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Words of Welcome from the Editors

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to announce the release of Volume XVI, Issue 5 (October 2022) of *Perspectives on Terrorism* (ISSN 2334-3745). Our independent online journal is an Open Access publication of the Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI), Vienna, and the Institute of Security and Global Affairs (ISGA) of Leiden University's Campus in The Hague. All past and recent issues can be found at: <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/perspectives-on-terrorism>.

Perspectives on Terrorism (PoT) is indexed by JSTOR, SCOPUS, and Google Scholar where it ranks No. 3 of journals in the field of Terrorism Studies. Jouroscope™, the directory of scientific journals, has listed PoT as one of the top ten journals in the category free open access journals in social sciences. Now in its 16th year of publication, PoT has nearly 8,000 registered subscribers and many more occasional readers and website visitors in academia, government and civil society worldwide. The Articles of its six annual issues are fully peer-reviewed by external referees while its Research Notes and other content are subject to internal editorial quality control.

The current issue features five **Articles**. The first two, by Atal Ahmadzai on the one hand and by Dalbir Ahl-wat and M. Raymond Izarali on the other hand, discuss the local and regional implications of the Taliban gaining state power in Afghanistan. The third article by Alif Satria and Cameron Sumpter explore a policy dilemma of Indonesia's counterterrorism strategy. This is followed by an analysis from Raphael Cohen-Almagor on the (ir-) responsibility of social media for spreading terrorist content, exemplified by the role of Google's YouTube. Finally, Jeppe T. Jacobsen offers five reasons why cyberterrorism has not happened – yet.

The current issue also features two **Research Notes**. The first of these, by Matthew DeMichele, Wesley S. McCann, Kathleen Blee and Peter Simi, explores what led nearly 50 people into and out of White Extremism. In the second Research Note, Katalin Pethö-Kiss examines the reasons why five individuals decided to attack places of worship in Europe, concluding that there is no such thing as a 'typical extremist'.

The **Resources** section features, in its CT-Bookshelf 11 short reviews by our book reviews editor, Joshua Sinai. This is followed by a review of David C. Rapoport's *Global Waves of Terrorism* by Alex Schmid. Our information resources editor, Judith Tinnes, offers a new bibliography on the terrorism research literature. Associate Editor Berto Jongman contributes another of his wide-ranging surveys of recent online resources on terrorism and related subjects. And Broderick McDonald provides a list of academic theses (Ph.D. and M.A.) on terrorism in war and terrorist warfare tactics.

In **Announcements**, our new Associate Editor, Méryl Demunyk, presents her first "Conference Calendar". Finally, the brief **About *Perspectives on Terrorism*** section lists the people behind the journal and their tasks.

The texts of the current issue of *Perspectives on Terrorism* have been selected, edited and prepared by James Forest and Alex Schmid, the journal's principal editors, with the help of our Associate Editors. Editorial Assistant Jodi Moore handled proof-reading, while the technical online launch of the October 2022 issue of our journal has been in the hands of our Associate Editor for IT, Audrey J. Vrolijk (ISGA, The Hague Campus of Leiden University).

IS-Khorasan: Organizational Structure, Ideological Convergence with the Taliban, and Future Prospects

by Atal Ahmadzai

Abstract

Contrary to its known name, many aspects of IS-Khorasan are shrouded in secrecy. The Taliban regime in Kabul claims that the subsidiary of ISIS-Core is an insignificant and irrelevant threat. On the other hand, international military and intelligence sources warn about its resurgence. Utilizing three types of sources of information (existing literature, the Taliban literature, and insights of local residents), this article offers a new perspective on IS-K. The dual organizational structure provides IS-K with flexibility and resilience for survival. Furthermore, its ideological convergence with the Taliban has assisted the core of the organization to remain protected. While its outer layer has been dismantled and dispersed in eastern Afghanistan, IS-K has more opportunities in the northern regions to transform into a regional and global threat.

Keywords: Islamic State Khorasan Province (IS-K), Daesh, Afghanistan, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K), Terrorism, Afghanistan, Taliban

Disclaimer: Due to the current political and security situation in Afghanistan, the author of this article used pseudonyms for the study's respondents. All the respondents live in Afghanistan, and, following their request, the author decided to conceal any identifiers that could directly or indirectly compromise their safety and well-being.

Introduction

Since late 2014, terrorist activities carried out in Afghanistan,[1] Pakistan,[2] Tajikistan,[3] and India[4] have been referred to, or claimed by, the Islamic State-Khorasan Province or IS-K. The organization reached worldwide attention in late August 2021 when it accepted responsibility for a suicide bombing at the Kabul Airport that killed 13 U.S. service members and 170 Afghan civilians.[5] Ever since, IS-K has continued to perform mass killings, including suicide bombings in Shi'a mosques and schools.[6–8] In addition, the group carried out coordinated attacks targeting the Taliban's high military officials and ideologists.[9][10]

The attacks claimed by the IS-K instigated a surge of information about the group.[11–14] Nevertheless, in the months following the Taliban's rise to power in Kabul, the violence inflicted by IS-K remained limited in scope and intensity. This raised doubts about the group's military and organizational capabilities.[15] However, such a presumption could not hold ground for long. With the arrival of spring, the fighting season in Afghanistan, IS-K intensified its indiscriminate and targeted violence across the country.[16] Still, the group has remained shrouded in secrecy, and the existing information about it is contested and contradictory.

The Taliban regime claims to have uprooted the organization in Afghanistan, a mission the U.S. and NATO failed to accomplish.[17] U.S. military and intelligence officials, in contrast, believe that IS-K is reconstituting itself and will be able to conduct attacks out of Afghanistan within a year and a half.[18] The recent wave of violence is indicative of such a transformation. Since the rise of the Taliban to power, IS-K has remained the top terrorist threat targeting religious minorities, the economic infrastructure, and the Taliban.[19][20] Lately, the group warned of a new era of violence. In its newly launched online English magazine addressing a global audience, IS-K claimed the beginning of a new age of jihad.[21]

The uncertainties surrounding IS-K intensify the need to explore key aspects of this subsidiary of the Islamic State (IS). What is the current strength of the organization in Afghanistan? What are the ideological and strategic dynamics between the Taliban and the IS-K? What is the growth potential of IS-K, which could allow it to become a regional or even global threat? These are the main questions that this article addresses.

As mentioned, knowledge about IS-K is limited and contested. Methodologically, the mutually reinforcing

challenges of information accessibility and authenticity about the group have shaped the problem. Existing information about the group primarily comes from Western and former Afghan security and intelligence sources. The withdrawal of the U.S. from Afghanistan and the subsequent collapse of the Afghan government have created an information vacuum about IS-K, which is consequential, especially at a time of the IS-K's transformation.

Before the fall of Kabul to the Taliban, IS-K was reconstituting itself from the strategic losses it incurred at the hands of the U.S. military, Afghan security forces, and the Taliban during 2019–20.[22] At the time, the organization started moving from eastern Afghanistan toward the northern and northeastern regions of the country. It is challenging to assess the country's new political and strategic realities following the fall of Kabul. Furthermore, the media blackout in the country orchestrated by the Taliban regime for political and strategic reasons reinforces such limitations. Before publishing any information, Afghan media outlets need approval from the Taliban.[23] Since taking state power, the Taliban regime has emerged as the primary source of information about IS-K. It has monopolized information by systematically closing down free media.[24] Such a monopoly over information poses challenges for separating the Taliban's propaganda from facts about IS-K.

The Taliban have persistently downplayed the threat of IS-K.[25] They also deny the existence of foreign militants in the country, including within the IS-K.[26] Such denials are orchestrated for political and strategic reasons. By toning down the threat of IS-K, the Taliban claim a monopoly over the use of force/violence across the country that the group needs to seek international recognition and legitimacy. In addition, the Taliban's claim of successfully uprooting the threat of the ISIS-K in the country is meant to project the notion of their disassociation from global terrorism. Waging war against local members of IS-K can also obscure the regime's failure or unwillingness to sever ties with al-Qaeda and other transnational terrorist groups. Recent U.S. military and intelligence assessments as well as a UN report suggest that the Taliban regime is likely loosening its pressure on al-Qaeda to reestablish external operations capabilities.[27][28] The killing of Al-Zawahiri in Kabul in a U.S. counterterrorism operation would appear to confirm existing synergies between the Taliban and transnational terrorism.

Against the backdrop of challenges related to the accessibility and authenticity of the information, this article sheds new light on the current state of IS-K. The study on which it is based matched existing literature with data from the field. In addition, the study also explored the Taliban literature on IS-K. During their insurgency, the Taliban sources consistently wrote about IS-K since the latter came into existence in 2014. This corpus is mainly in the Pashto language and is composed of plain op-eds, field reports, critical analyses, decrees, and hermeneutic pieces based on religious scripts and interpretation. The corpus opens a unique window to examine the emergence of IS-K and how its relationships with the Taliban evolved. In addition, it provides materials for contrasting the ideological orientations of the two militant entities.

The author of this article gathered field information through interviews with key informants in Kabul and Nangarhar provinces in Afghanistan. Subsequently, key informants identified residents of districts in eastern and northern regions infiltrated by IS-K militants since 2015. In total, 12 field interviews were conducted with residents in the following districts: Achin, Speen Ghar, Kot, Haska Mina, and Shirzad in Nangarhar Province; Chardara and Dashti Archi in Kunduz province; and residents in Takhar, Balkh, Faryab, and Badakhshan provinces. All interviews took place via telecommunication.

In the following sections, this article provides insights into the origin of IS-K, contrasts the ideological orientations of the Taliban and IS-K, and discusses IS-K's current status and future potential. Each of these topics has interconnected strategic implications. Reviewing the origin of IS-K sheds light on the evolutionary trajectory of the organization and hence helps us understand its current shape and structure. The article concludes that IS-K is not a centralized and unitary organization but since its establishment, practices a local-foreign structural dualism.

Contrasting ideological orientations is aimed at exploring the Taliban's strategy toward IS-K. One finding is

that IS-K and the Taliban converge on fundamental ideological tenets. Such a convergence facilitates synergies for long-term interests between the two groups. Lastly, it is argued that, unlike ISIS-Core, the immediate goal of IS-K is not to establish its territorial power but to infiltrate the surrounding regions, including Central Asia. The group's strategic goal is not to topple the Taliban regime but to expand its own tentacles.

A Fragmented Origin

Unlike reports originating from eastern Afghanistan,[29] IS-K emerged in Pakistan. The Taliban sources identified the Tirah valley of Orakzai district in Northwestern Pakistan as its birthplace.[30] The origin, however, was not centralized but fragmented.

In 2014, the Pakistan military launched the Zarb-e-Azab operation in North Waziristan against local and foreign militants, mainly Tahrir-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM). While some TTP leadership reemerged in Tirah Valley, militants belonged to IMU, and ETIM seemingly vanished into thin air but later resurfaced in Afghanistan.

In Tirah Valley, the TTP leadership initially reorganized itself into a new group named Tehrik-e Khilafat Pakistan (TKP) [the Caliphate Movement of Pakistan] led by Mullah Saeed Orakzai, otherwise known as Hafiz Saeed Khan, a former TTP high-level operative. Soon after its establishment, the group started promoting ISIS in the region. In September 2014, ISIS-Core sent an envoy to Pakistan for a monthlong talk with the leaders of the newly established TKP.[31] In January 2015, the TKP pledged allegiance to Abu Bakar Al-Baghdadi, the then-leader of ISIS.[32] The latter quickly reciprocated the pledge by officially accepting the oath of allegiance and announced the establishment of the IS in Khorasan Province (IS-K) under the governorship of Saeed Khan, with Mullah Abdul Rauf Khadim as his deputy.[33][34]

Before becoming the deputy of Khan, Khadim, a former Taliban commander and a former Guantanamo detainee, defected from the Taliban and started promoting ISIS in the Kajaki district of Helmand in southern Afghanistan. He was reportedly engaged in resettling the foreign fighters that fled from Waziristan into the area. Days after being named as deputy of IS-K, Khadim was killed in a targeted drone strike by US forces.[35]

Meanwhile, at the same time in eastern Afghanistan, Abdul Rahim Muslim Dost, another former Taliban militant with a long terrorism charge sheet, including imprisonment in Guantanamo Bay, opened another front of promoting ISIS and pledged his allegiance to al-Baghdadi.[36] There is no evidence to indicate that Dost had initially combined his efforts to promote ISIS with either Khan or Khadim. Taliban sources noted that both Khan and Dost acted independently and out of opportunism in pledging allegiance to al-Baghdadi. The source claims that while Khan got recognition by ISIS, Dost's allegiance landed on deaf ears and was not reciprocated.[37] However, soon thereafter, Dost joined IS-K under the leadership of Khan and facilitated its expansion into eastern Afghanistan, which subsequently became a crucial front for IS-K's foreign elements.

Giustozzi claimed that Khan's credentials of traveling to Syria and having membership in Al Nusra and, in 2013, in ISIS were crucial in designating him as the IS-K head.[38] However, there is no evidence to suggest that Khan traveled to Syria, except Khan's own claim in an interview with Giustozzi. The latter seemed to take the claim at face value. Within the global jihadi culture, such wild claims are mainly used for the purpose of suggesting divine and moral legitimacy. Within this culture, even dreams are used as tools to seek legitimacy. As such, Khan's claims of being a member of Al Nusra and then of ISIS in Syria before becoming the head of IS-K can pretty much be a fantasy created for soliciting legitimacy among the jihadi groups in the region when seeking leadership. There is no third-party evidence to authenticate Khan's travel to Syria and his memberships in Al Nusra or ISIS-Core. The Taliban sources, on the contrary, indicate that before reemerging in the Tirah Valley from Waziristan and before establishing TKP, Khan was a mid-level commander of the Tarik Taliban-Pakistan (TTP) in Waziristan.[39]

While Khan was designated to lead IS-K in the Tirah Valley, Dost initiated the resettling foreign militants

in eastern Afghanistan. Respondents in the region revealed that Dost initially started to facilitate harboring foreign militants in the southern districts of Nangarhar province in 2015.[40][41] It indicates that Dost's initial allegiance to ISIS and his subsequent integration with IS-K may have been due to his close contacts with foreign militants who escaped from Waziristan in 2014. Taliban sources acknowledge that they relocated foreign militants, mainly from Central Asia, including Uyghur fighters, to eastern Afghanistan before the start of the Waziristan operation.[42]

In 2017, Taliban sources revealed that during the 2014 Pakistan Army Zarb-e-Azab operation in Waziristan, foreign fighters, mainly those from Uzbekistan, were relocated into Zabul province in southern Afghanistan. [43] In 2015, a defecting Taliban commander, Mullah Mansoor Dadullah, collaborated with Uzbek fighters against the Taliban in Zabul province. Under the IS-K flag, they laid siege on some districts in the province and committed violence against the Shi'a population. The Taliban responded by waging war against the Uzbek fighters and their local collaborators in late 2015.[44] A Taliban official report indicates that the Taliban retook the districts and executed Dadullah and his men. The report vaguely mentioned that the foreign/Uzbek militants were dispersed.[45]

In brief, after the dispersion of militants from Waziristan in 2014, they reemerged in three different regions. The first group was the Pakistani militants that established IS-K in northwestern Pakistan. Initially, the Taliban relocated the foreign fighters to eastern and southern Afghanistan. In alliance with Afghan collaborators, mainly former Taliban commanders, these elements reorganized themselves in Nangarhar, Zabul, and Helmand provinces.

Subsequently, all three groups reconvened in the southern districts of Nangarhar province in eastern Afghanistan. By 2020, after years of fighting with the U.S., the Afghan government, and the Taliban, the foreign elements moved out of eastern Afghanistan and relocated to the country's northern regions.[46] By that time, its local fighters (Pashtun tribesmen) were killed, captured, or dispersed. During the initial phase of its evolution, IS-K's organization embraced a local-foreign dual structure.

Local-Foreign Structural Duality

The dispersion of militants from Waziristan and the subsequent fragmented rise of IS-K gave birth to confusion about its structure. Some analysts see IS-K as a centralized and unitary entity, composed mainly of local Pashtun (Afghan and Pakistani) militants.[47][48] In his detailed account of IS-K's structure, Giustozzi asserts that the organization is a hybrid model with a centralized structure but centrifugal tendencies. He considers IS-K as an alliance of four local groups, namely Tehrik-e Khilafat Khorasan (TKK), Tehrik-e Khilafat Pakistan (TKP), Khilafat Afghan and Azizullah Haqqani.[49] When trying to understand the genesis and structure of IS-K, Giustozzi had given much weight to the role of ISIS leadership, including Al-Baghdadi, Muslim Turkmani, and Omar al-Shishani, in encouraging Afghan and Pakistani volunteer fighters in Syria to return and establish a branch of the organization in the region.[50] He claims that efforts were also coordinated with the Afghan Taliban, including its Peshawar Shura and Haqqani Network members, to facilitate establishing such a branch. There are two issues that the narrative could not explain. First, the Taliban source that has started commenting on ISIS since its inception reveals no accounts to suggest their direct contacts with either ISIS or its subsidiary. Similarly, Johnson (2016) rejected the view that the returning Afghan and Pakistani fighters from Syria played any role in establishing IS-K.[51] Secondly, Giustozzi overlooked the roles and constituencies of the foreign militants displaced from Waziristan in the organization's composition. This present article, on the contrary, notes a more pragmatic and fragmented genesis and structure of IS-K. The most significant aspect of the organizational structure is its local-foreign duality.

In general, the public face of IS-K portrays an organization composed of local Pashtun tribesmen, mainly from Pakistan's tribal areas and eastern Afghanistan. However, the study on which this article is based found two structural layers within the organization—an outer layer primarily composed of the local militants and a veiled inner or a core layer, exclusively composed of foreign militants, mainly from Central Asia as well as

some from the Middle East.

Residents of remote villages and districts in eastern Afghanistan, where IS-K infiltrated during different periods from 2015 to 2020, revealed a visible division/divide between the dealings and conducts of the two layers. While the local elements were more brutal, mostly uneducated, and detectable, the foreign fighters were more organized, well-equipped, and out of the way of the public eye. The foreign elements mostly dwelled in deep pockets of villages where local IS-K militants resided in the out parameters. In addition to spreading fear and terror among the local population by inflicting inhumane and barbaric violence, the local militants also served as a protective layer for the inner core and facilitated accommodation and provisioning services for the foreigners.

