



# **Business Intelligence Required for National Security and Civil Liberties**

By Dr. Ramon Barquin

*President of Barquin International  
&  
BeyeNETWORK Government Expert*

*and*

David Trickett

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**T**he terrorist acts in early July that halted transit systems in greater London took place just before an unexpected family emergency took one of us (David) to the United Kingdom. Having a front-row seat in another nation's struggle to understand and also take decisive action to protect oneself can be instructive for one's own efforts at home. This was the case in July, for the second ("failed") effort to take down London transit which took place before the trip home.

Intelligence and security forces acted swiftly following both incidents. With the first, there was a great deal of attention to the loss of life, the infrastructure damage and collateral psychological impact of what many in the public viewed as an unthinkable act. Apprehension of perpetrators—indeed, even the identification of them—initially seemed to move forward as slowly as molasses pours. But, as we know, progress has been made.

When the second event took place, actions to secure the public space—including mental space, the place where fear and hope lives inside each of us—was even more evident than it was two weeks earlier. And we know that at least one resident from Brazil lost not only his civil liberties, but also his life on a public transit platform. He lost his life in a violent display of protective force after being shot eight times in the head.

Almost daily, British television news was glued to two topics: finding and making sure that the culprits (and any accomplices) responsible for the July events were taken into custody. Almost a mission-like focus to highlight how certain international terrorist groups work, find footholds in impoverished developing nations, and then infiltrate the West and North to do their harm was shown to the viewing public. The papers, particularly the tabloids, were not far behind the video-casters in the topics they covered. Questions were asked about the possible infringements to civil liberties that people must be subjected to in order to be safe. We contemplate similar questions here in the United States.

In many areas of life that we find complicated, we should ideally turn to professionals—experts, in some fashion or another—to help us. When it comes to matters of national—or even local—security, though, many members of the general public shrink from the critical roles they have to play. We find it easy to hand nearly everything—including our fears about our own abilities to keep ourselves safe—to others, but we do this at our own peril. The voice of the people is an essential building block in the foundation for a free society. We must be clear about how our basic civil liberties will be preserved as we face increasingly frequent and challenging security threats.

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One thing evident in England recently that also seems noticeable here in the United States is an underlying uncertainty about whom we can really trust. We see this in many settings: whether suspiciously eyeing the person sitting next to us on public transit, wondering about what's in every backpack we see or having less confidence in the effectiveness of certain screening stations as we go through security lines at some busy airports (not to mention those small air fields that don't have much security to speak of). Who is trustworthy? Who or what can ensure that we will be able to make it home safely at the end of what begins as a normal day?

The knowledge management and business intelligence disciplines have a vital role to take in helping shape the deep underlying sentiments that give us confidence in our leaders. Where the field has excelled to date is largely in amassing and disseminating information as it is transformed into actionable knowledge. That greatly helps with the nuts and bolts of security, the daily operational tasks that affect each of us. But it doesn't go very far in addressing our deep yearning to feel safe again. We need to trust that leaders are in place whose judgment somehow accurately and honestly account for our hopes and fears. We need those leaders to put agencies, policies, and practices in place that will genuinely support us as free people, while also protecting us. We know that hard choices have to be made in an effort to maintain civil liberties while providing effectively for our security. But what is the *framework* giving shape to those choices that have to be taken? It seems as if we have gone down the somewhat easier path—that of pitting civil liberties against national security, and then asserting (usually more loudly than thoughtfully) that when they conflict the path to take is pretty clear. But are security and liberty really in such deep competition with one another? We do not think so. Rather than taking an “either/or” approach, what about a reasoned “both/and” approach? The [Government Channel](#) addressed the problem of balancing these two critical values in a recent article, [Societal Issues, Business Intelligence and the Need for Balance](#).

What might a sustainable “both/and” framework look like? For one thing, this relationship would reflect a leadership mindset at all levels of our society that finds genuine positive value in embracing real diversity, and doesn't just give lip service to it. Those who see things from this perspective also value the task of working to transform organizational cultures from one way of being to diverse, flexible ways—such as *from* hoarding and reinforcing barriers of separation *to* sharing mission-critical information and goals so that effective collaboration is an outcome. The greater we can weave an interdependent web of strong relationships among agencies, within them, and with the public—which, at the heart, includes transparency of important and trustworthy information that we can use in becoming and staying safe), the more secure we will all be. And we will be safe mostly because our civil liberties have not been foreshortened or abrogated. We will then have a voice that is accountable, valuable and difference—making.

Those who protect us can do so only by our consent. The world has a track record that shows when genuine popular consent is absent; regimes do not have a viable future, even if some remain for a while. It is now essential that we communicate with those whose mission it is to make our nation secure. Together we can collaborate on a process of deliberation concerning standards of ideal community life, and in this iterative process we will affirm and renew who we are as people. Knowledge management and business intelligence can help us toward this key goal. We have a heritage that touches all of us to some degree, of being “one from many.”

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Today, we cannot afford to focus only on one thing—our security—at the expense of our liberties as human beings.

## About the Authors

**Dr. Ramon Barquin** is the President of Barquin International, a consulting firm, since 1994. He specializes in developing information systems strategies, particularly data warehousing, customer relationship management, business intelligence and knowledge management, for public and private sector enterprises. He has consulted for the U.S. Military, many government agencies and international governments and corporations.

Dr. Barquin is a member of the E-Gov (Electronic Government) Advisory Board, and chair of its knowledge management conference series; member of the Digital Government Institute Advisory Board; and has been the Program Chair for E-Government and Knowledge Management programs at the Brookings Institution. He was also the co-founder and first president of The Data Warehousing Institute, and president of the Computer Ethics Institute. His PhD is from MIT. Dr. Barquin can be reached at [rbarquin@barquin.com](mailto:rbarquin@barquin.com).

**David Trickett** is the Founder and President of The Jefferson Circle, a practice he established in the early 1990s to work with people and organizations that find themselves stuck and don't want to be. His contribution lies at the intersection of human systems strategy and human capacity development, and has worked with nation states in different regions of the world, family-held and publicly traded companies ranging from small to multi-national, as well as nonprofit organizations. In addition to creative problem solving that brings tangible benefits, he provides clients with highly customized research and writing on topics essential to executing effective strategy. He also speaks in selective venues and writes periodically for wider audiences.