

Germany stays calm in the face of terrorism threat

On 3 October the US Department of State issued a warning for American citizens about possible terrorist attacks in Europe. The British Foreign Office has also warned its citizens about the threat of terrorist attacks in France and Germany. Despite these announcements the German Ministry of the Interior did not change its assessment of the threat and announced that it did not have any data about attacks planned in the immediate future. It appears that the German security services have infiltrated Islamist circles in Germany to the degree that they do not have cause for much concern.

According to the media, the source of American (and probably British) information about potential attacks is a German citizen of Afghan origins. He was arrested by the Americans in Kabul in July this year and has been undergoing interrogation in the American base Bagram in Afghanistan. The information revealed by him probably made the strike by American drone planes on the mosque in North Waziristan in Pakistan on 4 October possible. As a result of this attack German Islamists that were to participate in planning attacks in Europe were killed. German security services did not however increase the level of threat for terrorist attacks in Germany. Due to a lack of specific information about the planned attacks, the German Ministry of the Interior announced that it did not see a reason for increased alert level. At the same time it points to the general threat of terrorist attacks in Germany that has existed since the beginning of 2009. The calm reaction of the federal Ministry of the Interior also shows a change in the policy of this ministry which occurred after the election to the Bundestag held in 2009. The new Interior Minister in the CDU/CSU/FDP government, Thomas de Maiziere, has stepped back from the policy employed by his predecessor of alarming German society about the threat of terrorist attacks on insubstantial grounds. <jus>