A respondent in the secluded mountainous region of Haska Mina (Dih Bala) in eastern Afghanistan indicated that in 2018, in addition to Pashtun fighters, a group of up to 45–50 foreign fighters lived in the area. Unlike their local peers, the foreign elements mostly remained unengaged with the local population and were kept isolated from the larger community.[52] Another respondent in the Shirzad district remembered that the local people welcomed the existence of those foreign militants in the area as they created economic opportunities by offering high prices for daily provisions, including livestock, dairy products, and rentals. [53] The respondent stated that in the Kandi village, a resident, who used to be an Imam of a local mosque and then moved out to live in Pakistan, rented his abandoned compound to a group of IS-K foreign militants in exchange for US\$400 per month. The respondent claimed that getting this much for the rental in an off-the-grid area was unprecedented.[54]

In the Achin district in eastern Afghanistan, a respondent revealed that the foreign militants were mainly men that, unlike their local peers, mostly avoided interfering in the affairs of the villages. They were organized into 4–5 subgroups that frequently moved from the village to the nearby mountains, most probably for training purposes.[55]

Relatively, according to the study respondents in northern Afghanistan, similar structural dynamics were observed in Andarab [56] and Khost-o-Farang [57] districts in the northern regions during 2020–21. The only difference inferred from the accounts of some respondents is that in the northern region, the Pashtun tribesmen, primarily the Pakistani elements, were not accompanying the foreign elements. Instead, residents observed fewer local militiamen, mainly former/Jihadi warlords, alongside the foreign fighters. In addition, unlike in Nangarhar Province, the foreign fighters were socially not very dependent on their local peers. Instead, taking advantage of their ethnic and linguistic similarities with the local population, the Uzbek and Tajik fighters were more independent in their dealings and interactions. Villagers reportedly informed the then-Afghan government local officials about the newly arrived fighters. The officials refused to intervene. [58]

After the organization started shifting to the northern parts of the country in 2020, the Pashtun elements within the IS-K have considerably abridged. With the collapse of Kabul to the Taliban, IS-K's outer layer of local fighters further thinned out as the Taliban initiated a brutal campaign against them (discussed in detail elsewhere).

The local-foreign duality in the organizational structure of IS-K has evolved since its inception in early 2015. The entity has initially come together as the result of three relatively parallel processes of new recruitment, reorganization/resettlement of the existing foreign groups in the region, and repositioning elements from the Middle East.

The recruitment process was mostly focused on attracting fighters from local Pashtun tribes in the regions surrounding the Thira Valley in northwestern Pakistan. Soon after announcing its existence, the group recruited Orakzai tribesmen, predominantly. Even when IS-K shifted to Afghanistan in 2015, these tribesmen composed a large proportion of the organization's rank and file. During that time, the Taliban sources acknowledged that the Orakzai tribesmen were the main elements in the then newly shifted IS-K in eastern

Afghanistan.[59] Similarly, the U.S. commander in Afghanistan in 2017 acknowledged that IS-K fighters are Pakistani from the Orakzai agency.[60]

When the organization moved to eastern Afghanistan in 2015, it continued recruiting local fighters. This study revealed that unlike in the Orakzai district, where the recruits were primarily uneducated tribal religious fanatics, recruits in this part of Afghanistan were the ideologically driven and well-educated Salafi cadres from the four eastern provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar, Nuristan, and Laghman.[61][62] It is worth mentioning that the roots of Salafism in Eastern Afghanistan go back to the Afghan Jihad era in the 1980s when a local Mujahideen leader named Jamil-u-Rahman with the support of Arab mujahideen and finances from Saudi and Kuwait established Salafi madrasas in the Kunar Province of Afghanistan and the adjacent Bajaur District in northwestern Pakistan.[63]

The second process involved in the initial evolution of IS-K was resettling the existing transnational militant groups in the region. Before the Waziristan operation, foreign militant groups, including the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and other militants from Central Asia, were relocated to Afghanistan by the Taliban. These groups resettled in Nangarhar, Zabul, and Helmand provinces and were protected by local militants. In Nangarhar Province, the foreign fighters got together with the newly shifted IS-K. In Helmand, a former Taliban commander, who became IS-K deputy leader, supported the relocated foreign fighters.[64] [65] In Zabul, the Uzbek fighters relied on another dissented Taliban commander Mullah Mansoor Dadullah (discussed below).[66]

In the subsequent years after IS-K announced its existence and was endorsed by ISIS, the latter assisted its new franchise with human and financial resources. Reportedly, it relocated some operatives in the newly designed IS province. According to the UN in 2017, “ISIS-core continues to facilitate the relocation of some of its key operatives to Afghanistan, including Abu Qutaiba, the Islamic State’s former leader in Iraq’s Salah al-Din province.”[67] Similarly, ISIS-Core also sent financial resources to IS-K to improve its network and organizational structure.[68]

Initially, the U.S. Central Command believed that the “Khurasan Group” was an elite independent terrorist network comprised of core Al-Qaeda operatives and some elite members of the Al-Nusra Front in Syria. [69][70] Other sources questioned the independent existence of such a group and asserted it should be a small network within a network.[71] Al-Nusra Front categorically denied the existence of such a group and considered it a fabrication by the U.S.[72] Soon after, the FBI announced the destruction of the group, claiming that it was no longer a threat.[73] This was at the time when ISIS sent its delegation to meet Khan in Pakistan, who had pledged allegiance to the organization, for initial talks. The discussion among the U.S. military and intelligence circles about the emergence and then rapid dissolution of the “Khorasan group” might have been confused with the emergence and spread of IS-K.

In brief, while existing literature points out the presence of foreign fighters from Central Asia and some Arabs in the composition of IS-K [74–76] the structural duality of the organization is a new find. IS-K is composed of two unfused layers of local and foreign groups. Contrary to Giustozzi’s claim about the IS-K rejecting the notion of being a nomadic jihadi organization without a stable home,[77] this study found that while local fighters serve as the face of the organization, its core has remained obscured and migratory.

The outer layer of the organization is unstable and constantly changing due to the mobility of its core from one region to the other. In eastern Afghanistan, the organization developed a thick outer layer with thousands of local fighters from Pakistan and Afghanistan. However, since the IS-K shifted to the northern region of Afghanistan, the Pashtun elements have declined considerably. In the northern provinces, IS-K is focusing more on recruiting local and across-the-border Uzbek, Tajik, and Turkman fighters.

Unlike reports portraying an organization internally divided between local (Afghan) and foreign (Pakistani) militants,[78] this study reveals a more novel and pragmatic organizational setup—a local-foreign structure duality. The structure provides the organization with security from existential threats. While the local

(Afghan and Pakistani) elements have remained the main target, the obscured core that is predominantly composed of foreign militants has remained unaffected. It has kept a low profile, is mostly unengaged, and is often on the move. The geographic scope of the organization's current tactical and media activities, including carrying out attacks in the Afghan-Pakistan region and its recent recruitments from Central Asian republics, suggests that the core is anchored through networking.

After rising to power in Kabul, the Taliban has continued a brutal crackdown mainly against the local elements of IS-K. It has almost dismantled the organization's outer layer. Why are the Taliban targeting IS-K's local fighters, not the core? To explain this puzzle, it is important to compare the ideological orientation of the Taliban with that of the IS-K.

Ideological Convergence with the Taliban

An apparent rivalry between the Taliban and IS-K has existed since the latter emerged on the jihadist landscape in late 2014. While the contentious relationship between the two has been discussed,[79–81] the question that did not attract much attention is whether the rivalry is ideological or strategic. In order to explore the question, this study examines three issues that can help in contrasting the ideological and strategic contours of the IS-K/ Taliban relationship. These are the Taliban's initial stance on the creation of ISIS, the Taliban's position on the issue of the creation of a global caliphate for the "Muslim Umma," and, thirdly, the Taliban's stance on the question of perpetual jihad. While the first issue is more of a strategic significance for understanding the relationship between the Taliban and IS-K, the last two are at the core of almost all Sunni jihadist groups' ideological socialization. In the following, we briefly discuss each of these questions below.

The Taliban's Initial Relationship with ISIS

Examining the Taliban's initial relationship with ISIS-Core helps to determine whether the rift between the two organizations is ideological or strategic. From their writings, it is clear that the Taliban's initial stance on ISIS was nothing but supportive and harmonious. Unlike al-Qaeda, the Taliban welcomed the declaration of the creation of ISIS by Abu Bakar Al-Baghdadi in 2013. In early 2014, the Taliban portrayed a positive image of ISIS through their writings. They addressed its fighters as "mujahideen" or holy warriors, and they even threatened Afghan media outlets not to report negatively on the newly emerged ISIS.[82]

The Taliban speculated about the new ISIS-Core as being influential in combining Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Oman, and Lebanon into a single caliphate.[83] Such conjecture about the creation of an overarching Islamic caliphate was months before the actual proclamation of the caliphate by ISIS in June of 2014. Moving forward, the Taliban apologetically justified ISIS brutality as a reaction to the brutality of the US and NATO. The group even cited Fidel Castro's written piece that compared NATO to Nazi SS.[84] Furthermore, the Taliban claimed that, in addition to being engaged in warfare, ISIS provides welfare programs such as building roads and charity to the poor. The Taliban neither opposed the creation of the caliphate nor denounced ISIS's expansionist agenda. Quite the opposite, the Taliban asserted that the ISIS caliphate was based on justice and meant to serve the Umma [Muslim nation].[85]

Reciprocally, ISIS provided support by publishing the Taliban's related propaganda, news, and other materials in its global media outlets. In 2017, the Taliban sources acknowledged the supportive dynamic and synergies between the two groups. They affirmed and appreciated that ISIS allocated a section of their [International Jihadi Platform] distinctively to the Taliban.[86]

In 2015, the Taliban's then-leader Mullah Mansoor Akhundzada sent a carefully toned letter to the ISIS caliph Abu Bakar Al-Baghdadi. Its contents were not indicative of any ideological differences or contentions. On the contrary, it elaborated the common grounds and shared vision between the two organizations. Mansoor praised the Arab ideologues and pioneers of the global jihad, including Abdullah Azzam, Osama bin Laden, Abdu Musab Al-Zarqawi, and Al-Baghdadi himself, for their relentless sacrifices for the Muslim Umma [nation]. In addition, the letter addressed Al-Baghdadi and his ISIS fighters as mujahideen and

wished them success in their divine efforts.[87]

The letter, which the Taliban leader apparently sent in response to ISIS establishing its subsidiary in the historic Khorasan region (present-day Afghanistan, Central Asia, and parts of Persia and the Indian subcontinent), did not oppose the creation of IS-K. However, it attempted to convince Al-Baghdadi not to challenge the legitimacy of the Taliban's supreme leader Mullah Omar and his claimed title of Amir al-Mu'minin [leader of the Muslimeen] in his domain. It is noteworthy that, by then, Omar was dead (though his death was kept secret). Mansoor requested Al-Baghdadi not to divide the united front against the infidels.[88] The essence of the letter was to convince Al-Baghdadi to let IS-K follow the tradition of other jihadist groups, including Al-Qaeda, Tahrik Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and others who gave their oath of allegiance to the Taliban's Amir al-Mu'minin.

But that is not what happened. ISIS's response to the letter was not just harsh but belittling. According to Giustozzi, Al-Baghdadi described Omar as "uneducated" and unfit for being Amir al-Mu'minin.[89] Subsequently, the official relationship between the two organizations went into a free fall, with ISIS labeling the Taliban heretics.[90] In response, the Taliban decreed any oath of allegiance to Al-Baghdadi as outlawed and un-Islamic.[91]

However, despite the ISIS doctrinal and ideological criticism of the Taliban, the latter never opposed the ideological tenets of ISIS, including the creation of the caliphate and the waging of a global jihad. On the contrary, the Taliban criticized ISIS purely on the ground of strategic imperatives.

The Taliban's Position on the Issue of the Caliphate

The Taliban's rivalry with ISIS is not based on the ideological and moral imperatives of a caliphate. They have explicitly acknowledged the moral and religious necessities for establishing a caliphate. The Taliban assert that it should be the sacred vision of every Islamic movement and group to establish the caliphate.[92] However, they criticized ISIS's unsystematic and drastic approach toward the proclamation of the caliphate. The group considered the ISIS declaration premature and counterproductive, saying that "...there is always a proper time for the realization of such a sacred dream." [93]

The strategic restraint of the Taliban pertaining to the establishment of an overarching caliphate is similar to that of al-Qaeda. According to Giustozzi, al-Qaeda has postponed declaring its caliphate to the distant future.[94] In their writings, the Taliban justified their restraint by referring to a letter that the chief judge of the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI) Abu Sulayman al-Utaybi wrote to Osama bin Laden in 2007. In the letter, Utaybi [95] opposed the declaration of the Islamic State by al-Zarqawi on the ground of causing strategic and tactical challenges for the mujahideen.[96] After writing this letter, Utaybi left ISI, the predecessor organization of ISIS, and joined al-Qaeda in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region.

On the issue of creating IS-K, the Taliban initially advised ISIS to have a systematic and inclusive approach. Before announcing its presence in Khurasan, ISIS was supposed to first free Iraq and Syria from the infidels and their puppets, and then move on to Lebanon and Jordan, Saudi and other places, and maybe later to Afghanistan.[97] Similarly, in his letter to Al-Baghdadi, the Taliban leader's justification for acknowledging the Taliban as the sole legitimate source in Afghanistan was not based on ideological reasoning but strategic and tactical ones. Mansoor repeatedly mentioned that the strategic realities on the ground point to the necessity not to diversify the leadership and divide the legitimacy of the holy war against the infidels and their puppets.[98]

These explanations suggest that ideologically, the difference between the Taliban and the IS-K is not over the moral and political legitimacy of a caliphate. On the contrary, commitment to pursue such a mission is considered by the Taliban as one of the main sources of legitimacy for Islamic movements. The Taliban do not counter the Salafi jihadist movements' goal of establishing a caliphate. Their ideologues explicitly adhere to such a goal. They, however, diverge with ISIS over strategizing the realization of such an ultimate goal. ISIS's

proclamation of the caliphate was taken by the Taliban as delegitimizing the role of their Amir al-Mu'minin. [99] In almost all branches of Islamic jurisprudence, only the Amir al-Mu'minin has the legitimacy and authority to proclaim a caliphate. The Taliban argue that realizing such a sacred mission should be consensual, timely, and well-strategized.

Convergence with the Taliban on the Global Jihad

The third element that can help us in contrasting the ideological differences between the Taliban and the IS-K is the Taliban's stance on global jihad. The Taliban neither reject nor question the claim of a perpetual jihad. On the contrary, they theoretically and hermeneutically converge with the global jihadist movements on the issue of a never-ending jihad. It is unlike what Giustozzi asserts that the nihilist militarist 'ideology' of war of IS-K differentiates it from the Taliban.[100] The Taliban sources point in the opposite direction. They not only present the ongoing jihad as a fundamental obligation of an Islamic organization; they also do not believe in a peaceful coexistence with the "infidels."

The factor that has convinced some scholars to hold that the Taliban differs from other contemporary jihadist organizations is the Taliban's rapprochement with the Western powers. Bunzel claims that the Taliban's interests begin and end in Afghanistan.[101] Giustozzi argues that the Taliban lost its leading jihadist role when its leadership began to seek a political solution for the conflict sometime after 2010.[102] Similarly, IS-K denounced the Taliban for straying from the divine path, thereby losing their religious purity.[103] The Taliban, on the other hand, justify their rapprochement with the Western powers as tactical and part of the jihad.

Based on Al-Mabsut, a medieval text authored by the 11th-century Islamic jurist Muhammad bin Ahmad Al-Sarkhasi, the Taliban justifies their detente and truce with the Western powers as a tactical arrangement in the conduct of jihad to maintain and improve strength toward the ultimate triumph.[104] Theologically, the compromise of a truce is indeed accepted by mainstream branches of Islamic jurisprudence, including the Hanafi and Shafi schools of thought, as an integral part of the jihad.[105] The disagreement, however, is on the timing/duration of the truce.

Addressing the disagreement about the duration of the truce, the Taliban sources vacillate between the Hanafi and Shafi schools of jurisprudence. While Hanafi jurists do not specify a timeline for a truce, the Shafi jurists, on the other hand, are divided. One group gives the right of decision to the Imam or the leader. The other side identifies a maximum duration of ten years after which any obligation to the truce becomes illegitimate and outlawed.[106] On the issue of a permanent truce and peace, the Taliban sources avoid having a clear stance. However, they briefly mentioned the contrasting views of Islamic jurists.[107]

The Taliban conclude that a truce with "infidels" is allowed even if its duration is not mentioned in the agreement. They argue that some Islamic jurists also legitimize a permanent truce.[108] They assert that while there are no boundaries for [global] jihad, there are for its various battle fronts.[109] This implies that theoretically and ideologically, the Taliban acknowledge the obligation of jihad on a global scale. They, however, consider limitations in its application based on strategic and tactical reasons and circumstances.

These three explanations indicate that the rivalry between IS-K and the Taliban is more strategic and tactical than ideological. As such, being a jihadist organization, the Taliban's interests are not restricted to Afghanistan. In their writings, the Taliban explicitly acknowledge the legal and moral imperatives of the global caliphate and jihad. However, what differentiates them from ISIS, or its subsidiary IS-K, is more strategic constraint/patience and flexibility in terms of timing and fronts of global jihad. Such patience and group-based interest put the Taliban in a contentious strategic rivalry with IS-K. This rivalry fuels the brutal and bloody low-profile warfare between the Taliban and the IS-K. However, strategic imperatives, not overarching ideological tenets, shape the nature of this warfare.

Soon after announcing their Emirate in Kabul in early September of 2021, the Taliban intensified its brutal

crackdown on IS-K. The research on which this article is based points in the direction that the Taliban's war is not a total war against IS-K, but only against selective targets within the organization. Based on its strategic calculation, the Taliban regime, while exclusively targeting IS-K's local elements, protect its foreign elements by denying their existence in the country. On numerous occasions, the Taliban denied that Arab, Uzbek, the Uyghur, Pakistani, and other foreign fighters exist in the country. This selective treatment of IS-K by the Taliban is discussed in the following section.

Strength and Future Potentials

Since its creation in early 2015, IS-K has incurred several strategic blows. The organization, though, survived and resurfaced after every setback. Similarly, since gaining power in Kabul, the Taliban have repeatedly claimed to uproot IS-K across the country.[110] However, in contrast to such claims, IS-K has shown yet another resurgence, stronger than before. With the arrival of spring in 2022, the group has intensified and widened its operations in different regions of the country. It has found new sanctuaries and safe havens in the northern, northeastern, and western parts of Afghanistan. Before discussing the new opportunities for the group, it is worth exploring what drives IS-K's resilience and survival capacities.

As discussed elsewhere, since its emergence, IS-K has projected a complete local image. Its leadership and public face predominantly represent local militants. While most operations against the organization have targeted its leadership and local militants, the foreign elements, or its core, have remained more or less unruffled. This duality gives the organization the flexibility and strength to absorb severe blows and reorganize quickly. Over time, it became clear how the foreign elements have remained less affected by various crack-down operations carried out by the U.S. military, the former Afghan government, or the Taliban.

One of the first battles against IS-K was in Zabul province of Afghanistan in late 2015. The then-newly arrived IS-K Uzbek fighters collaborated with defected Taliban and besieged some districts. The Taliban reacted forcefully. As per a Taliban field report, the Uzbek militants were dispersed, and the defected Taliban was liquidated.[111] Similarly, from its birth in late 2014 to mid-2018, IS-K has lost four of its leaders, namely Hafiz Saeed in 2015,[112] Abdul Hasib in April 2017, Abu Sayed in July 2017,[113] and Abu Saad Orakzai in August 2018.[114] All the leaders were local Pashtuns. None was foreign. Despite such leadership loss, it did not affect the organization's ability to survive.

