

Belgian state report points to links between police services, Brussels attacks

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Press leaks on the report of the Belgian police surveillance committee (“P Committee”) regarding the monitoring of the Abdeslam brothers again underscore the role of the imperialist proxy war in Syria and the complicity of police and intelligence in the attacks last November 13 in Paris and on March 22 in Brussels.

Immediately after the attacks, it was reported that the terrorists were known to the intelligence services as Islamists involved in traveling and fighting in Syria and the Middle East. Now, the Belgian report confirms that the scope of these networks and the protection they enjoyed in official circles in the context of the war played an important role in allowing the attacks to proceed.

The P Committee report blames the anti-terrorist services for neglecting the surveillance of Salah Abdeslam, who is accused of being the only survivor of the group that carried out the Paris attacks. His sudden arrest at the end of March in Brussels, after four months on the run, reportedly pushed the March 22 attackers into action.

According to the P Committee report, the anti-terrorist services lost Salah Abdeslam's GSM phone card and ignored his USB key, confiscated in February 2015, that is, nine months before the Paris attacks.

La Dernière Heure reports that these materials were seized “during a police search of the Abdeslam household in the context of a drug investigation. The local police then prepared a report on this search before depositing the objects that had been seized, as required by procedure, with the Brussels tribunal. Afterwards, Brahim Abdeslam came under suspicion of wanting to travel to Syria. His file went to the well-known DR3 agency.”

There are conflicting reports as to whether the negligence in investigating these objects is due to the

police or the DR3 counter-terrorism agency. Nonetheless, the P Committee report clearly indicates that there was an intervention by forces inside the Belgian state to protect Abdeslam's data, which then disappeared.

Again according to *La Dernière Heure*, “The federal magistrate then authorized the anti-terror unit to consult the elements seized at the Abdeslam household, except Salah A's USB key and GSM card. The DR3 then asked to be able to consult these materials anyway. It is only at that point that it became clear that these objects were no longer in the possession of the tribunal. The content of the telephone had, however, been saved. Indeed, there was thus at the time, in February 2015, contact information for people now known to have been involved in the Paris and Brussels attacks.”

The federal magistrate's intervention to protect specifically the USB key and GSM card of Abdeslam, which then went missing, is remarkable. How was it possible to then lose what were such essential elements to follow up and identify an Islamist network—particularly in the law-and-order atmosphere at the time, a few weeks after the January 2015 *Charlie Hebdo* attacks in Paris?

One must ask not only if this allowed the November 13 and March 22 attacks to proceed, but whether possible complicity of forces within the state with the terrorists, related to NATO's support for the Islamist militias in Syria, played a role.

On Monday, official circles in Brussels sharply attacked the P committee report, which had been issued to the parliamentary commission tasked with oversight of police and intelligence activities. In a decision without precedent in Belgium, government and opposition legislators in the parliamentary commission unanimously decided to allow the police services

incriminated in the report to reply point by point to its contents. Legislators are being instructed to take into account the service's own defense of its activities while reading the P Committee report.

Faced with the criticisms from the parliamentary commission, P Committee President Yves Keppens, a former royal prosecutor in Furnes, reacted. He told VTM, "For this investigation, we worked on objective bases and with a proven method. This is always the case, and this investigation is in no way an exception. If we make observations, we are obligated to report them objectively and accurately to the parliament."

The Free Trade Union of the Public Service, through its president Vincent Gilles, defended the police services. Gilles said, "the methods used by the P Committee investigators are based on procedures from long ago. Some of these investigators have not faced the realities on the ground and in the judicial system for more than 15 years. Methods have changed since then. Reality has changed, too. And based on what I have been told, I consider that unfortunately they did not take these realities into account in their conclusions."

Yesterday, officials of the police and the prosecutor's office released emails to the press pleading that they were overrun with work, citing numerous foreign combatants in Belgium, as well as the large number of ongoing investigations. They also attacked the P Committee report, which they said was costing them even more work.

The fact that Belgian cops and spies are overworked tracking foreign combatants is proof not of the errors of the P Committee report, but rather that the imperialist policy of regime change in Syria relying on an international network of Islamist terrorists has had disastrous consequences.

For five years, Syrian cities have been devastated by raids carried out by Islamist militias, as well as by the bombings of Syrian government forces trying to crush them. Now, this war has begun claiming lives in Europe itself, overwhelming the very same intelligence services that initially allowed it to take shape. The services' numerous failures are now well documented.

When the European press was describing Salah Abdeslam as "Europe's most wanted man," he had in fact been found by a policeman from Malines in the Brussels area, without this leading to his arrest, as the policeman's report was blocked as it traveled up the

chain of command. The police only briefly questioned Abdeslam after his arrest, while his accomplices were preparing the March 22 attacks at the Brussels airport and at a subway stop. Belgian police also overlooked warnings from Turkey that Ibrahim El Bakraoui, one of the leaders of the March 22 attacks, was a terrorist.

Since last week, Salah Abdeslam has been imprisoned in France in Europe's largest prison, Fleury Méréogis, having been deported from Belgium. He is on intensive suicide watch.

It is important to note the remarkable silence on this affair by the French media. Indeed, these revelations underscore the sordid political mechanisms through which the media and the government of French President François Hollande exploit the so-called war on terror to justify the imposition of police state measures.

Hollande has invoked the threat of attacks to impose the ongoing state of emergency in France, which has seen hordes of riot police attack protesters opposed to an unpopular labor reform. The goal of the French government is to manipulate the reaction of the public to the attacks, to allow it to proceed with physically crushing the opposition of workers and youth to his government's hated austerity policies.



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