games, 'Homecoming of the Games — Organisation and Operations'.

116 Johnson, 'A Brief Overview of Technical and Organisational Security at Olympic Events'.


118 Words of John Coates, President of the Australian Olympic Committee, emailed to Australian athletes competing in the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, forwarded to the researchers in a personal communication on 17 July 2004.

119 Atkinson and Young, 'Terror Games'; Pound, Five Rings Over Korea.


121 IOC, 'IOC Activities', p. 12.


124 Pound, Inside the Olympics, p. 113.