These challenges forced the organization to morph and adapt new coping mechanisms. In 2018, IS-K started moving some of its foreign militants to northern Afghanistan.[115] By 2020, units of Central Asian fighters of IS-K relocated to the Andarab and Khost-o-Ferung districts of Baghlan Province.[116] Based on a shared ethnolinguistic identity, these fighters were reportedly less hesitant in interacting with residents. Consequently, with the shift to northern Afghanistan, the proportion of Pashtun elements within IS-K started to sink. Instead, the organization embarked on recruiting local fighters from the northern region. According to respondents, in 2020 and 2021, some non-Pashtun warlords and militia sided with IS-K. Unlike in eastern Afghanistan, where ideological factors attracted many Salafi Pashtuns toward IS-K, local elements in the north joined the organization based on political motivations. They were skeptical about the intentions of the Afghan government in fighting the Taliban.[117] In addition, unlike in eastern Afghanistan, the recruitment process of local elements in northern Afghanistan was on a small scale.

IS-K since the Fall of Kabul

The collapse of the Afghan government and the rise of the Taliban to power brought challenges and opportunities for IS-K. The immediate effect of the state collapse for IS-K was the release of its prisoners. After capturing large cities—including Kunduz, Kandahar and Kabul—the Taliban opened gates of prisons and released the inmates.[118–120] Among them were thousands of alleged IS-K fighters.[121] IS-K sources indicate that the Taliban released more than 2000 IS-K fighters already before capturing Kabul.[122]

Among the released inmates was the one who carried out a suicide bombing attack at the Kabul airport on

August 26, 2021, that killed 170 Afghan civilians along with 13 US service members.[123] IS-K identified the bomber as Abdulrahman Logari, whom the group initially sent to India in 2017 to carry out a suicide mission. Logari was arrested in India and deported to Kabul, where he was handed over to the CIA prison on the Bagram airfield.[124] As the airport bombing sparked a media frenzy about IS-K, it reached the peak of its global exposure. With that came challenges. The Taliban regime soon launched a brutal campaign against the local elements of IS-K in eastern and southern Afghanistan.

The Taliban regime's stance on the IS-K presence has been confusing and contradictory. On the one hand, the Taliban categorically denied the existence of foreign militants within the framework of either IS-K or al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.[125] In addition, the Taliban portrayed IS-K as a small group that was irrelevant and insignificant as a threat. Soon after the Kabul airport bombing, the Taliban ordered its commanders to weed out IS-K members hiding among the Taliban ranks.[126] Consequently, the regime initiated brutal and violent warfare against IS-K militants.

By applying brutal and fear-mongering tactics, including beheadings, stabbing, drownings, and on-the-spot executions,[127] the Taliban have targeted and liquidated hundreds of local IS-K members. On various occasions, the group proclaimed victory and announced the uprooting of IS-K in the country.[128] In addition, the Taliban has denied the existence of any organized multinational structure of IS-K in the country.[129] The present study rejects this claim. Foreign elements have been proliferating within IS-K in various regions of the country since the rise of the Taliban to power. These elements are originating mainly from Central Asian republics.

In addition, the rise of the Taliban to power also pushed various local militia to side with the IS-K. According to sources consulted for this study, IS-K has been expanding its recruitment of local fighters in Faryab, Jawzjan, Sar-e-Pul, Mazar-e-Sharif, Kunduz, Takhar, and Badakhshan provinces. A group of IS-K is now even stationed in the western Herat Province bordering Iran.[130]

Respondents consulted for this study pointed out that ideological, ethnolinguistic, and political factors have facilitated the shift of the IS-K to the north of the country. The ideological factors are mainly influential in Badakhshan, Takhar, and Herat provinces, where Salafi and Deobandi jihadist ideologies are prevalent among local religious clerks. More specially, in the northwestern Badakhshan and northern Takhar provinces, in addition to potential ethnic and linguistic factors, extremist ideology is the main factor for attracting local elements to IS-K. These two provinces have a significant number of young people in Jihadi madrasas. For many decades, the challenging socioeconomic conditions in these resource-scarce provinces have forced thousands of families to send their male children to boarding madrasas in Pakistan that offer free accommodation and food.[131]

In retrospect, it appears that the Salafi madrasas established in Pakistan for Afghan refugees during the Afghan jihad had attracted tens of thousands of students from the northeastern provinces of Afghanistan. In addition, during that time, the Deobandi madrasas established by the Afghan jihadi groups attracted many students from Takhar and Badakhshan provinces. The madrasa culture promoted a jihadist ideology in the region. Compared to other non-Pashtun populations, Badakhshan and Takhar have a significant presence in extremist militant organizations such as the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and IS-K.

The western province of Herat is turning to a new sanctuary of IS-K. Here more than ethnic and linguistic reasons, ideological factors are reported to be the main drivers for local militants to join or accommodate IS-K. The province has become a hotspot for radicalism and jihadist ideology due to the proliferation of Salafi madrasas funded by Arabs in Herat during the Afghan jihad era. One of the attractions for the Arab Salafi dynamism in the province was the proximity of Herat to Iran. For example, during the Afghan Jihad in the 1980s–1990s, the Kulya Shari'a [school of Sharia] was a well-known Salafi madrasa that the Arab mujahideen founded in Peshawar, Pakistan. After the collapse of the Afghan communist regime in 1992, the madrasa moved to Herat.[132] In addition, due to its historical and spiritual significance, the Herat province has attracted many hard-line religious figures and clerks to promote their radical jihadist ideology.

Unlike in Badakhshan, Takhar, and Herat, in other northern provinces, including Kunduz, Faryab, and Balk provinces, ethnic-linguistic factors are facilitating the infiltration of IS-K.[133][134] As a Pashtun dominant group, the Taliban's intolerance and their regime's restricting and exclusionary policies and conduct have been pushing non-Pashtun groups toward alternatives. With the collapse of the Afghan government, these groups have already started collaborating with IS-K in the northern provinces.[135][136] Our sources revealed that IS-K recruits individuals from non-Pashtun residences in provinces and districts with high ethnolinguistic tensions among the population.

These factors provide IS-K with new opportunities in northern Afghanistan. Factors such as proximity with the Central Asian republics, intensifying ethnolinguistic resentments of the non-Pashtun population with the Taliban, and the existing radical/jihadist ideological infrastructure in the northern regions provide IS-K with more favorable conditions to expand the recruitment of local and foreign elements.

While the Taliban have only targeted the local elements of the organization, the core of IS-K has remained intact, even expanding. By taking advantage of the current political realities of Afghanistan under the Taliban and with the geographic proximity to Central and Western Asia, IS-K could morph into a significant regional and, over time, even global threat. In the northern regions, IS-K will find it easy to recruit local elements, based on their political and ethnolinguistic grievances with the Taliban regime. In addition, they have more access to the Central Asian republics for more recruits.

Conclusion

IS-K is not a local jihadi organization. On the contrary, it is a transnational group that is composed of fighters from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Arab countries, the Central Asian republics, and even includes some Indian nationals. The organizational structure of IS-K is based on a local-foreign duality, whereby the local elements (Afghan and Pakistani Pashtuns) serve as the public face of the group/outer layer. The foreign elements, which compose the organization's core, operate in the shadows of the outer layer. Such a structural duality has enabled IS-K to survive strategic blows and reemerge quickly.

However, the structural duality is not the only strength of IS-K enabling it to evolve into a regional and perhaps even global threat. The shared ideological tenets between the Taliban and IS-K on issues such as global jihadism, the necessity of a caliphate for Muslims, and the sanctity of suicide bombings, facilitate an ambiguous relationship between them. The ongoing conflict between them is predominantly nonideological. For strategic and rational reasons, including eliminating potential domestic rivals, the Taliban have waged a brutal low-profile warfare against the local elements of IS-K in different parts of the country. They have succeeded in dismantling and dispersing IS-K's local infrastructure in eastern Afghanistan. However, for ideological and grand-strategic reasons, the Taliban has refrained from fighting the core of IS-K. There is no evidence to suggest that the Taliban, at any point, have targeted the foreign elements of IS-K. The Taliban know that the foreign elements of IS-K will never succeed in challenging their rule in Afghanistan without the help of a strong local operational force.

Contemporary Sunni global Jihadi groups, including Salafi and Deobandi, are hardly diverse in their fundamental ideologies. Regardless of their theater of operation and agendas—domestic, regional, or global—the ideological contours of all these groups are similarly defined and articulated. They share the original sources and ideologues of jihadism. They have based their group ideologies and conduct on the same radical and literal interpretation and comprehension of the religious scripts and tradition. Placing these groups in separate ideological corners would be a mistake.

It would also be an analytical mistake to consider the Deobandi orthodoxy as static and untransformed. Such an assumption ignores the ideological transformation of this school in the last half-century. Many branches of the Deobandi school have shifted from orthodoxy to jihadism since the Afghan Jihad in the 1980s. This shared ideological direction was one of the reasons why the Taliban, a traditional Deobandi orthodoxy, quickly adopted and internalized the Salafi jihadist literature and ideology on the issue of suicide bombings.

For the Taliban, the anti-Shia stance of IS-K is a strategically insignificant issue for two mutually reinforcing reasons. First, though the Taliban does not hold a Takfiri position against the Shi'a population, the IS-K violence against the religious minority does not endanger the regime's grip on power. A potential rise of dissent of the Shi'a population cannot challenge the despotic rule of the Taliban. Secondly, since coming to power in Kabul, the Taliban has enforced many religious and social restrictions on the Shi'a, including but not limited to the revoking of Shi'a/Jafari jurisprudence from official laws.[137] They also removed the Jafari jurisprudence curriculum from universities.[138]

The Taliban knows that being a subsidiary organization of ISIS, the IS-K objective is to infiltrate the surrounding regions, including Central, South, and Western Asia/Persia. It also realizes that Afghanistan can serve as a springboard for such an overarching objective. Sharing such a goal with IS-K, at least in principle, does not contradict the Taliban regime's internal legitimacy or strategic imperatives. On the contrary, there exists an ideological imperative for the Taliban to be at least an indirect part of a broader global ideological scheme.

About the Author

Atal Ahmadzai, Ph.D. is a scholar with thematic expertise that falls within the security (human)-development-environment intersection. With regional expertise in South, Central, and Western Asia, Dr. Ahmadzai writes on contemporary terrorism and insurgencies in those regions. Given his multilinguistic fluencies, he examines contemporary terrorism through a prism of writings produced by given terrorist organizations. Analyzing the Taliban's corpus, Dr. Ahmadzai systematically studied the organizational and individual motivations behind the group's suicide bombings. He currently serves as visiting assistant professor of international relations.

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Security Implications for India and Pakistan from the Taliban Regime since the U.S. Withdrawal from Afghanistan

by Dalbir Ahlawat and M. Raymond Izarali

Abstract

Since the withdrawal of the U.S. forces from Afghanistan and the takeover by the Taliban regime more than one year ago, the new regime has been struggling to get legitimacy from the members of the United Nations. The past year has also exposed the complex network of various militant groups in Afghanistan that supported the Taliban against the U.S. but have now started pursuing their own interests. India and Pakistan face several militancy challenges that emanate from Afghan soil. In turn, India and Pakistan counterbalance each other by supporting different groups in Afghanistan. This article addresses the Taliban's rise to power, the complexity of engagement with the new rulers, and the security implications for India and Pakistan in relation to Afghanistan. It suggests that zero-sum behavior and strategic theory can be windows through which Pakistan's and India's engagement may best be viewed.

Keywords: Afghanistan-India-Pakistan, al-Qaeda, Islamic State, strategic theory, Taliban, zero-sum game

Introduction

The Taliban is likely to stay at the helm of Afghan affairs now that a year has passed since it seized control of the country. However, it remains unrecognized internationally and within South Asia. Since the U.S. withdrawal in August 2021, the Taliban rule has affected trade and the economy and has exacerbated a dire humanitarian crisis and raised human security issues.[1] While the resurgence of Taliban control is a concern for Afghanistan and the West, given the safe haven provided to al-Qaeda and its role in the 9/11 attacks, it also has significant implications for the long-standing rivalry between India and Pakistan over Jammu and Kashmir (referred to as Kashmir) as the two states engage in Afghanistan through proxies and through development support to counteract each other. They try to anticipate each other's actions and influence in Afghanistan and proactively assess and strategize to neutralize the gains of the other. Some may view their engagement as zero-sum behavior or analyze it through the lens of strategic theory. Regardless of which lens through which one assesses their behavior, the resurgence of the Taliban has major consequences for India and Pakistan. This article examines the security implications for India and Pakistan in relation to Afghanistan. It utilizes scholarly literature, news reports, and primary source data from the UN and the World Bank in developing the analysis.

Afghanistan: Current Context

The World Bank's Afghanistan Monitoring Survey of March 2022 indicates that 70% of the respondents claim they could not meet basic food and other necessary goods, compared to 35% in May 2021.[2] Roughly half (37%) of that sample population could not cover food expenses. A major decline in the amount of food consumed and its quality was also noticed. About 94% of people needing medical attention could not get it in autumn 2021.[3] While there has been an increase in rural and urban employment (except in the public sector, owing to a decline in jobs in the security and government spheres), there has been a substantial fall in earnings. Not surprisingly, the Taliban regime is eager to seek developmental support, especially as some U.S. \$9 billion of Afghan assets have been seized and held in U.S. banks. This situation creates a yearning on the part of the state and the civilian population for engagement to lift them from despair. At the same time, the Taliban is mindful of its image not to be seen as desperately pleading for Western support.[4] In the West, skepticism continues about the Taliban's intentions and objectives, while the Taliban tries to project an image of having things under control and having left behind its own past image.[5]

Although the Taliban has taken complete control of the Arg (presidential palace),[6] other constituent militant groups that resisted U.S. forces, along with the Taliban, have started to pursue their own ideological/religious aspirations. Both al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) have their

own agendas for South Asia.[7] Pakistan played a vital role in bringing the Taliban to the negotiation table with the United States, which ultimately led to the signing of the February 2020 Peace Agreement.[8] Ever since the Taliban's inception, Pakistan has supported it and the groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), and others that were created by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and fought along with the Taliban.[9] In addition, one of the groups, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which is supported by the Afghan Taliban but works against the interests of Pakistan, remains active.[10] Pakistan accuses India of supporting TTP as its proxy and tends to blame Indian intelligence for supporting the planning and execution of violent attacks on Pakistan from Afghan soil.[11] India has had cordial relations with Afghanistan except during the period of the Taliban regime from 1996 to 2001. Since August 2021, India has been reassessing its level of relations with Afghanistan under Taliban control while at the same time offering humanitarian support for the civilian population.[12] India is still mindful of the fact that during the first reign of the Taliban, there was a significant rise in terrorist attacks in Kashmir.[13]

India is generally perceived as a friendly country by broad sectors of the Afghan population;[14] the Taliban itself appears to have no antagonism against New Delhi. India has provided \$3 billion in aid to Afghanistan over the last few decades in support of water supply, roads, health care, agriculture, power generation, and education, among other things.[15] Pakistan has also provided \$1 billion in aid to Afghanistan over the years. [16] So far, the Taliban has not made any statement hostile to India; on the contrary, in August 2022, the Taliban regime's foreign ministry spokesman Abdul Qahar Balkhi stated that Afghanistan has requested India to complete the development projects that it had begun in Afghanistan such as the Shahtoot Dam in Kabul, and to upgrade its diplomatic mission in Kabul, giving India assurances of protection.[17]

Notwithstanding support from Pakistan, the Taliban, as Lisa Curtis notes, "are not puppets of the Pakistani government, but the Pakistanis are able to establish indirect control over the group through careful manipulation." [18] In some respects, the Taliban has demonstrated a level of autonomy from Pakistan's policy toward India. For example, it considers Kashmir an internal matter of India.[19] However, the groups supported by Pakistan, specifically the Haqqani Network (a constituent of the Taliban), are considered harmful to India's interests there. In this way, Afghanistan contains complex strings of networks and state actors.

Complex Strings of Networks and the Role of the ISI

Afghanistan has become a complex playground for the Taliban, Pakistan, and India as the latter two engage in proxy wars over the Kashmir conflict.[20] As Zhang notes, "Although the two countries have no direct border, Afghanistan has extremely important geographical significance to India." [21] Shah and Hussain argue similarly for Pakistan, noting that a peaceful Afghanistan would benefit Islamabad.[22] Taya and Ahmed echo this sentiment in their focus on the potential benefits of economic cooperation between the two, an area of study for which there is a paucity of scholarly literature.[23]

To understand the predicament in which Afghanistan is currently placed, it is pertinent to unravel the complex web of relations the Taliban maintains with the major actors in Afghanistan—notably, al-Qaeda, IS-K, and the ISI.[24] In this regard, John Allen, who led the U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, underscores the intricacy of the relations when he writes: "Too often we treat [Taliban] as one homogeneous entity when in fact it is a loose conglomeration of local tribal leadership, independent warlords, and disconnected or siloed cells. Any argument that the Taliban can control violence in the long-term is a fantasy." [25] If Allen's assessment is correct it would be germane to be reminded that only the Taliban signed the peace agreement with the United States; other non-state actors like IS-K, al-Qaeda, and clandestine state actors like the ISI remain outside the purview of the agreement and thus feel free to operate on Afghan soil without violating the agreement.[26] More specifically, neither the Afghan government at the time nor the other groups were engaged by the U.S. in dialogue for the peace agreement. Therefore, any potential of these groups harming the U.S., its allies, or their respective interests, is left for the Taliban to assess and act upon. It does not help that the Taliban and al-Qaeda have maintained a connection since the war on terror began.[27] Currently, the Taliban appears to have only limited operational and financial capacity and capability to bring the varying groups under its control.[28]

The local geographical domination by each of these groups further complicates the situation in Afghanistan. These groups compete and cooperate on different levels according to their interests, strengths, vulnerabilities, and strategic dominance. This is due to their decentralized structure at the local levels, divided loyalties, linkages of kinship and intermarriage by some of the members and commanders, and ideological affinities. New groups are being formed from the splintering of other groups, and also due to the perspective in certain instances that they have a common enemy.[29] For example, in the northern region, where the Taliban had a limited presence, it cooperated with the IS-K to harm the Kabul government and U.S. interests before signing the agreement with the U.S.[30] Subsequently, in facing pressure from U.S. forces, the Taliban cooperated with the Afghan military to launch a military campaign against the Islamic State, harming the IS-K and stirring defections in its cadres.[31]

Yousaf and Jabarkhail state: “As for the IS-K, the group remains a problem for the Taliban. The Kabul airport attack on 26 August 2021, which claimed nearly 200 lives (mostly Afghans), brought into perspective the seriousness of the IS-K threat in Afghanistan.”[32] Indeed, as D’Souza points out, attacks have intensified since the U.S. withdrawal.[33] Ibrahimi and Akbarzadeh underline that “both groups maintain their strategic rivalry while fighting over resources and territorial control in some parts of the country and engaging in informal collaborations in others.”[34] The Special Report by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan highlighted that in August 2017, “Anti-Government elements attacked Mirza Olang village from multiple directions... Taliban and self-proclaimed Daesh [Islamic State] fighters fought [against] Pro-Government Militia and Afghan Local Police...” and that “the attack involved local Taliban with regional Taliban support from nearby provinces, as well as some self-identified local Daesh/Islamic State fighters.”[35] It further states: “Those interviewed by UNAMA noted that cooperation and coordination between Taliban and local, self-identified *Daesh* has been observed for some time in Sayyad district, and is believed to be based upon family and tribal connections.”[36]

