

## **LNG Vulnerabilities Go Far Beyond Their Facilities**

**Joel N. Gordes**

During 2004 I very carefully read, tabbed and annotated the 9/11 Commission Report (Kean/Hamilton Commission) and listened to many of the hearings that led up to its publication.

At approximately five minutes into her statement to that Commission, Dr. Condoleezza Rice said, "The terrorists were at war with us but we were not yet at war with them."

At approximately 60 minutes into the CIA's testimony, Deputy Director John McLaughlin, noted:

One thing the American people need to understand is that we are still at war. every single day.... we are not at the end of it and we will have to stay in a defensive posture, and much of this will not be visible to the public, we will have to stay at an offensive posture 24/7.

In light of these statements, it is surprising that the realization that we are at war has not more deeply penetrated the psyches of those who propose and those regulators who approve new energy facilities. There is a distinct dearth of security considerations and even when security is considered it is confined to the narrowest microcosm.

It can only be surmised that even lack of dialogue on security issues may be due to some imagined perception by decision-makers that even discussing concerns is "giving something to the enemy." They should be assured that the very lack of discussion speaks volumes and those who would wish us harm already know where all the vulnerabilities of our existing infrastructure lie --- probably better than these all-too-tacit regulators. There is little doubt reconnaissance has been undertaken both physically and cybernetically on our systems for years. Lack of any discussion is more likely to embolden terrorists to take action than information provided in the proper context that could actually provide deterrence (as can diversion, deception and even selective mis/dis-information) to contemplated attacks.

A well-articulated, concrete set of existing measures already in place as well as goals and objectives could aid in establishing how such contemplated actions against our critical infrastructure may be thwarted. Unfortunately, unrelenting and mostly unquestioned support for certain energy projects be they large transmission line projects or new LNG facilities provide a telegraph to terrorists that we will continue to put ourselves into vulnerable positions. This past November NARUC passed a resolution concerning utility sector interdependencies that recognizes the interrelationship of natural gas to electric to telecom systems and the damage that can take place to all critical infrastructures by incapacitating any of these key ones. That is exactly what is at stake here when a single "centralized solution" is proposed to each specific energy problem.

Currently, we face the prospect of new liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities to be built in numerous locations. These present new energy security challenges far beyond merely blowing them up (although we must be wary of any attendant loss of life and that would certainly be a tragedy albeit limited.) The 9/11 Commission report said that the greatest failing of those tasked with security was "a failing of imagination." While Dr. Condoleezza Rice was quoted just a few paragraphs earlier, her widely-reported statement wherein she said who would've thought of anyone using aircraft as missiles of destruction highlights this point. Tom Clancy used exactly that mechanism in his 1994 book *Debt of Honor* wherein an airliner was used to destroy the nation's capitol. While it may appear frivolous to suggest that energy planners and regulators read Tom Clancy, Clive Cussler and others to better understand our past and potentially our future security failings, it may be essential in order to correct that failing of imagination so imbued in our mindset. One potential scenario that could take place due to this growing LNG dependence uses, by way of example, the existing Everett, Massachusetts and proposed Broadwater facility planned for Long Island Sound.

Because of the large amount of LNG this new facility and a planned enlargement of the one at Everett at some point in the future we can only assume it will make us far more dependent upon them and vulnerable to any disruption of these two supply sources. Peter Asmus in his EnergyPulse article, *LNG: Just Say Maybe*, notes that as much as 25% of California total gas supply might come from a single LNG facility at some future point in time. (see [http://www.energypulse.net/centers/article/article\\_display.cfm?a\\_id=914](http://www.energypulse.net/centers/article/article_display.cfm?a_id=914) ) It is under those or similar conditions, as we become more dependent upon them, the hour of maximum danger approaches.

With apologies to Tom Clancy this is one possible scenario: If terrorists were to blow the two major facilities simultaneously on a day like the ones in late December 1989 when East Coast temperatures were in the 10 degree below zero range for days on end it might result in catastrophic human suffering and loss of life. Especially if they were smart enough (and they are) to wait for an ice storm as in December 1973 or January 1998 or a large snowstorm as in January 2005 which would hamper use of emergency vehicles to move people to shelters or to even refuel emergency generators. Especially if it was blended with a coincident cyberattack to disrupt critical communications and traffic flows. In 1989 there was very little use of gas for electric generation in the Northeast -- not the situation today or ahead. Imagine this scenario and the consequences in lives lost let alone economic losses that could accompany increased dependence on LNG under it unless proper protections are built in. (They are not.)

Also consider that the second largest source of foreign LNG is Algeria (Trinidad & Tobago are currently #1) and the information from the Broadwater project indicates that it may be a primary source for this facility.

In 1991 Algeria was about to have free elections but it was would become what author Fareed Zakaria has called in his book *The Future of Freedom* a "one man, one vote, once" situation as the fundamentalists were poised to win the election. This would likely have been the last free election after Sharia (Islamic Holy Law) was put in place. The

military sprang a coup instead and that is where we are today ---another politically fragile situation. <sup>1</sup> Surprisingly the aforementioned Trinidad and Tobago has its own small, but homegrown Jihadist group, Jamaat-al Muslimeen, which already attempted a coup in 1990. A report from Insight Magazine's Scott Wheeler recounted that:

... the Trinidad-based Muslim group Jamaat al-Muslimeen bombed police headquarters, attacked the parliament, shot and wounded the prime minister and held hostage members of his Cabinet in an effort to overthrow the government. According to press accounts, 24 people were killed and hundreds wounded during the attempted coup that lasted six days.<sup>2</sup>

The question is do we want to further expose ourselves to even greater dependency on the risky politics of Jihadist Islam? While the availability of those LNG sources might continue (and they might not) under fundamentalist regimes, it would probably be at a higher cost. That might destroy the economics and value of those projects.

For these reasons, and numerous others, these new facilities should undergo far more scrutiny than currently provided on security and sociopolitical criteria. You are now free to dream up your own scenarios.

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<sup>1</sup> The author of this article brought up this exact point in his testimony of October 30, 1990, to the Office of Policy & Management's Energy Division on their "Connecticut's Energy Future: Making the Right Choices" plan.

<sup>2</sup> Scott L. Wheeler. The World: Trinidad and Tobago. Terrorists Develop Island Operations. Insight on the News - World Issue: 1/7/03,  
[http://www.insightmag.com/global\\_user\\_elements/printpage.cfm?storyid=342431](http://www.insightmag.com/global_user_elements/printpage.cfm?storyid=342431)

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