This see-saw game in the public domain aside, the arrest of IS-K’s top leader Aslam Farooqi in April 2020 and senior commander Munib Mohammad (alias Abu Bilal) by Afghan security forces revealed that the “Taliban promised that it will not allow Al-Qaeda to operate from areas under its control.”[37] If such is correct, this takes the level of complexity even deeper. Muhammad Amir Rana, a Pakistani security expert, noted that “Al Qaeda, IS (Khorasan chapter) and TTP were merely” the Taliban’s “tools through which the U.S. withdrawal was made possible.”[38] Furthermore, Taliban spokesperson Zabiullah Mujahid, in clarifying the Taliban’s relations with al-Qaeda, stated that “nowhere in the agreement has it been mentioned that we have or don’t have ties with anyone. The issue of relations with other groups is not considered; what has been agreed upon is that no threat should be posed from Afghan soil to the U.S. and its allies.”[39] Indeed, a UN (2021) report noted that ties between the Taliban, al-Qaeda and the Haqqani Network, which has been the primary channel of the Taliban’s engagement with al-Qaeda, continue to be strong due to ideological alignment, common struggles, and intermarriages.[40]

The strategic calculations of Pakistan’s ISI are also notable, as it played a vital role in bringing the Taliban to the negotiation table with the US. This role implies that the ISI enjoys a degree of strategic influence in Afghanistan and holds some sway over the Taliban leadership.[41] For example, the ISI captured the chief Taliban negotiator Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar in 2010 to stop him from entering into negotiations with the Hamid Karzai government because the signing of an agreement between the Taliban and the Karzai government would have limited Pakistan’s influence in Afghanistan.[42] In the post-Peace Agreement, given the Taliban’s attempt to pursue an independent path in contravention of the ISI’s interests,[43] the ISI continued cultivating close relations with the Haqqani Network to offset the Taliban’s influence. In addition, it also appears to support the IS-K so that there are channels to retain its dominance.[44] Munib Mohammad also confirmed the ISI’s counterbalancing approach during his interrogation by Afghan security forces, stating that “his primary job in the ISKP was to coordinate with Inter-Service Intelligence regularly and through them connect with other terrorist groups like Lashkar-E-Taiyabba, Jaish-E-Muhammad, Sipah-E-Sahaba, Haqqani Network, Jamayat-Ul-Ulema-E-Islam, and Taliban Peshawar Shura.”[45] He revealed at the time that “all the ISKP units operating in Nangarhar and Kabul area are reporting and taking directions from none other than Sirajuddin Haqqani... a Taliban commander.”[46]

Pakistan's key interest in Afghanistan is having what some of its military leaders call "strategic depth." [47] This interest suggests that Pakistan continues to have sway in Afghan affairs and keeps the Afghan state weak or at its disposal. [48] While Pakistan supports the Taliban, it is arguable that it may also be worried that total control by the Taliban over Afghanistan will reduce its influence and put pressure to resolve the disputed Durand Line to the latter's advantage. Curtis captures this concern when she writes, "Now that the Taliban control Afghanistan and no longer require their Pakistani safe haven, Pakistani military and intelligence officials are undoubtedly worried about losing leverage over the Taliban." [49] It is significant that the ISI seeks to counterbalance India's influence in Afghanistan in the same vein. [50] Islamabad sees New Delhi as posing a threat to destabilize its border areas, specifically in Baluchistan, along the Afghan border. [51]

From this perspective, it may be argued that there is a complex network in which the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and the IS-K had operated before the Taliban took control of Kabul. [52] Furthermore, the complexity is deepened by the shifting loyalty of the cadres/mujahideen and their sharing of operational information of one group with another. [53] While these groups have autonomy and conflicting interests, they are also individually influenced if not controlled by the ISI. This situation has given the ISI an advantage to counterbalance one group against the other and undermine India's interests in Afghanistan and elsewhere. [54] As Fair writes: "Most of the militant groups that have terrorized India since the early 1990s—e.g., Harkat-ul-Jihad-Islami (HuJI), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), Harkat-ul-Mujahideen/Harkat-ul-Ansar (HuM/HuA), and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)—have trained in Afghanistan, with varying degrees of connection to the Afghan Taliban and, by extension al-Qaeda." [55]

Complex Triangle: Afghanistan, India and Pakistan

While the agreement between the Taliban and the U.S. stipulates that the Taliban would not allow harm to the U.S. and its allies' interests from Afghan soil, neighboring countries like India and Pakistan that do not quite qualify as U.S. allies do feel vulnerable, despite what seems to be a shift by the U.S. in leaning closer to India. This vulnerability exists because the Taliban-associated groups motivated by the Taliban's victory have their own agendas and interests to pursue in these countries. Specifically, in the case of India, the Haqqani Network on Afghanistan soil, and LeT, JeM, AQIS and IS-K on Indian soil pose severe challenges. [56] In the case of Pakistan, the border dispute with Afghanistan along the Durand Line and the TTP pose challenges to the state's sovereignty. Adding to this challenge is the India-Pakistan ongoing rivalry over Kashmir and Pakistan's proximity with the Taliban and support for militant groups like JeM and LeT in their efforts to liberate Kashmir from India. [57]

India-Afghanistan Dynamics

India has long-term security and strategic interests in the outcome of Afghanistan in the current transition period. During the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, India's interests came under intense pressure and attacks that led it to close its embassy in Kabul. In the post-9/11 period, with the U.S. declaration of war on international terrorism and the ouster of the Taliban because of its support to al-Qaeda, India reopened its missions in Kabul, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Herat.

The withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan in August 2021 yielded very different dynamics in the trilateral relations between Afghanistan, India and Pakistan, as the Taliban supported by Pakistan controls Kabul. This impinges on India's interests as the Taliban's militant wing, the Haqqani Network, continues to be seen as harming India's interests in Afghanistan, having attacked Indian assets and its personnel. [58] Currently, India faces three challenges that emanate from Afghanistan.

a) The Al-Qaeda Challenge

With the launch of AQIS in September 2014, cadres of several major militant organizations like HuJI and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi joined it. The ISI initially formed these groups to support its cause in Kashmir. Later, with the convergence of interests, the ISI broadened its horizon; however, except for its collusion with LeT in the Mumbai attacks in 2008, al-Qaeda has not involved itself in any major attack in India. [59] Its role seems limited to

making verbal announcements. For instance, in June 2017, when it announced its first comprehensive strategic plan, a major emphasis was put on atrocities committed by the Indian government against the Kashmiris. It encouraged the militants to target the Indian Security Forces (ISF).[60] A month later, it announced the formation of Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind (AGH). In December 2017, AQIS released a video highlighting the excesses committed by the ISF.[61] However, the ISF eliminated the group's leader Zakir Musa in mid-2019 and his successor Hameed Lelhari in October 2019. Thus, that created a leadership void in implementing AQIS's strategy in Kashmir. With this development, AGH was declared "wiped out" in Kashmir by the ISF.[62] Notwithstanding the ISF's claim, AQIS changed the title of its magazine from *Nawai Afghan Jihad* to *Nawai-Ghazwa-ul-Hind* in March 2020, emphasizing that after defeating U.S. forces in Afghanistan, its focus will shift to the liberation of Kashmir.[63] Indeed, after the Taliban signed the Peace Agreement with the U.S. in February 2020, a prominent AGH ideologue, Hafiz Mustafa Abdul Kareem, became active in recruiting new cadres in Kashmir.

Based on intelligence-led inputs, the ISF conducted major operations in Kashmir to neutralize the different militant groups. In addition, the government of India revoked the special status granted to Kashmir under Article 370 and divided it into two union territories.[64] This action, along with the Kashmiris' syncretic culture and their aversion to jihad led by foreign fighters, appears to have deterred the AQIS from getting local support. The high number of ISF deployments, their vigilance over cross-border movements with Pakistan, and their undertaking of carrying out strikes on the militant launching pads and airstrikes on training camps have played a significant role in deterring AQIS operations in Kashmir. However, the week before the 20th anniversary of 9/11, a reference to Kashmir was made in a video message released by the al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri.[65] Al-Zawahiri's killing in July 2022 has given India time to recalibrate its strategy, as it is unclear who will be his successor and what his policy orientation will be toward India.

b) *The IS-K Challenge*

The Islamic State (IS) had India on its agenda long before the IS-K was launched in 2015. The 13th issue of the IS magazine, *Dabiq*, claimed in June 2014 that "it will not be long before Kashmir is run by the organization." [66] Groups like Indian Mujahideen (IM) and Ansar-ut-Tawheed (AuT) took oaths of allegiance to the IS-K. While the IS-K was in the process of unfolding its operations in Kashmir, it got a big jolt in 2016 with the killing of its key leader, Shafi Armar, and other leaders in command in the subsequent years. The IS declared in May 2019 the establishment of *Wilayah Hind* in India to overcome the loss.[67] It lured local groups into its jihadi fold in response to the revocation of Article 370 in Kashmir. In IS's weekly paper *al-Naba*, an editorial called for attacks on Hindus living in the Arab Gulf states.[68]

One group, the Islamic State Jammu and Kashmir (ISJK) made some dent by attacking the ISF bases and discrediting local militant groups that did not support the IS-K's ideology of narrating the Kashmir conflict as religious.[69] However, the ISJK cadres and its commander, Ishfaq Ahmed Sofi, were eliminated by the ISF by May 2019.[70] In essence, the ISF eliminated the *Wilayah Hind* members before they could establish a foothold in Kashmir. The IS-K, in turn, perpetrated attacks on Indian interests in Afghanistan, specifically attacking a Sikh temple in Kabul, killing 25 people in March 2020, and two people in another attack in June 2022.[71]

Although the IS-K has been neutralized on Indian soil, its propaganda publications continue highlighting the Kashmir issue. For example, the IS-K's affiliate Al-Qitaal Media Centre, in its publication *Sawt-al-Hind*, highlighted a violent protest in New Delhi as communal during President Donald Trump's visit to India in February 2020.[72] An August 2020 issue of this publication showed a militant with an IS flag on the road leading to the al-Babri Mosque (a disputed site between Hindus and Muslims) in Ayodhya, India.[73] However, lack of support from the Kashmiris and strong vigilance by the ISF have so far prevented the IS-K from establishing a foothold in India, but India treats it as an ongoing concern.[74]

c) *Groups Supported by the ISI*

Two major groups, LeT and JeM, originated in Pakistan and have since been supported by the ISI. The cadres of both groups joined al-Qaeda and fought along with the Taliban against U.S. forces in Afghanistan. Some cadres who were disillusioned with al-Qaeda and the Taliban joined the IS-K.[75] Consequently, there has

been regular mobility of the cadres among these groups. Such mobility perhaps serves as leverage for the ISI to get internal information about the Taliban, AQIS, and IS-K. Moreover, the ISI continues to influence these groups' leadership. As a result, the ISI is in a strong position to use these groups to its advantage. Members of these groups have perpetrated high-value target attacks in India, such as in Mumbai, Uri, Pulwama, also hitting the national parliament in Delhi.[76] The reactions of the United States and Afghanistan to these attacks led to Pakistan being placed on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Grey List which has acted as a deterrent. Since being placed on the FATF list, Pakistan reduced militant activities from its soil. However, following the precedent of the 1996–2001 period, it can use Afghanistan as a launching pad.[77]

Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations

Since gaining independence in 1947, Pakistan has had strained relations with Afghanistan, except from 1996 to 2001, during the first Taliban regime.[78] As Shah and Hussain write: "A disputed border and the associated issues of Pashtunistan have continued to contribute towards ill-will and bad blood between Pakistan and Afghanistan right from the outset." [79] Afghanistan had voted against recognizing Pakistan at the UN in 1947 because of the presence of the Pashtun community across the Durand Line.[80] The Afghan government also did not support Pakistan's claims over Kashmir. During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, Pakistan chose to become a frontline ally of the United States. To supply religious fighters/mujahideen, the then-Pakistani president Muhammed Zia-ul-Haq turned Pakistan toward a theocratic state with the ultimate motive to make "Afghanistan [Pakistan's] fifth province." [81] Since then, most Afghan authorities have been suspicious of Pakistan's ulterior motives and have remained adamant in safeguarding their sovereignty.

Notwithstanding this aversion, after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, Pakistan facilitated Taliban control over Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. Having been trained on Afghan soil, some mujahideen were directed to cross the border into Kashmir to liberate and separate it from India. However, Afghan-Pakistani differences over the Durand Line continued.

In the post-9/11 period, Pakistan reluctantly joined the United States in its "War on Terror". This placed Pakistan in the uncomfortable position of having to fight the Taliban, whom it created and nourished. Although Islamabad acted adroitly while fighting against the Taliban rank and file, it protected the top Taliban leadership. But the finding of Osama bin Laden's hiding place in Abbottabad exposed Islamabad's dual role. Setting aside trust deficits with the US, Islamabad facilitated the February 2020 agreement between the Taliban and the US.

Since August 2021, the Pakistan-supported Taliban regime has again been in power in Afghanistan. Pakistan has made attempts for recognition of the Taliban regime on different platforms and has appealed for humanitarian assistance but, so far, has had limited success. Aside from soliciting support for the Taliban regime, Pakistan faces two major challenges emanating from the Taliban regime.

a) The Challenge of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

The TTP was formed in December 2007 by Pashtun militants located along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border in reaction to the Pakistani military's operation against al-Qaeda militants in the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA).[82] Since then, TTP has been fighting against Pakistan's armed forces and poses a threat to Pakistan's national sovereignty.

While supporting the Taliban in Afghanistan, TTP continued attacks against the Pakistani state. Facing high-value target attacks from the TTP, Pakistan's military launched two major operations, Operation Zarb-e-Azb in 2014 and Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad in 2017. These offensives neutralized many TTP militants or forced them to cross the border into Afghanistan. Some of the TTP members changed their allegiance to IS-K. [83] Others, such as the TTP chief Noor Wali Mehsud, publicly reiterated their pledge of allegiance to Taliban leader Maulvi Hibatullah Akhundzada and "claimed the TTP to be a branch of the Taliban in Pakistan." [84] According to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, "since July 2020, ten militant groups opposed to the Pakistani state have merged with the TTP, including, among others, three Pakistani affiliates of al-Qaeda and four major factions that had separated from the TTP in 2014." [85] Thus, aware of the United States's plan

to exit Afghanistan, TTP increased the intensity of its attacks against Pakistan's security forces while operating both from Afghan and Pakistani soil. TTP was strengthened when the Taliban, after capturing power in August 2021, opened the prison gates, and many of its leaders and cadres were free again.

Pakistan has tried to exert pressure on TTP through its ally, Taliban leader Sirajuddin Haqqani, and also by simultaneously offering an olive branch for political negotiation, namely, if TTP surrenders, disarms, and accepts the writ of the state, the government would provide a general amnesty.[86] But during the 20-day cease-fire declaration by the Shura of TTP in North Waziristan in December 2021, the government did not agree to release over 100 TTP leaders and cadres from Pakistani prisons due to fear of reprisals. In reaction, TTP walked away from the cease-fire agreement.[87] Since then, the intensity of high-value attacks by TTP against Pakistani forces has multiplied. Furthermore, the killing of TTP cofounder and senior commander Omar Khalid Khorasani in a roadside blast in eastern Afghanistan in August 2022 when a ceasefire between TTP and the army was in place, may lead to reprisals for Pakistan, as the ISI is claimed to have perpetrated this blast.[88] In addition, the Taliban has taken strong cognizance of the killing of al-Zawahiri through an over-the-horizon drone strike in Kabul. The Taliban's acting defense minister, Mullah Yaqoob, blamed Pakistan for this when he stated: "Our information shows that they (US drones) are entering into Afghanistan from Pakistan, using the airspace of Pakistan." [89] However, Pakistan has denied the use of its airspace.[90] This has led to a trust deficit and strained Taliban-Pakistani relations.

This situation has brought Pakistan to a crossroads. It does not want to lose a friendly Taliban government in Afghanistan, whereas the Taliban continues to support the TTP. At the same time, Pakistan is neither in a position to provide sufficient financial aid nor get the Taliban government international recognition. Thus, Pakistan appears to be left with limited leverage while, at the same time, it does not want to cede Afghan space; it worries that India may fill the void and harm Pakistan's interests.

b) Border Dispute

In anticipating the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan and a subsequent spill-over of refugees and a flow of militants across the border, Pakistan had started to fence the disputed Durand Line since 2018. The then-Ashraf Ghani government objected to this move.[91] In witnessing the continuation of the fence installation, the Taliban militants started breaking down the fence, firing at the Pakistani forces, and killing several soldiers. In a sharp reaction, Pakistan's military asserted that there would be a continuation of the Pak-Afghan border fencing and that the fence's construction involved martyred soldiers' blood.[92] The Taliban's ministry of defense spokesman at the time, Enayatullah Khwarizmi, condemned the fence construction by Pakistan as "illegal." He warned that Pakistan had "no right" to divide Pashtuns living on both sides of the border." [93]

Moreover, to deter increasing TTP attacks from Afghan soil, Pakistan launched air raids on TTP hideouts in eastern Afghanistan in April 2022 which killed dozens of civilians. Instead of controlling the TTP activities, the Taliban took strong notice of Pakistan's breach of its sovereignty. Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid termed the killing of civilians "cruelty" and stated such actions by Pakistan would lead to "enmity between Afghanistan and Pakistan." [94] This situation has diluted Pakistan's influence and reinforced the notion in some quarters that TTP's attacks against the Pakistani state were somehow justified.

Conceptual Analysis: Zero-Sum Behavior and Strategic Theory

Given the preceding discussion, it may be argued that Afghanistan has been turning into a battleground for India and Pakistan, wherefrom both countries face terrorism challenges. India denies proxy engagements in Afghanistan, but as Fair points out, claims of complete innocence on the part of India are questionable.[95] The Taliban assured the UN of its "commitment not to allow Afghan soil" to threaten other countries.[96] But its inaction and the undertakings between India and Pakistan to outmaneuver each other on Afghan soil can be viewed as zero-sum behavior. While some scholars may treat Pakistan's engagement in Afghanistan as merely seeking to expand its economic space in that country as opposed to countering India and that India's engagement in and with Afghanistan relates to its regional standing, the long-standing rivalry over Kashmir between the two states suggests otherwise.

A zero-sum game is a situation where one country's gain is equivalent to another country's loss. To achieve their geostrategic interests, rivals vie for power/influence in a third country and use government and non-state actors as proxies to gain an advantage over the other. A zero-sum game is all encompassing; it assumes to incorporate the entire range of power instruments.[97]

If one state gains influence, it will be at the expense of the opponent's loss. This may have two outcomes: either the external rival states are so strong as to make the third country vulnerable and subject to external manipulation, or the third country enjoys a degree of autonomy and has the capacity to play one rival state against the other.[98] There can be substantial effects on the third country: its territory may be used, its people may become polarized, and even the third country's sovereignty itself may be affected. Taking cognizance of the India-Pakistan conflict of interests, Perkovich notes that they perceive the "phenomena around them so divergently that they have become world leaders in zero-sum thinking." [99]

A problem with a zero-sum conceptualization is that while it gives a rough picture of the situation, it is difficult to measure the actual weight of each player's undertaking. That would require an elaborate empirical design going well beyond the ambition of this article. Zero-sum games are based on the idea of rational choice. Rational choice theory has been criticized in criminology because of certain assumptions of agency and actors' time and effort to carefully compute the loss and gains of each situation before making a move.

From the standpoint of political theory, there may be questions about whether there really exists a zero-sum outcome, considering that many situations may yield positive-sum (as in multilateral initiatives) or negative-sum outcomes where both sides become losers. In other words, non-zero-sum outcomes seem more probable. Nevertheless, while the net outcome of the situation in the India-Pakistan rivalry in Afghanistan may not necessarily be an actual zero-sum, the undertaking as each state actor perceives it in taking countermeasures to offset any gains and influence by the other in Afghanistan in some fundamental respect points to a zero-sum mentality of both state actors.

Support for local terrorist groups can occur as a war-by-proxy when those holding state power are unwilling or unable to take on another state directly in armed conflict.[100] After having fought three wars since independence, India and Pakistan do not appear willing to take on each other in direct armed conflict anymore. However, each state is engaged in acquiring as much information as possible about the other through its intelligence agencies, embassies, and other sources. The intelligence and other information may sometimes be inaccurate or insufficient, but they are gathered to contemplate one's own and anticipate each other's strategic moves. What is effectively at play is India and Pakistan strategizing to offset each other's gain, to undermine, and to contain each other. While some scholars have alluded to a "zero-sum" situation, a detailed framework for analysis is still lacking.[101]

Strategic theory can be another useful window, as it extends beyond the scope of a zero-sum framework in taking into account a broader range of variables and thereby avoids binary and polarized perspectives.[102] While it is primarily a theory of bargaining and may have good yield in an analysis of the U.S. withdrawal, it may also provide insights into the India-Pakistan conflict as played out in Afghanistan. As Pinfold and Smith write: "In a conflict-as-bargaining model, each actor watches the adversary, whilst aware that their own actions are being anticipated and interpreted." [103] Yarger elaborated that insight when writing: "Strategic theory opens the mind to all the possibilities and forces at play, prompting us to consider the costs and risks of our decisions and weigh the consequences of those of our adversaries, allies, and others." [104]

Strategic theory takes cognizance of the complexity of the strategic environment and the inherent frictions. [105] The theory is "proactive" and "anticipatory" as opposed to "predictive," and is underpinned by assumptions that both state and non-state actors have interests that affect their focus and pursuit in various ways—among them, national survival and economic well-being.[106] Thus, the strategy embodies a logic and assumes that rational actors are carefully assessing what is beneficial or costly to them in employing means to achieve their desired ends.[107]. State actors engage in tactical analysis concerning the ends they have in mind and the values associated with them. Thus, strategic theory may identify the utility of the tactics of the relevant actors.

India has been very absorbed in monitoring Pakistan and the undertakings of its proxies in Afghanistan. Likewise, Pakistan has been similarly obsessed with India, especially concerning the conflict over Kashmir.[108] They each tend to take carefully strategized initiatives to neutralize the gains of the other side or to fight their battles on Afghan territory. They each anticipate what the other side may do and proactively undermine each other. Strategic theory, then, may offer a practical tool to assess each side's objectives, methods, and outcomes. Like zero-sum, strategic theory also has its limitations, due to its origins in public choice economics.[109] Nevertheless, it provides a valuable window to interpret and assess the India-Pakistan rivalry.

Furthermore, it is not our objective here to elaborate on a developed theory of the long-standing rivalry between these two countries that span since the independence of each in 1947. Nor is it our intention to make a choice between these two frameworks. Since this conflict has been ongoing for more than 75 years, scholars have expended considerable energy discussing it from many angles. Our humble aim has been to outline for analysis some elements that are particularly relevant to the post-US withdrawal Afghan situation and sketch two conceptual windows through which the conflict between India and Pakistan can be viewed.

Conclusion

The different militant groups that operate in Afghanistan maintain complex networks of relations; on different levels they cooperate and compete, unite for a common cause and retain autonomy, experience shifts in the loyalty of cadres, and act as proxies for different external actors. This complexity in some ways contributed to the exit agreement with the United States. However, now it forms a significant hurdle for the Taliban regime to obtain international recognition. Different militant groups exploit this situation to pursue their respective agendas. In this regard, India faces challenges from AQIS, IS-K, and the ISI-supported militant groups that operate from Afghan soil, while Pakistan has to confront the TTP. Until now, India appears to be successfully countering the terrorism threats emanating from Afghan soil, whereas Pakistan is still subject to TTP attacks. [110]

The many militant groups existing in Afghanistan are harmful as they keep the country unstable. Currently, Afghanistan is experiencing a severe food shortage and human security challenges. Pakistan faces an economic and leadership crisis while India is on the verge of becoming a supra-regional power. Their bilateral behavior of mistrust and subversion will neither beget secure futures for either of them nor benefit the region.[111] The trust deficit among them is deep and real. An atmosphere conducive to peace, security, and stability is greatly needed for their societies.[112] Therefore, they ought to collaboratively take sincere steps to work with each other to eliminate terrorism and move forward in a spirit of cooperation.

About the Authors

Dalbir Ahlawat, PhD, is a senior lecturer in the Department of Security Studies and Criminology, Macquarie University, Australia. His areas of specialization include terrorism in South Asia, India-China strategic competition, and security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.

M. Raymond Izarali, PhD, is a philosopher and associate professor in the Department of Criminology at Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada. His research interests include globalization, global terrorism and security, human rights theory, Africa, the Caribbean, and South Asia.

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Recognizing Trade-Offs in Indonesian Counterterrorism Strategy

by Alif Satria and Cameron Sumpter

Abstract

Counterterrorism policies often suffer from a troubling dilemma: Thwarting violence and the development of extremist networks in the near-term may require uncompromising operations that ultimately impact a broader section of society than the intended targets. When whole communities or certain demographics become entangled in sweeping strategies, the suspicion generated can fuel counterproductive grievances and hinder longer-term prevention initiatives. On the other hand, if policies prioritize softer social programs aiming for gradual (re-)conciliation, this approach may provide undue space for violent actors to exploit. Finding the right balance between deterring violence in the short-term and addressing the underlying issues is crucial—but difficult. A pertinent example is playing out in the criminal justice system of Indonesia. Recent updates to the nation's counterterrorism legislation have provided law enforcement with preemptive powers that have generated hundreds of arrests since late 2018. At the same time, new regulations have sought to develop a community policing philosophy for preventing violent extremism. While the two strategies are not mutually exclusive, the atmosphere generated by repressive tactics may inhibit the trust-dependent community-focused approach. Balance will depend on ensuring that community policing remains focused on procedural justice and building relationships, rather than cultivating informants and collecting information.

Keywords: Community Policing; Preventive Detention; Preventing Violent Extremism; Indonesia

Introduction

Indonesia's counterterrorism capacity has increased significantly in the past 20 years. In 2001, Indonesia was one of Southeast Asia's most skeptical and uncommitted countries in dealing with the threat of international terrorism. Not only was the security apparatus more focused on separatists in Aceh and ethnic conflicts in Maluku,[1] but the government also had little to no political will to acknowledge the threat.[2] By 2021, however, Indonesia had established a robust set of counterterrorism measures. The government developed a well-trained counterterrorism police unit, Special Detachment 88 (Densus 88) in 2004, created a vigorous legal anti-terrorism infrastructure through revision of its anti-terrorism law in 2018, and set up a comprehensive national action plan on preventing/countering violent extremism (P/CVE), known as RAN PE in 2021.[3] The efficacy of these modalities is evident—terrorist attacks in Indonesia today are notably less frequent and less lethal than in the early 2000s.[4]

However, a common dilemma that states face as they strengthen their counterterrorism capacities is the emergence of policy trade-offs—such as between expansive surveillance and respect for individual privacy or between indefinite detention and the right to proper procedural justice. The most common counterterrorism dilemma is the trade-off between operational aggressiveness and the maintenance of public trust. Various case studies have noted that as counterterrorism policies become increasingly focused on arresting terrorist suspects, governments risk alienating and losing support among communities with a similar demographic profile to those of terrorist groups.[5] During France's fight against the Front de Liberation National (FLN) in Algeria, for example, the torture of FLN members to gain intelligence ultimately diminished the support from both Algerians and French citizens—resulting in the exit of France from Algeria.[6] A similar case occurred in Israel, where British colonial forces' torture tactics eventually undercut their authority and increased population support for the paramilitary Irgun organization.[7]

The present article considers this counterterrorism trade-off in the context of Indonesia. Specifically, it analyzes the trade-offs between two of Indonesia's counterterrorism policies: the use of preventive detention and the adoption of a strategy of community policing. While Indonesia's increasingly aggressive use of preventive detention since 2018 has indeed helped to reduce the threat of terrorism, it has also led to increasing

distrust toward the counterterrorism apparatus, particularly from conservative Islamic communities. This erosion of trust is counterproductive as it complicates the implementation of community policing in at-risk populations.

This article will be divided into four main segments. The first segment will summarize the relevant literature on preventive detention and community policing, before outlining how Indonesia has developed and currently implements both policies. A third segment will analyze the practical trade-off between the two policies, while the final section will conclude with discussion of the potential implications.

Understanding Preventive Detention

Preemptive arrest, also commonly referred to as preventive detention, is the act of detaining an individual who is expected to commit a crime, based on less evidence than ordinary criminal law would generally allow. [8] In the context of counterterrorism, national governments have implemented various practices referred to as preventive detention, ranging from pre-charge detention of a potential terrorist suspect, or detainment during an immigration process, to indefinite detention without trial under an executive order.[9] However, a commonality between them is their deviation from the standard arrest procedure in administering justice. For many state authorities, this deviation in the context of counterterrorism is vital as it overcomes various challenges associated with investigating terrorist activities, such as limited time frames, the difficulty of obtaining evidence, and the need to withhold sensitive intelligence information. Proponents believe the strategy is proportional to preventing the risk of mass-casualty terrorist attacks.[10]

The use of preventive detention is not new nor exclusive to modern-day counterterrorism policing.[11] The United Kingdom employed the practice between 1970 and 1989 to detain citizens suspected of supporting the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland.[12] The United States used it in World War II to detain people of Japanese descent in internment camps out of prejudiced fear for their support of the Axis powers.[13] Other countries also adopt the preventive approach of indefinitely detaining “habitual criminals”—such as violent recidivists or repeat sexual offenders.[14] The use of preventive detention is not limited to any specific nation or region. The United States, for example, legalizes indefinite detention of suspected terrorists in Guantanamo Bay; Trinidad and Tobago allow its executive to “make provision for the detention of persons” in national emergencies; and the Colombian government provides no explicit limit for the length of pretrial detention in criminal cases.[15]

However, not all preventive detention practices are the same. On the spectrum of least to most right-stripping, practices can be clustered into three frameworks. The first is the pretrial detention framework. Countries such as Germany and Spain only detain individuals without charge in advance of a trial that is set to occur. This practice is the least extreme framework as it involves the constant presence of judicial oversight. Second is the immigration detention framework. Nations such as Canada and New Zealand delegate authority to detain suspected terrorists to administrative officers during immigration processes.[16] While there is a lack of judicial oversight during the initial detainment in such cases, decisions are made accountable to judicial review—ensuring some level of rights protection for the suspects. The third is the national security framework. Countries with this framework, such as Malaysia and the United States, derive detention authority from the powers their constitutions and special regulations delegate to the executive. To that end, this is the most extreme detention framework as there is little to no judicial oversight over the executive branch’s decisions to detain.[17]

Understanding Community Policing

Another judicial approach that has been associated with effective counterterrorism strategy is community policing, which developed following research showing the benefits of closer interactions between citizens and the police.[18] During the 1980s, several countries began establishing neighborhood police posts, while foot patrols were increasingly seen on urban and suburban streets as officers attempted to build better relationships with community members. The idea was to be less reactive and focus more on preventing

problems through close collaboration with residents, who were no longer seen as the referent object of law enforcement but as “co-producers of public safety.”[19] Police would seek information on criminality from community members but also provide updates on police activities, listen to community concerns, and offer appropriate support.

The reciprocity of these relationships is a crucial feature and requires a high degree of trust in the institution of law enforcement and its personnel. An effective way of building this trust is by ensuring what is known as procedural justice, which links satisfaction of a conflict resolution outcome with the perceived fairness of the process. If people believe police officers act with integrity, they are more likely to cooperate. There are four key aspects of procedural justice: (1) people have opportunities to express their problems to the police; (2) they believe police operate with transparency and neutrality; (3) they think the police are trying to do what’s best for the community; and (4) police treat everyone with respect and dignity.[20] One study from EU nations found that the “quality of relations” between residents and the police was even more important than police competence when it came to their perceived legitimacy.[21]

Procedural justice is particularly important if community policing is framed as a way of preventing violent extremism. Human intelligence often plays a central role in thwarting terrorist attacks and dismantling networks, but residents cannot be compelled or coerced into cooperation; information must come from genuine collaboration. This has been a problem in some Western nations, where Muslim communities have been expected to cooperate with the police but were also made to feel like suspects themselves.[22] Ideally, a properly implemented and observed community policing approach would avoid this dynamic while more broadly respecting human rights and addressing the underlying grievances associated with violent extremism. Of course, this is not straightforward in practice, particularly where police culture is playing catch-up with public opinion.

Developing Indonesia’s Preventive Detention and Community Policing Practice

Indonesia’s Preventive Detention in Practice

The authority of Indonesia’s current preventive detention for counterterrorism originates from the 2018 legislative amendments (Law No. 5/2018 on Anti-Terrorism) which, aside from having expanded the definition of terrorism,[23] has also specifically expanded Densus 88’s ability to conduct preventive detention against terrorist suspects in two ways. First, the regulation extended the pre-charge and pretrial detention periods for suspected terrorists. In the original anti-terrorism regulation, Law No. 15/2003 on Anti-Terrorism, police were allowed to detain a suspected terrorist for seven days before charging the individual and 120 days before trial.[24] This alone was already expansive in comparison to provisions for other crimes, which only allow for one day of pre-charge detention and a maximum of 60 days of pretrial detention.[25] In the amended anti-terrorism regulation, however, this detention authority is further extended to allow the detention of suspected terrorists for 21 days prior to charging and 200 days prior to trial.[26]

Second, the regulation has extended the scope of prosecutable activities under terrorism clauses to include nonviolent activities not directly connected to terrorist operations. The original 2003 anti-terrorism regulation only authorized security forces to arrest suspects who either conduct, attempt to conduct, or directly support the conduct of terrorist attacks. These included activities such as *knowingly* procuring firearms for terrorist attacks (Article 9), contributing funds toward an attack (Article 11), or directing individuals to conduct attacks (Article 14).[27] In the amended anti-terrorism regulation, security forces can criminalize individuals even if they do not contribute to, or participate in, such attacks. It now assumes that while these nonviolent actions may not directly contribute to any attack, they generally still facilitate the terrorist organization’s or network’s activities. These include arresting members affiliated with designated terrorist organizations (Article 12A), individuals who create, collect, or distribute training materials (Article 12B), and individuals who distribute terrorist propaganda material (Article 13A).[28]

These two de facto expansions of detention powers provide security forces with a larger window of opportu-

nity to find actionable evidence post-arrest, reducing the possibility of the trial being waived or the suspect walking free due to a lack of evidence. In turn, this enables security forces to conduct preemptive detention more confidently without needing a full set of evidence before the arrest. Additionally, the increased scope of prosecutable offenses allows security forces to target individuals deemed vital to the survival of a terrorist organization (e.g., funders, trainers, and ideologues) despite their not conducting or directly supporting acts of violence. As National Police Chief Gen. Tito Karnavian stated in 2018, for security forces, “prosecuting early action is better so that police can prevent or launch pre-emptive strikes. [It is better] than waiting until we have evidence.”[29]

The expanded use of preventive detention as authorized in the 2018 anti-terrorism law has greatly increased the number of arrested terrorist suspects over the past four years. In 2018 alone, Densus 88 arrested over 396 terrorist suspects—marking a 117% increase on the previous year.[30] Although arrests in 2019 and 2020 were reduced to 275 and 228 cases, this number increased again in 2021. Between January and December last year, Indonesian security forces arrested and killed more than 384 terrorist suspects.[31] Most of these suspects were alleged members of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) (42.5%), Indonesia’s notorious pro–Al Qaeda group that has, however, not conducted any successful attacks since 2011; Jemaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) (31%), Indonesia’s largest pro–Islamic State group; and the West Papua National Army-Free Papua Organization (TNPB-OPM) (13.5%), a separatist group that the Indonesian government labeled as a terrorist organization in early 2021.[32]

The expanded use of preventive detention has also increased the diversity in the roles of those arrested. Out of the 113 suspects arrested in 2021 whose organizational role was publicized in police reports, only 28.3% were militaristic/operational (e.g., planning and preparing for attacks). Many of these suspects’ roles were instead aimed at supporting the terrorist organization rather than involving any specific plan of attack. These roles include logistical distribution (30.9%), fundraising roles (23.8%), and ideological indoctrination and propaganda roles (12.3%). One key example of this was the arrest of four suspected terrorists in the southern Sumatra province of Lampung, whose main role was to operate the Abdurahman Bin Rauf foundation, a charity organization that has raised money for JI by distributing more than 6,000 charity boxes across the province. Notably, these individuals do not necessarily focus on conducting attacks but are vital to the organization’s survival.[33]

The large numbers and diversity of arrests have significantly helped to reduce the threat of terrorist organizations in Indonesia. Notably, over the past two decades, terrorist attacks in Indonesia have become less frequent and lethal. Whereas the 2002 Bali Bombing by JI resulted in over 502 casualties, the 2018 Surabaya bombing attack by JAD resulted in 13 deaths and 41 injured.[34] The most recent attack by the JAD, the 2021 Makassar Bombing on Easter Sunday, only resulted in two deaths and 20 injured—the deaths being the two suicide bombers.[35] Additionally, arrests have significantly disrupted organizations’ attempts to regroup and rebuild by arresting individuals who have fulfilled vital roles in supporting the organization. For example, by arresting key JAD leaders and ideologues in 2018, their once robust and centralized organizational structures are now de facto nonfunctional.[36] Similarly, by arresting senior JI officials, such as Abu Rusydan and Siswanto, whose role focused more on giving JI leaders strategic guidance and not on orchestrating attacks, counterterrorism operations have greatly disrupted JI’s leadership selection process.[37]

However, preventive detention is not without its unintended problems. The exponential increase of arrested terrorist suspects in the past four years has added significant strain on Indonesia’s already-overcrowded prison system. In 2020, for example, Indonesian prisons were at 109% overcapacity, with prisons in key areas such as Jakarta reaching 160% overcapacity.[38] Coupled with the fact that these prisons are mostly understaffed,[39] large additional numbers of terrorist inmates due to preventive detention have made close monitoring of these inmates increasingly difficult. If prison reform is not adequately and quickly implemented, these conditions could create ripe environments for the further radicalization of suspects who were initially arrested for low-risk activities, potentially leading them toward participation in more decisive operational roles once they leave prison. Abdul Rauf, for example, an inmate arrested for his involvement in fundraising for the 2002 Bali Bombing, was further radicalized in prison, and ultimately left to fight for ISIS in Iraq after

he was released.[40]

Indonesia's Community Policing in Practice

In Indonesia, community policing occupies a point of focus in the nation's emerging national action plan to prevent violent extremism (known by its Indonesian acronym, RAN PE). The ambitious plan was instituted by presidential regulation in January 2021 and aims to facilitate stakeholder coordination, improve data collection methods, and build the capacity to conduct prevention programs.[41] Pillar one of the three-pillar plan includes an article on building resilience among vulnerable groups, which involves the "optimization of community policing in preventing violent extremism." [42] When the regulation was issued, media commentary seized on this point, as both human rights activists and representatives of Islamic organizations expressed concern that the strategy would generate mutual suspicion and division if people were encouraged to spy on one another.[43]

This apprehension is well-founded. During the authoritarian Suharto regime, which spanned the last 30 years of the 20th Century, the army stationed noncommissioned officers throughout the archipelago, where they coordinated with neighborhood and village leaders to collect information on perceived subversive activity. Then from the early 1980s onward, police developed a system of organizing informal neighborhood-watch-type community patrols, which became a form of central state surveillance.[44] These practices were largely phased out through democratic reforms in the late 1990s. However, more recently, the government has urged neighborhood associations (known as *rukun tetangga/rukun warga*) to report on certain community behaviors, which has generated some persecution of LGBT and minority religious groups.[45] To be sure, such co-opted neighborhood surveillance is not the same as community policing, which requires building trust rather than stripping it away through suspicion and discrimination.

While the P/CVE plan calls for further development, Indonesia's experience with community policing dates back to the democratic transitional period of the early 2000s. A collaboration between UNDP, the World Bank, Asia Development Bank, and the Indonesian government called the *Partnership for Governance Reform* was the first to introduce the community approach in 2001.[46] Subsequent projects from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the Asia Foundation conducted specific capacity-building programs, including cultural competency training for officers working in the outer regions of Maluku and Papua.[47] Additional pilot projects involved dozens of community task forces in four provinces, which reportedly improved trust and opened lines of communication for community members to share their concerns.[48]

Projects on the ground have been backed by evolving government regulations over the years since the beginning of democratic reform. A police chief regulation (*Peraturan Kepala Kepolisian*) in 2005 established what became known as Police and Community Partnership Forums (FKPM) in over 5,000 police precincts across the country.[49] Three years later, a more detailed regulation aimed to become a guideline manual for implementation, which was updated again in 2015, following a restructuring of the national police.[50] Regulation No. 3/2015 described how the concept of community policing was to be understood, emphasizing accountability, transparency, "intensive two-way communication" between officers and residents, mutual respect, and collective problem-solving.[51] Regarding implementation, the regulation sought to: (1) empower social institutions; (2) enhance capability and instill community policing values throughout the institution; and (3) draw on strategies developed in Japan, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand to establish models that fit the Indonesian context.[52]

In early 2021, a further policy update defined the particular strategy deemed most suitable for Indonesia and outlined the roles, responsibilities, and oversight of dedicated community policing officers. The new police regulation 1/2021 settled on two versions: the *wilayah* (regional) model in residential areas such as neighborhoods, villages, and hamlets; and the *kawasan* (area) model in commercial and industrial quarters. [53] The *wilayah* approach is based on each community's "will, awareness, and interest" to get involved in local security and order issues. In the *Kawasan* model, business owners and commercial tenants can form an

FKPM, based on “mutual agreement” among each other and with police.[54] However, there is also a broader and important distinction between internalizing community policing values at the institutional level and implementing relevant activities on the ground.

Discussion: The Trade-Off

The Challenge in Community Policing: Building Public Trust

Establishing trust between communities and counterterrorism agencies plays a significant role in ensuring that counterterrorism strategies succeed. First and foremost, this trust is important strategically—consistently high public trust in counterterrorism agencies is necessary for parliamentary bodies to justify their support for new initiatives and programs.[55] This support is particularly vital when terrorist attacks are few and far between, as these are the times when the public begins doubting the gravity of the terrorist threat, while terrorist organizations can focus on rebuilding their ranks. Secondly, public trust is also important for operational purposes. Notably, successful CVE depends on the cooperation of various service providers.[56] These service providers range from teachers and local imams whose credibility makes them key actors in countering radical narratives to youth organizations and neighborhood leaders whose embeddedness in society makes them important actors in facilitating the reintegration of ex-terrorist inmates—individuals who would not cooperate if trust was not present.[57]

The significance of trust is particularly important in the practice of community policing. As mentioned above, the strategy of community policing requires the public to perceive themselves as “co-producers of public safety” vis-à-vis the police—partners that would voluntarily provide human intelligence on close neighbors or locally reputable imams to the police for suspected terrorist activities.[58] Without trust between communities and counterterrorism agencies, this voluntary cooperation would easily be perceived as coerced surveillance. In the United States, for example, Muslim communities’ distrust of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and certain municipal police agencies has led them to perceive the FBI’s community policing efforts to be merely a pretext to “entrap young Muslims” and “coerce people to spy on their Muslim-American friends.”[59] A study among Danish communities also found that a lack of trust between Muslim communities and counterterrorism agencies has prevented cooperation out of fear that counterterrorism units will “keep tabs” on individuals and register them as potential terrorists.[60]

The importance of public trust in community policing is also true in Indonesia’s case. Various clauses in Indonesia’s community policing regulations reflect this. For example, one regulation states that community policing officers (known as *Petugas Polmas*) are generally noncommissioned officers who have served for at least five years and must reside in the assigned community.[61] The operational principles mentioned in the 2005 police chief regulation provide these officers with long-term or even permanent postings to allow rapport to develop organically between them and their surrounding community.[62] The regulation No. 3/2015 update also mentions public trust as both community policing’s main goals and criterion for success evaluation.[63] *Petugas Polmas* are expected to develop this trust through various means, ranging from establishing partnerships with local stakeholders, conducting foot patrols, visiting households, solving local disputes, and communicating effectively with residents.

However, several challenges remain. First, while their activities and engagements with communities are potentially constructive in terms of building trust, community policing officers on the street also rely on broader community perceptions of law enforcement, which repressive or heavy-handed practices can erode. In the past, police in Indonesia have been seen as acting with a degree of superiority toward the public, being quick to use their firearms, and seeking ‘pocket money’ during inspections and interactions with local business owners.[64] A 2009 review commissioned by the National Police (Polri) on community policing found that “it is difficult to change the officers from behaving with superiority to becoming the partner or even servants of the community.”[65] The review also noted that most police recruits actually join the force to seek this “superior” status. More recent research finds that such rent-seeking remains a problematic practice, which represents a significant obstacle to building trust and reaping the benefits of this community-based

approach.[66]

A second challenge, particularly when it comes to counterterrorism, is that certain provisions in recent regulations appear to require a more covert form of community policing. Reminiscent of the nation's late 20th-century authoritarian era, noncommissioned community policing officers stationed in neighborhoods once again have a designated intelligence function. Articles in the January 2021 regulation obligate community officers to "identify and document community data and activities related to security and public order" and then submit associated reports to their superiors.[67] A subsequent regulation issued in August 2021 built on these designations of duty and included specific provisions for preventing violent extremism. According to police chief regulation 7/2021, community officers should encourage residents to identify new neighborhood arrivals and the presence of "suspected" extremists, and officers should supervise, monitor, and record certain "traditional teachings/beliefs," which is vague and unhelpfully open to interpretation.[68] There is a fine line between collaborating with community members and using them as a source of information to be sent up the chain of command.

The Complication of Preventive Detention: Eroding Public Trust

Indonesia's use of preventive detention has further complicated security forces' efforts to build the public trust necessary for community policing to be effective. This is most recently evidenced by the increased public outcry against Densus 88 and Indonesia's National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) from conservative Muslim communities for their heavy-handed treatment of terrorist suspects. However, it is important to note that the reduction of public trust due to right-stripping counterterrorism practices such as preventive detention is not exclusive to Indonesia. Studies in the United Kingdom and the United States have found similar dynamics—when communities have an increased perception that police are deviating from the standard procedure of administering justice when dealing with terrorist suspects with a similar identity to them; or an increased perception that counterterrorism agencies are unfairly targeting certain communities based on their identity, cooperation and trust between such communities and the police erode.

In the case of Indonesia, this has been evident in the public outcry against Densus 88 and the BNPT following the arrest of suspected terrorists who held prominent positions in notable Islamic organizations. For example, after the arrest of Ahmad Zain an-Najah, a member of the Fatwa Committee of the Indonesia Ulama Council (MUI), and Farid Okbah, head of the Indonesian People's Da'wah Party (PDRI), in November 2021 for being suspected JI members, hundreds of protesters demonstrated in Solo, Central Java calling for the disbandment of Densus 88.[69] Protesters claimed that Densus was unprofessional and Islamophobic in conducting the arrest. More specifically, the police were accused of unfairly targeting *ulamas* who have not yet been proven to have engaged in any terrorist activities. One protester claimed a double standard: "As to the extent of [Okbah and an-Najah's] involvement, what kind of terror was committed? He is a preacher who is considered righteous ... [while] in Papua it is clear that there are acts of terror carried out [there]. Why are our ulama the ones being arrested?"[70]

Such criticism continued in 2022. After the arrest of three suspected terrorists in Bengkulu in early February, two of whom were administrators of MUI's Bengkulu branch, the deputy chairman of the MUI, Anwar Abbas, also made strong criticisms against Densus 88 and BNPT. In his interview with Tempo Magazine, Abbas noted that the current counterterrorism strategy was "too extreme" and that suspects such as Farid Okbah and Zain an Najah, people whom he knew to be kind and polite, should not be arrested immediately but given the opportunity for dialogue. Abbas added that "the definition of terrorists are people who create fear in the community. Try sitting near Farid Okbah and Zain an Najah. There will be no fear with them... [The arrest] confused me too. How can such a person be considered a terrorist?"[71] To that end, he believed arrests and preventive detention should only be used as a last resort after civil dialogue fails to deradicalize them.[72]

This backlash toward Densus 88 has also led to increasing distrust regarding the legitimacy of BNPT's counter-radicalization initiatives. For example, as part of their counter-radicalization initiative, the BNPT, in early

March, released a list of five characteristics of radical ulama. This list included preaching pro-caliphate sermons, labeling other religions as *kaffir* (infidels), using sermons to sow distrust and criticism toward the government, being intolerant toward diversity, and adopting anti-traditional culture stances.[73] Shortly after, the head of the MUI, Amirsyah Tambunan, released a statement rejecting the criteria. He argued that contrary to BNPT's belief, ulama who carry these characteristics are not necessarily bad and that "some beliefs which deviate from the Islamic faith, such as the Ahmadiyya followers, should be categorized as heretical because they believe in another prophet after Muhammad." Amirsyah concluded, "BNPT should not interfere in matters of religion as it is not their domain." [74]

Such public outcries are detrimental to community policing for two reasons. First, while the majority of the Indonesian public does not share these outcries and distrust, they are commonly shared among conservative Islamic groups. These groups include members from organizations such as the *Aksi Bela Islam* alumni and Dewan Syariah Kota Surakarta (DSKS), which called for Densus 88's dissolution in November 2021. This is particularly concerning as this demographic would likely be an area of focus for a CVE community policing strategy, given their strong antipathy to democracy, belief in the supremacy of sharia law, and (in the case of DSKS) actual connections to terrorist organizations.[75] Second, these outcries are significant as they involve not only grassroots organizations but also the MUI—which is a state-sponsored religious organization with one of the highest authorities to issue fatwa in Indonesia.[76] They were asked by then-President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to "formulate policies regarding Islam," and in 2017, issued a fatwa that became the catalyst for nationwide demonstrations against a Jakarta governor who was perceived to have insulted Islam. [77] Having the MUI discredit the counterterrorism agency's authority would be detrimental to engendering buy-in and trust from the population.

Conclusion

Counterterrorism strategies tend to either emphasize short-term gains or longer-term benefits. When responses require immediate results, such as during the wave of attacks associated with pro-ISIS extremists in the mid- to late-2010s, the interests of public safety may demand aggressive counterterrorism practices that will inevitably have residual effects, such as false accusations and perceptions of persecution. Such adverse impact should clearly be avoided, but there will always be trade-offs when the critical priority is preventing the death of innocent civilians. The importance of recognizing such trade-offs, however, is finding the right balance between keeping people safe in the near term and avoiding the exacerbation of grievances that may lead to discord down the road. In Indonesia, this trade-off is most evident between two of its counterterrorism policies: preventive detention and community policing.

Indonesia's intention to institutionalize a community-oriented approach to policing violent extremism is a much-needed step to improve prevention. To make community policing effective, high public trust is needed. However, some of the specific provisions in recent regulations suggest that the version of community policing being developed to prevent violent extremism could actually exacerbate problems associated with trust. For example, encouraging residents to discuss the presence of ideological study groups their children or siblings may be attending would be prudent if the process is transparent and solutions to any perceived dangers are developed collectively. But if descriptions of activities are treated as data to be eventually passed on to a counter-terrorism police unit through periodic reports, this would undermine the intention and values of a community policing model. Neighborhood officers should not have a prescribed intelligence function involving the documentation of local activities. The idea is to listen to community concerns, not to query people on particular threats.

This already challenging circumstance is currently made worse by some unintended consequences of preventive detention. Notably, while the use of preventive detention since 2018 has helped reduce the terrorist threats Indonesia faces, it has also led to a reduction in communities' trust in the intentions and practices of counterterrorism agencies. Similar to the experiences of other countries, Indonesia's deviation from the standard procedure when administering justice toward terrorist suspects belonging to a specific community has eroded trust between such communities and the state's counterterrorism agencies—leading to vari-

ous protests and vocal opposition toward the government. While these public outcries have yet to become widespread, the fact that conservative Islamic groups and MUI continue to voice them indicates that such distrust is a cause of concern.

About the Authors

Alif Satria is a researcher in the Department of Politics and Social Change of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Jakarta. His work focuses on the issue of terrorism, intolerance, and political violence. In the last five years, he has conducted various research ranging from understanding radicalization processes of Indonesian terrorists, mapping terrorist organizational dynamics, and developing the Collective Violence Early Warning (CVEW) Dataset, a dataset on collective violence in Indonesia.

Cameron Sumpter coordinates the preventing/countering violent extremism (P/CVE) thematic area of an EU-backed initiative called ESIWA, which seeks to enhance security cooperation in and with Asia through a range of practical exchanges and engagements. Cameron is also an adjunct fellow with the Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS) in Singapore, where he was based until mid-2022. As part of CENS's radicalization studies program, Cameron analyzed and discussed the policy and practice of preventing violent extremism, particularly in Indonesia, where he conducted regular fieldwork.

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- [75] JI members joined the DSKS in 2013. One of them, Tengku Azhar, even became its secretary-general. For background, see: Institute for the Policy Analysis of Conflict, “The Impact of the Taliban Victory,” p. 5.
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Google and Corporate Social Responsibility: YouTube in the Service of Terrorism

by Raphael Cohen-Almagor

Abstract

This article is concerned with the boundaries of freedom of expression on the Internet and, more specifically, with manifestations of terrorism on YouTube. The article opens with two definitions of terrorism. Section II discusses various responsibilities that businesses have: economic, legal, moral, social and discretionary. Section III addresses the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Unfortunately, not all companies adhere to the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility. Therefore, ethical standards should be anchored in appropriate laws and enforced by responsible governments. Section IV clarifies that incitement to violence is in the focus of attention. The philosophy of John Stuart Mill is instrumental in explaining the difference between advocacy (or preaching) and incitement (or instigation). Sections V and VI examine the influences of Anwar al-Awlaki, the American-Muslim jihadi preacher, and of Anjem Choudary, the British-Muslim jihadi preacher, on their followers. The words of al-Awlaki and of Choudary instigated many of the terrorist activities that the West had seen in recent years. There are direct links between their incitement and extreme violent incidents. Both of them were able to spread their instigation to terror on platforms provided by Google and specifically its subsidiary YouTube. Finally, Section VII probes YouTube and CSR. It is argued that the Internet is international in character, but it cannot be abused to override law. There is not one law for people and another for the Internet. It is further argued that power without responsibility is dangerous and corrosive.

Keywords: al-Qaeda; Anjem Choudary; Anwar al-Awlaki; Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR); freedom of expression; Google; incitement; Internet; Islamic State; jihad; terror; YouTube

I. Introduction

The focus of this article is on incitement to terrorism on YouTube. There is no universally agreed-upon definition of terrorism, but some common features are repeated in many definitions. The 22 U.S. Code § 2656f holds that the term terrorism means “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents,”[1] while the UK Crown Prosecution Service defines it as “the use or threat of action, both in and outside the UK, designed to influence any international government organisation or to intimidate the public.” It must also be for “the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause.”[2] According to the Crown Prosecution Service, terrorism is not limited to conducting attacks and includes the planning, assistance and collecting of information for the intended purpose of terrorist activities. Additionally, Part 1 of the Terrorism Act 2006, Encouragement of terrorism, holds: “A person commits an offence if—

- (a) he publishes a statement to which this section applies or causes another to publish such a statement; and
- (b) at the time he publishes it or causes it to be published, he—
 - (i) intends members of the public to be directly or indirectly encouraged or otherwise induced by the statement to commit, prepare or instigate acts of terrorism or Convention offences; or
 - (ii) is reckless as to whether members of the public will be directly or indirectly encouraged or otherwise induced by the statement to commit, prepare or instigate such acts or offences.”[3]

YouTube is an American online video-sharing platform. It was established by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim in February 2005. In November 2006, Google bought the site for US\$1.65 billion. In August 2007, the service started to include adverts. In May 2010, YouTube had more than two billion views per day.

By March 2013, YouTube saw one billion monthly active users.[4] Google is an international company and it needs to abide by the laws of the countries in which it is operating. This highly popular Internet platform provides an important outlet for many individuals and organizations. Unfortunately, however, YouTube has been abused by antisocial users, criminals and terrorists. Because of YouTube's wide reach and because it is a legitimate company that operates in the open and not in the Deep Dark Web, responsible operation is a must. Unlike the Dark Web, the website is not encrypted and there is no need for a special secure browser to access it. YouTube is easily accessible and is said to be regulated in accordance with the company's Code of Practice. In 2020, YouTube generated a revenue of \$19.7 billion, a 30.4 percent increase year-on-year and it is estimated that more than 2.3 billion people access YouTube once a month.[5] With great profit and great power should also come great responsibility to ensure a safe and secure environment for its billions of users.

Our discussion considers YouTube's terrorism problem in the context of the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to which, unfortunately, not all companies adhere. Ethical standards—which have a rich history—should be anchored in appropriate laws and enforced by responsible governments. When corporate activity causes harm, nations need to assert their regulatory authority. Insisting on a safe Internet free of terrorism is in the interests of individuals, business and democratic governments.[6]

This article is structured as follows: Section II discusses various responsibilities that businesses have: economic, legal, moral, social and discretionary. Section III discusses the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Section IV accentuates that in the focus is incitement to violence. Sections V and VI examine two influential jihadi preachers, Anwar al-Awlaki and Anjem Choudary, and their dangerous influence on their followers. Finally, Section VII probes YouTube and CSR.

II. Economic, Legal, Moral, Social and Discretionary Responsibilities

Businesses have economic, legal, moral, social and discretionary responsibilities. *Economic responsibility* refers to the production of goods and services that society needs. *Legal responsibility* requires businesses to conduct their affairs within the confines of transparent legislation and regulation. In *moral responsibility*, the agent's conscience is at issue in terms of a causal connection between the agent and the action or the consequences of the action. When people perform a morally significant act, they deserve praise. When they fail to perform a morally significant act, we may blame them for omission.[7] Businesses should assume ethical responsibilities that are extended to actions, decisions, and practices beyond what is required by the law.[8] *Social responsibility* assumes that individuals have responsibilities to their communities, and businesses should both better the societies in which they operate and refrain from inflicting harm on communities. Finally, *discretionary (or philanthropic) responsibilities* represent voluntary roles and practices that businesses assume although there are no clear and explicit societal provisions as to how to perform these responsibilities. These are left to individual managers' and corporations' judgments and choices in accordance with prevailing social norms.[9]

Two bones of contention are (a) whether Internet intermediaries have any moral responsibilities beyond the professional responsibility to carry and disseminate information, and (b) whether Internet intermediaries should monitor and filter the content circulating on the web in order to prevent the dissemination of harmful material. In the view of this author, both questions ought to be answered in the affirmative. These questions relate to technological abilities and to the expectations that we may have regarding the conduct of Internet gatekeepers. In *Confronting the Internet's Dark Side: Moral and Social Responsibility on the Free Highway*, I argued that Internet intermediaries should adopt a proactive stance in combating antisocial and violent content. Those who control the access to the information highway should assume an obligation as trustees of the public good. Responsibility dictates that Internet intermediaries must not be neutral toward antisocial and violent content. I argued that absolute content net neutrality constitutes irresponsible conduct.[10] Among the prime troubling antisocial and violent activities that have significant presence on the Internet are terrorism and its relationship to crime.

Marc Rotenberg, president of the Electronic Privacy Information Center, said that the capability to monitor the Internet is greater than what most people assume. It is a question of will rather than of ability.[11] Edward

Snowden's revelations about the National Security Agency (NSA) surveillance program opened our eyes to the growing technological capabilities and the rapid expansion of security surveillance over the past decade.[12]

III. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) emerged during the 1950s out of recognition that adopting norms of social responsibility could be beneficial for business.[13] The modern era of CSR was stimulated by Howard R. Bowen's *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman* (1953).[14] CSR is defined broadly to encompass the economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic expectations placed on businesses by society.[15] Important expectations of business include their recognition that business integrity and ethical conduct go beyond mere compliance with laws and regulations. Part of the ethical expectation is that businesses will be responsive not only to the letter of the law but also to the "spirit" of the law as well as to social mores and ethical norms.[16] Ethics should guide the pursuit of knowledge and the development of skills. However, CSR has never been motivated by pure altruism. CSR is sustainable because it benefits not only society but also business. As the eminent CSR scholar Archie Carroll notes, CSR is enlightened self-interest that has come of age.[17] Granted that companies wish to make profit for their owners and shareholders and to enhance corporate performance, adherents of CSR believe that this concept is the perfect scheme for maximizing profit for stockholders.[18]

Corporate Social Responsibility refers to democratic accountability to the public as a whole; responsibility for meeting general and special needs as decided by the public; a commitment to quality, not determined by profit or the market; and often some subordination to national needs or priorities in cultural, economic, and political matters.[19] In the context of professional activity, social responsibility entails that professionals have a duty to serve their clients' interests and also some wider social interests.

The arguments for CSR are strong. It is believed that CSR ensures the company's long-term viability. Responsible planning which includes anticipating and initiating policies is more practical and less costly than reacting to social problems. Furthermore, ethical practice enhances the firm's reputation and marketing and it wards off government regulation. Government intervention can be forestalled if the firm applies responsible standards and fulfills society's expectations.[20]

Adherents of CSR believe that decisions of business managers need to respect human dignity and provide for the common good.[21] Ethical leadership should include care, compassion and foresight. Leaders should have the ability to analyze and be responsible for the consequences of their decisions. Ethical leaders are people who care about the greater good of their employees, organization, and society rather than their own self-interests. These ethical role models adopt socially responsible behavior and strive to balance the various needs of stakeholders in a way that serves the interests of all.[22]

Corporate Social Responsibility carries a special meaning in the context of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). It is argued that ICTs should be accountable for the digital platforms and for the way information is transferred.[23] Members of these professions have a duty to institute and enforce codes of practice as well as ensure that their clients are safe and secure. Certain standards and qualifications need to be maintained. While Internet companies are for-profit and, as such, wish to expand their businesses, to enjoy wide clientele and see that their interests are being served, companies need also to ensure a safe environment for their customers. In the democratic world, Internet companies operate under liberal norms and regulations that enable their empowerment. First and foremost, it is the premise of freedom that enables their operation. However, freedom of use is not freedom of abuse. Boundless liberty might lead to chaos and lawlessness. The Democratic Catch (the very principle of liberty might undermine democracy) prescribes certain boundaries to enable a safe environment.[24] All democracies, including the American, bar incitement to violence.

IV. Incitement

The United States is the most liberal country in the world when it comes to freedom of expression. The First Amendment to the American Constitution explicitly instructs: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the

press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”[25] The text is written in negative terms upholding individual rights and prohibiting state action that interferes with speech. The First Amendment condemns with its absolute disapproval any suppression of ideas, even the vilest. Racist and hate speech, in its varied general manifestations, is therefore protected speech in the United States.[26] In the United States, people are free to hate everybody with gusto and verve. The United States has an active Nazi party.[27] However, even the United States does not tolerate incitement to violence. The American legal system, like most democratic legal systems in the world, has accepted in broad terms John Stuart Mill’s reasoning on the importance, scope and boundaries of freedom of expression.

Indeed, in the field of political philosophy, one of the thinkers who has influenced the liberal discourse on freedom of expression is John Stuart Mill. Mill’s book, *On Liberty*, published in 1859, is still widely quoted today as before—and not only by academics but also by journalists, politicians and judges. Mill’s philosophy is instrumental in explaining the difference between advocacy (or preaching) and incitement (or instigation). Mill argued for the protection of all opinions, including the most unorthodox and false.[28] He welcomed the expression of nonconformist opinions as they would provoke debate and advance us to the discovery of another facet of truth. Silencing such opinions might rob the entire human race because many scientific breakthroughs originated in singular minds. Mill also emphasized the use of speech to express and promote our ethical convictions. At the same time, in Chapter 5 of *On Liberty*, Mill wrote that “It is one of the undisputed functions of government to take precautions against crime before it has been committed, as well as to detect and punish it afterwards.”[29]

On Liberty, as the title suggests, celebrates freedom. The important thing for Mill was to reveal freedom of expression, not circumscribe it. Precisely because of our awareness of Mill’s intention, his exclusionary treatment of incitement is very important. The essential distinction between “instigation” or “incitement” on the one hand, and “advocacy,” “preaching” or “teaching” on the other is that those to whom the instigation is addressed must be urged to do something now or in the immediate future, rather than merely convinced to believe in something. Advocacy attests to democratic deliberation when diverse interests openly compete for a period of time in order to reach a decision.[30] Mill considered as instigation a speech that is intended or that is recklessly uttered to lead to some mischievous action in circumstances that are conducive to the taking of that dangerous action.[31] Incitement is not mere advocacy, discussion or debate voiced as a matter of ethical conviction which are protected under Mill’s theory. Three elements must be met for speech to be considered as incitement: (1) the speaker must intend to cause violence, (2) s/he intends that the violence occur immediately, and (3) the violence is likely to occur immediately. A speaker who explicitly says that he wishes to stir violence against his target group strengthens our conclusion that the speech can be described as incitement and that, therefore, it should be prohibited. The clear intention to do harm should not be facilitated by society’s permission to attack victims.

In 1859, when John Stuart published *On Liberty*, the press was the main vehicle for circulating news. Today, in addition to newspapers, there are many other means to circulate news. The Internet with its multiple news and social platforms plays a magnificently important role. Incitement can be uttered many miles away from the target group and the online and offline media will transmit it to the audience who might act upon it. Further, the media might create an atmosphere of incitement against the designated target. The media amplify violent expressions, multiply its strength tenfold, and inspire more people to adopt aggression. The Internet is extremely powerful in conveying messages, positive and negative. It can mobilize people into action. We have witnessed this time and again in organizing events, demonstrations, petitions, charity campaigns, marches, customer initiatives and political campaigns.

Boundaries to freedom of expression should be considered very carefully. Whenever we come to restrict speech, the onus for limiting free expression is always with the one who wishes to limit expression, and that one should bring concrete evidence to justify restriction. The speech must be dangerous and/or harmful. Here the focus is on incitement, also called speech-act, when it is difficult to ascertain where the speech ends and the action begins.[32]

V. Anwar al-Awlaki

In September 2001, the coordinated Al Qaeda attack on several targets in the United States not only killed almost 3,000 people, but also brought a sense of urgency that terrorism was a substantial threat to world peace and order. The twenty-first century has witnessed numerous terrorist attacks around the globe, many of which were orchestrated by Islamic terrorist organizations, such as Al Qaeda and the Islamic State, that have been using American companies' digital platforms, such as YouTube, to fight against the United States and other countries, perceived as enemies of their kind of Islam. The Internet has been used for indoctrinating and radicalizing people. It has been abused to promote and support homegrown terrorism—i.e., terrorism in many countries—based on local people who became radicalized via the Internet and were willing to attack their own countries in the name of religion and violent political ideology. Effective propaganda has been translated to successful recruitment of people who are willing to commit their lives to jihad as well as to raise funds for terrorist operations.[33]

The Internet has amplified terrorism, provided conditions for terrorists to develop and see success in achieving their aims of spreading hatred and translating heinous ideas into destructive deeds. Direct correlations can be made between violent words and violent deeds. The British MI5 warned that “Extremists use websites and social media to recruit and radicalise individuals through videos and propaganda.”[34] Such websites can also “provide advice and instructions on how to plan and prepare for attacks, acting as a ‘virtual training camp’ or ideas forum. Terrorists in the UK and elsewhere have been convicted of running or contributing to extremist websites or have been found in possession of downloaded material that would assist in preparation of terrorist attacks.”[35]

Anwar al-Awlaki is one of the iconic figures of modern terrorism. The American-Yemeni cleric was the leading English-speaking propagandist for al-Qaeda who was embraced also by the Islamic State. For his operational and leadership roles with al-Qaeda and for plotting attacks intended to kill Americans, al-Awlaki was killed by an American drone in 2011 but his influence endures beyond the grave.[36] His presence on the Internet is immortal. Strikingly, YouTube used to host the largest collection of al-Awlaki's lectures and sermons.

On January 18, 2015, I conducted a simple YouTube search for “Anwar al-Awlaki”. My search produced 68,400 results, including many of his lectures. I repeated this same search on January 5, 2017, yielding 68,000 results. Captured titles included “Battle of the hearts and minds”, “Islam judgment day”, “Never trust a non-Muslim”, “Death: the hereafter series”, “The grave”, and “Allah is preparing for victory”. In 2017, some of the titles were “Persevere and Endure”, “The Uniqueness of the Shaheed”, “The Resurrection Day of Judgment”, and “Islam judgment day”. For many years, YouTube managers ignored the ethical dimension of their business and were inattentive to the implications of their conduct on stakeholders. In the name of “freedom of expression,” YouTube provided a powerful platform and facilitated incitement to violence. Anwar al-Awlaki's videos have proved to be most influential in inciting terror.[37]

Anwar al-Awlaki's depiction of the world is one of violence in which true Muslims fight nonbelievers to the death. At the end of this bloody struggle, Islam will rule the world and all “Kuffar” (nonbelievers) will be stamped out because their choice is simple: Islam or death. In a series of lectures titled “The Hereafter,” al-Awlaki explicated his worldview in detail. This series remained on the Internet for a very long time.[38] Security experts called on YouTube to ban videos of lectures by al-Awlaki, which helped radicalize some very dangerous jihadists, including the terrorist Nidal Hasan from Fort Hood, Texas who murdered 13 people and wounded 32 others in a 2009 shooting rampage;[39] Farouk Abdulmutallab who attempted to detonate a bomb on a Northwest Airlines flight;[40] Zachary Adam Chesser who was convicted of attempting to provide material support and resources to Somalia's al-Shabaab terrorist organization and who threatened to murder two American satirists;[41] Roshonara Choudhry, a 21-year-old student who stabbed in May 2010 MP Stephen Timms because of his 2003 vote in British parliament in support of the Iraq war;[42] Rajib Karim who in 2011 conspired with al-Awlaki to plant a bomb on a British Airways plane;[43] Dzhokhar Tsarnaev and his brother Tamerlan Tsarnaev, known as the Boston Marathon bombers, who on April 14, 2013 detonated two bombs near the finish line of the Boston Marathon, killing three spectators and wounding more than 260 others;[44] Moner Mo-

hammad Abu-Salha, who drove a massive truck bomb into a restaurant in Jabal Al-Arba'een, Syria;[45] Minh Quang Pham who planned to blow himself up at London's Heathrow airport,[46] and Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik, the San Bernardino terrorists who on December 2, 2015 attacked Farook's office holiday party, killing 14 and wounding 22.[47] Farook's neighbor Enrique Marquez, who was charged with complicity in the murders, had spent with Farook many hours watching the recorded lectures of al-Awlaki and had followed the bomb-making instruction that al-Awlaki published in the terrorist magazine *Inspire*. [48]

Via the Internet, al-Awlaki was acting globally, motivating and instigating violence by individuals and groups. A bloodthirsty terrorist, a fundamentalist Imam, and an eloquent orator who was able to support his worldview with Quranic references, al-Awlaki's thirst to evoke violence whenever possible was infinite. The Bangladeshi wing of al-Qa`ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), known as Ansar al-Islam, had carried out attacks against secular bloggers, quoting al-Awlaki's online sermons as justifications, speaking of the duty of Muslims to act against anybody defaming their religion.[49]

Al-Awlaki financed Cherif Kouachi who, together with his brother, murdered 12 people in a massacre at the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in 2015.[50] He also inspired Elton Simpson and Nadir Soofi, the terrorists who aimed to kill people who attended the "Draw Muhammad" cartoon contest in Garland, Texas. On May 3, 2015, they opened fire at the entrance to an exhibit featuring controversial cartoons of the Muslim Prophet.[51] Simpson used al-Awlaki's portrait as his profile picture on Twitter while Soofi's mother stated that the drone strike that killed the cleric was the turning point in her son's radicalization, instigating deeper passion for al-Awlaki's calls for violence against those who vilified the Prophet.[52]

Al-Awlaki also radicalized Mohammad Youssef Abdulazeez who on July 16, 2015 murdered four US marines in attacks on two facilities in Tennessee;[53] Omar Mateen, who murdered 49 people and wounded 53 others in a June 2016 mass shooting at Pulse nightclub in Orlando;[54] the London Bridge attacker Usman Khan who killed two people and injured three others before he was shot dead by the police in November 2019;[55] and several other plots that featured young men who watched and identified with al-Awlaki online, after his death.[56] Al-Awlaki also inspired Junaid Hussain, one of the leaders of the ISIS 'Cyber Caliphate', the terrorists' branch of hackers.[57] In "The Battle of Hearts and Minds" (2008) al-Awlaki urged that now is the time to establish the khilafah.[58] In "Call to Jihad," recorded in March 2010, al-Awlaki urged his followers to join the fight in Iraq and other places.[59] A study of the social media activity of 104 British citizens and residents who traveled to Syria and Iraq to fight jihad found that al-Awlaki was mentioned favorably by 24 of them (23 percent).[60] Posthumously, with the help of social media, al-Awlaki continues to influence the ideological and strategic trajectory of jihadism and terrorism.

In the face of such evidence, Eric Posner said that "Never before in our history have enemies outside the United States been able to propagate genuinely dangerous ideas on American territory in such an effective way." [61] Posner suggests enacting a law that would make it a crime to access websites that glorify, express support for, or provide encouragement for ISIS or support recruitment by ISIS; to distribute links to those websites, or to encourage people to access such websites by supplying them with links or instructions. Posner supports urging Facebook, YouTube and other social networking sites to crack down on terrorist propaganda.[62]

Likewise, Mark D. Wallace, chief executive of the Counter Extremism Project, an advocacy group based in Washington, called on YouTube and other platforms to permanently ban all of al-Awlaki's material, saying that it should be treated in the same way that child pornography is treated. It should be censored.[63]

Under increased pressure and criticism, in November 2017 YouTube finally upheld its CSR responsibilities and removed thousands of videos of Anwar al-Awlaki in a significant step-up that was described as part of the site's anti-extremism campaign.[64] In 2019, *The Times* reported more than 100 videos of propaganda speeches by al-Awlaki, including some in which the preacher glorified "martyrs" and was recruiting people to the Islamic State. The paper notified Google and in response the company removed the videos identified by the reporter.[65]

On April 12, 2020, I searched YouTube for "Anwar al-Awlaki". My search results led to many videos about

Awlaki, rather than authored by him. The top results concerned the killing of the jihadi preacher. YouTube reversed its freedom of expression policy at least regarding al-Awlaki, acknowledging that the virtual life that YouTube had granted the jihadi preacher was extremely dangerous to human life. After years of reciting the freedom of expression mantra, YouTube balanced one against another two important values: freedom of expression and social responsibility and reached the right conclusion. Common sense does prevail, eventually. Unfortunately, it took the managers of YouTube several years to reach the right conclusion. During those years, al-Awlaki abused the YouTube platform to incite violence against the enemies of Jihad.[66]

Anwar al-Awlaki was a frequent contributor to the *Inspire* magazine, an English language jihadist magazine published by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). The magazine inspires jihadists, instructs how to mount terrorist attacks, and encourages people to carry out a comprehensive battle to establish a world caliphate. It attempts to target traditionally adversarial populations, Muslims who live in the West, encouraging them to engage in terrorist activity where they are.[67] In 2015, the 14th issue of *Inspire* was published, focusing on lone-wolf operations in the West, including the attack on Charlie Hebdo's office in Paris, capitalizing on the then-ongoing racial unrest in the US, and called on African Americans to embrace Islam and to kill "racist politicians". *Inspire* No. 15, published in 2016, reiterated the call for lone-wolf operations; instructed how to make parcel bombs, magnetic car bombs, and door trap bombs; and warned about a knife revolution heading toward America as part of the Jihadi holy war. *Inspire* No. 16, published later in 2016, contained praise for terrorists, rulings of lone Jihad, and a message to "our Muslim brothers" in America. It also explained how to prepare pressure-cooker bombs. The magazine is available on multiple websites, including some counter-terrorism sites.

Inspire repeatedly calls for killing innocent civilians. Anwar al-Awlaki told jihadists in his videos to kill any American: "Don't consult with anybody in killing the Americans, fighting the devil doesn't require consultation or prayers seeking divine guidance. They are the party of the devils." [68] Following the Fort Hood shootings in 2009, al-Awlaki wrote a post headlined "Nidal Hassan Did the Right Thing," [69] in which he argued that the army psychiatrist's shooting spree had been entirely justified: "Nidal Hassan is a hero. He is a man of conscience who could not bear living the contradiction of being a Muslim and serving in an army that is fighting against his own people. This is a contradiction that many Muslims brush aside and just pretend that it doesn't exist." [70]

VI. Anjem Choudary

Anwar al-Awlaki is not the only zealot cleric who benefited from Google's irresponsible conduct. Another is Anjem Choudary, a jihadist preacher of radical Islam and ISIS supporter considered one of the most dangerous religious leaders in the United Kingdom, also exploited YouTube. Choudary directed the operations of Al Muhajiroun ("the emigrants"), a militant Salafi jihadist group that was founded by a radical Muslim cleric, Omar Bakri Muhammad. They wished to bring the end of British democracy and introduce Sharia law by force.[71] The message of Islam, so he claimed, will stem from the United Kingdom and spread all over the world to establish the Islamic caliphate. In 1999, Al Muhajiroun urged supporters to travel to Chechnya to wage jihad against the Russians.[72] Its posters hailed the 9/11 terrorists as "the Magnificent 19".[73]

The Counter Extremism Project provides a detailed account of Choudary's ties to extremists, arguing that between 1999 and 2016, Choudary and al-Muhajiroun were linked to almost one-quarter of the terror plots in the United Kingdom.[74] The list of terrorist plots linked to the group is agonizingly long. It includes the 2003 suicide bombing attack on Mike's Place bar in Tel Aviv; the failed 2004 fertilizer bomb plot; the 2005 London bombings; the failed 2012 plot to blow up a Territorial Army base with an explosives-filled toy car; the murder of Lee Rigby in 2013, and the London Bridge attacks in 2017 and 2019.[75] Many of Choudary's recruits have fought for ISIS, al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Syria, Iraq and other places. Nick Lowles, chief executive of a British anti-racist watchdog group, Hope Not Hate, said: "No other British citizen has had so much influence over so many terrorists as Choudary." [76]

For 20 years, Choudary used his training as a qualified lawyer to evade the law. Al-Muhajiroun and its succes-

sor organizations have contributed to the radicalization of hundreds of British Muslims. Choudary used YouTube to incite religious-Islamic war against the West, providing theological justifications for launching terrorist attacks against the enemies of Islam.[77] Via the Internet, Choudary's influence stretched well beyond the United Kingdom. AIVD, the Dutch intelligence agency, assessed him to be a key influence in the spread of the jihadi movement in the Netherlands.[78] In Belgium, Choudary helped set up Sharia4Belgium that "engaged in organised indoctrination and recruitment of young people to participate in the armed conflict in Syria." [79] Choudary and his aid, Mohammed Rahman, used YouTube to encourage support for ISIS. One of the speeches titled "How Muslims Assess the Legitimacy of the Caliphate" was uploaded to Choudary's YouTube channel on September 9, 2014, and played over the image of a map of northern Africa, the Middle East, north-west Asia and southern Europe, explaining the need for establishing an Islamic caliphate over this huge territory.[80]

In 2014, the British authorities arrested Choudary for supporting ISIS. In 2015, a jury convicted Choudary for inciting his followers to join the Islamic State in Syria. He was sentenced to five and a half years in prison and was released on licence in October 2018 after serving half of his sentence. According to the *New York Times*, having served their time, many members of Choudary's old network are being released from detention.[81] They constitute a lingering security threat.

Before his arrest, Choudary was very candid in pronouncing his violent beliefs. In an interview with CBN, he said that Islam is not a religion of peace. Islam does not mean peace. Islam means submission to the will of Allah. Choudary openly declared: "There is a place for violence in Islam. There is a place for jihad in Islam." [82] He explained that jihad is the second-most-talked-about duty in the Quran, after belief. The duty to fight is frequently mentioned. According to him, it is difficult to refute the belief that Quran dictates terrorism. This belief for him is a matter of religion, an ideology and a way of life.[83]

Google, one should note, is much less tolerant of terrorist incitement nowadays. In June 2020, I searched for "How Muslims Assess the Legitimacy of the Caliphate" on YouTube and was unable to find it. The search yielded a video titled "The Islamic State (Full Length)" by Vice News that requires age verification for access. I was able to find many clips on "Anjem Choudary", including reports about his imprisonment and release from jail, and his interviews with prestigious networks. I was unable to find his sermons and speeches. His ideas are heard when he was interviewed by news outlets. On RT, Choudary said that terrorizing the enemy is part of Islam. This is something that we need to understand and embrace as part of the jurisprudence of jihad. Furthermore, Islam does not make a distinction between soldiers and civilians because civilians are those who send soldiers to conduct war and, therefore, they are accountable for the war conduct. Specifically, journalists are the right-hand of politicians in their propaganda machine justifying wars against Muslim countries.[84] On BBC HARDtalk, Choudary said: "when we say innocent people we mean Muslims, as far as non-Muslims are concerned they have not accepted Islam... as far as we are concerned that is a crime against god... you are guilty of not believing in god... the whole world is Dar al-Harb (house of war)... Britain is Dar al-Fitna (house of strife)." [85] CNN provided Choudary a platform to propagate his violent ideas including justifications to wage war on the USA and killing of journalists who covered the war on ISIS.[86] On Fox television, Choudary had several shouting contests with Sean Hannity.[87]

On March 12, 2021, I conducted on YouTube yet another search for "Anjem Choudary." The search yielded dozens of results. The majority were interviews that Choudary granted to conventional media such as RT UK, BBC, ITV, Fox and Sky as well as news reports about Choudary. There are also plenty of clips that denounce Choudary and his worldview.

It is impossible in the scope of this article to discuss other people who explicitly incite violence. Anwar al-Awlaki and Anjem Choudary are two examples in a sea of hatred. I choose them because they constitute clear examples. I wanted to make the point that their preaching is beyond the scope of tolerance. Readers are welcome to employ the rationale exhibited here to analyze other cases and decide whether the content under scrutiny is mere advocacy and, therefore, legitimate, or constitutes incitement and, therefore, should not be tolerated.

VII. YouTube and Corporate Social Responsibility

YouTube has “Respect” in the YouTube community guidelines in its Policy and Safety section.[88] One of them concerns violent or graphic content. It says: “It’s not okay to post violent or gory content that’s primarily intended to be shocking, sensational, or disrespectful. If posting graphic content in a news or documentary context, please be mindful to provide enough information to help people understand what’s going on in the video. Don’t encourage others to commit specific acts of violence.”[89] YouTube has not been enforcing its own standards effectively. Having community standards and not enforcing them is a sham.

Since 2008, YouTube has improved its adherence to Corporate Social Responsibility and to its own guidelines. Still, in 2016 it was reported that British authorities made repeated efforts to get Choudary’s Twitter posts and YouTube videos taken down but had no power to force corporations to remove material from the Internet even if it was believed to have fallen foul of UK anti-terror laws.[90] At that time, Choudary had more than 32,000 followers on his active Twitter account. Repeated requests for the removal of his account were all declined. In June 2016, a request was sent to YouTube for the removal of a video titled “Duties of the Kilafah by Anjem Choudary”. The request was refused.[91] A video titled “The Caliphate will expand into Europe and US” was not referred because YouTube considers it “journalistic” as it was uploaded on Memri TV, a Middle East research institute.[92] A request to remove Mohammed Rahman’s videos was partially accepted.[93] In June 2020, I was unable to find those videos on YouTube. Common sense does prevail. Sometimes it hesitates, but eventually it does prevail.

The recent YouTube Violent or graphic content policies state that “Violent or gory content intended to shock or disgust viewers, or content encouraging others to commit violent acts are not allowed on YouTube.”[94] They instruct users not to post content that is, *inter alia*, “Inciting others to commit violent acts against individuals or a defined group of people”,[95] footage, audio, or imagery involving war aftermath, terrorist attack aftermath, street fights, physical attacks, sexual assaults, “immolation, torture, corpses, protests or riots, robberies, medical procedures, or other such scenarios with the intent to shock or disgust viewers”,[96] or “footage of corpses with massive injuries, such as severed limbs.”[97] YouTube policies provide examples of prohibited violent and shocking content which include videos of beheadings and footage filmed by the perpetrator during a deadly or major violent event, “in which weapons, violence, or injured victims are visible or audible. Note: there are no exceptions for this example, even if there is educational, documentary, scientific, or artistic context in your content.”[98]

These policies are certainly steps in the right direction. They were installed relatively late—but better late than never. CSR scholar Keith Davis asserts that it is a firm’s obligation to consider the effects of its decisions on society in a manner that will accomplish social benefits as well as traditional economic benefits.[99] This means that “social responsibility begins where the law ends. A firm is not being socially responsible if it merely complies with the minimum requirements of the law, because this is what any good citizen would do.”[100]

The main principles of CSR dictate a careful decision-making process which takes into consideration the potential consequences of decisions; corporate obligation to consider the stakeholders’ interests; transparency; accountability; respect for societal values; liability for decisions; enactment of remedial measures to redress harmful side effects and, lastly, community investment to benefit the public good.[101]

Adopting norms of social responsibility would contribute to corporate reputation and marketing. Indeed, there is a significant positive relationship between CSR activities and consumers’ purchasing decisions.[102] Stewart Lewis argues that corporate social responsibility, referring to practices that improve the workplace and benefit society beyond what companies are legally mandated to do, is established as a fundamental criterion for judging companies, and calls for a reappraisal of companies’ brand and reputation management.[103] Upholding norms of corporate social responsibility benefit both the firm and the societies in which it operates.

Social responsibility raises important contractual obligations that the company arguably violates by allowing terrorists’ videos to be uploaded and/or to stay up on its platform. The corporate statement to consumers is purposefully ambiguous to make liability highly unlikely in the United States, especially in light of 47 U.S.C.

230 - “Good Samaritan Immunity” that says: “No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider.”[104] Section 230 allows Internet intermediaries to exercise editorial discretion without fear of publisher liability and provides broad immunity for online service providers for third-party statements. Therefore, in the United States, legally cognizable ways to sue YouTube are rather limited. However, other countries are less tolerant than the USA. If Google will continue to fail to accept and adhere to CSR principles, countries should not hesitate to enforce their national laws to stamp out media-induced terrorism. The belief that the Internet transcends national laws due to its international nature is false. Internet intermediaries, such as Google, are not above the law. We have seen that when legal authorities of a given country decide to assert their jurisdiction, Internet companies then need to abide by national laws if they wish to operate in that country. The Yahoo! Saga that took place in France in 2000 when Yahoo! was selling Nazi artefacts on its auction site, in violation of French Criminal Code that prohibits the display of Nazi symbols, is a case in point. The Paris court found that Yahoo! had committed “a manifestly illegal disturbance” under the French New Code of Civil Procedure.[105] The French ruling contended that it is illegal to host criminal platforms. Yahoo! was forced to remove all Nazi memorabilia from its auction sites.[106] Another case is *Vivi Down Association v. Google*[107] where Google was forced to take off its servers an abusive, obscene and defamatory video clip.[108] As in the Yahoo! Saga, this ruling meant, in essence, that hosting platforms are required to be cognizant of the laws of the countries in which they operate.

VIII. Conclusion

The ingenuity and ubiquity of digital devices make the Internet an asset for communication between people. However, Internet companies and other stakeholders must be aware that the Internet’s massive potential might be abused, and the international community should devise appropriate ways to tackle the challenges.

While a great deal is dependent on how we use the Internet, a great deal is also dependent on Internet intermediaries. Google is one of the largest companies in the world, a member of the prestigious trillion-dollar club, together with Apple, Microsoft and Amazon.[109] Yet power without responsibility might undermine not only our well-being but also the mega companies that operate under democratic norms and procedures. Therefore, we must insist that Internet intermediaries take responsibility and ensure that Internet users can enjoy the vast capabilities of the Internet without putting themselves in danger. The Internet should be enlightening, innovative, entertaining, productive, and voicing the best of humanity. To enable this, boundaries should be introduced and safe environments should be established. This requires a combined effort of users, business, governments, and the international community at large.

I have put a lot of emphasis on censoring YouTube because of its great significance on the Internet as *the* leading video platform nowadays. Granted that extremists can view violent material in many other places. Granted that the goal of limiting incitement to violence fully and comprehensively is not achievable. Still, there is great value in making YouTube clean up such violent content because of its popularity, because of its accessibility, and because it is the place for people to go first when they wish to upload and watch video content. YouTube has the greatest ability to promote certain content. What is taking place on this platform, and the way it runs and makes a profit can serve as a model to follow for other companies. For a considerable amount of time, YouTube was awash with inciting calls for violence and terrorism. It took Google’s directors years to understand that “free to use” is different from “free to abuse”, and that words can be powerful and destructive. In 2017, Google announced that it intends to recruit some 10,000 reviewers to reduce the amount of “problematic content” on its video platform. YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki said: “Some bad actors are exploiting our openness to mislead, manipulate, harass or even harm”,[110] adding that YouTube’s trust and safety teams have reviewed nearly 2 million videos for violent extremist content in six months.[111] During the second half of 2017, its machine learning algorithms have helped remove more than 150,000 videos from YouTube that depict violent extremism. Many of those videos included al-Awlaki’s violent and inciting speeches. Still, there is room for Google to refine its content moderation algorithms further, making it more robust to identify extreme and violent content more effectively. Google should stop recommending ever-more-extreme content.[112]

Archie Carroll, the well-known writer on corporate social responsibility, articulated that—beyond the obvious economic and legal obligations that a firm has—the social responsibility of businesses also encompasses ethical and discretionary responsibilities.[113] Carroll's pyramid of CSR depicted the economic category at the base and then built upward through legal, ethical and philanthropic categories. In his view, a CSR company is one that strives to make a profit, obeys the law and behaves ethically.[114] While the focus of this article is on Google, the rationale holds true for other Internet intermediaries. There is growing awareness of the threats and of the need to provide human security. Ignorance and complacency, whether circumstantial or normative, cannot serve as an excuse. The role of gatekeeping should be clarified and defined. Google and other Internet intermediaries slowly realize the scope and importance of their responsibilities. There can be no power without responsibility. For years, Facebook, Google, Twitter, Yahoo! and others thought there is. In fact, I accentuate that greater power requires greater responsibility.

These giant companies are at an important crossroads. Google should assist security agencies in countering the dissemination of terrorist propaganda. The use of flagging mechanisms as a standard feature across all social networking media and Internet search engines will improve the likelihood of timely removal of propaganda intended to further terrorist purposes. The UN Office of Drugs and Crime advised that increased measures to identify terrorism-related content, combined with enhanced information-sharing partnerships between state and private stakeholders, could significantly assist in identifying and countering terrorist activity on the Internet.[115]

When corporate activity results in loss of life, government can expect businesses to adhere to responsible norms and codes of practice. If businesses fail to ensure a safe digital environment, governments should assert their regulatory authority. A balance needs to be struck between freedom of expression and social responsibility. Social responsibility prescribes certain boundaries to freedom in order to ensure public safety. Internet intermediaries are required to comply with social and business norms as well as with national laws and international conventions. While responsible Internet practices do impose costs on business, irresponsible practices impose far greater costs on society—which in the end will backfire on Internet firms tolerating incitement to terrorism.

N.B.: All cited websites were accessed during March 2021.

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About the Author

Raphael Cohen-Almagor, DPhil, *St. Catherine's College, University of Oxford, is professor of politics and founding director of the Middle East Study Centre, University of Hull and a global fellow, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Raphael has taught, inter alia, at the universities of Oxford, Jerusalem, Haifa, UCLA, Johns Hopkins, and Nirma, India. He was also senior fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington DC, and distinguished visiting professor, Faculty of Laws, University College London. In 2022, he was a public policy fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and in 2023 he will be the Olof Palme guest professor, Lund University, Sweden. Raphael has published extensively in the fields of politics, philosophy, media ethics, medical ethics, law, education, sociology, and history, including *The Boundaries of Liberty and Tolerance* (1994), *The Right to Die with Dignity* (2001), *Euthanasia in the Netherlands: The Policy and Practice of Mercy Killing* (2004), *Speech, Media and Ethics* (2005), *The Scope of Tolerance* (2006), *The Democratic "Catch": Free Speech and Its Limits* (2007); *Confronting the Internet's Dark Side* (2015), *Just, Reasonable Multiculturalism* (2021), and *The Republic, Secularism and Security: France versus the Burqa and the Niqab* (2022). He is now working on several publications, including two books: *Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Critical Study of Peace Mediation, Facilitation and Negotiations between Israel and the PLO*, and *Euthanasia in Belgium: The Policy and Practice of End-of-Life Care*.*

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Cyberterrorism: Four Reasons for Its Absence—So Far

by Jeppe T. Jacobsen

Abstract

Why has cyberterrorism (still) not happened? This article revisits two existing explanations and adds two novel ones. First, developing fear-inducing destructive cyberattacks is more difficult and involves more uncertainty in terms of producing harmful effects than conventional terrorist attacks. Second, cyberattacks rarely produce spectacular imagery. Since cyberattacks with the potential to cause fear do not necessarily require as high technical barriers of entry as an imagined cyber 9/11, the author adds two additional explanations to better understand the absence of cyberterrorism. Third, a corporal explanation: Violent bodies most often come into being through memetic practices of other violent figures and artefacts but the hacker's subjectivity is different from the typical non-state terrorist. Rather than through violence, the thrill of hacking emerges after having stared at endless lines of code, when a technical puzzle is solved, and access to an IT system is achieved. And fourth, a social explanation: it is difficult for prospective cyberterrorists to build the necessary amount of trust online. Based on these four explanations, the article sketches the likely characteristics of a future cyberterrorist. If we are to experience cyberterrorism from non-state actors, we will most likely face an antisocial Unabomber-like figure who has acquired the necessary technical knowhow independently, while not being attracted to a violent spectacle or to violent imitations of a jihadi or right-wing corporality.

Keywords: cyberattacks, cyberterrorism, hacking, terrorist profile

Introduction

The fear of cyberterrorism—the so-called cyber 9/11—reached a high at the beginning of the new millennium.[1] However, national threat assessments all over the world have incrementally downgraded the threat,[2] and other threats have started to dominate the security political debate, both in the public domain and in academia. In 2012, a questionnaire among IT-security experts showed that 79% expected a “major cyberterrorist attack” within one year.[3] Yet, the large, devastating and fear-inducing cyberattack conducted by a terrorist group or a lone wolf did not happen. This was a surprise to former head of CIA and NSA, Michael Hayden, who characterized the general use of cyberspace by terrorist groups as “sophisticated”.[4] In 2010, then-FBI director Robert Mueller underlined that terrorists and extremists showed clear interest in the use of hacking.[5] Two years later, the former head of NSA and commander of the US Cyber Command, General Keith Alexander, worried later that online activists possess the skills to shut down the US power grid.[6] This article explores why cyberterrorism has still not happened.

The academic discussions on the missing cyberterrorism peaked over a decade ago. Here, two overall explanations dominated: destructive cyberattacks that seek to cause direct violence against civilians or noncombatants performed for fear-generating and propagandistic effect, ultimately to (politically) coerce populations or conflict parties—or simply *cyberterrorism* [7]—are, first, technically too difficult and, second, lacking a spectacular visual effect.[8] Yet, the technical barriers of entry are not static over time. Today hacking tools have become more accessible than ever. Gangs of cybercriminals have shut down pipelines (causing panic-buying of gas) and disrupted hospital networks (resulting in the postponing of critical surgeries), while unknown hackers have come close to successfully poisoning water treatment plants in the United States.[9] We are also experiencing an increasing amount of unintentional diffusion of cyber capabilities from militaries and intelligence agencies to other actors by leakages and theft.[10] Yet, we are still waiting for the first act of cyberterrorism to occur.

This article starts by revisiting the two existing explanations as to why destruction and mass mobilization of fear through hacking is not necessarily very attractive to those subjects who are normally associated with conducting acts of terrorism. These technical and visual explanations approach cyberterrorism mainly as

a potential tool or means through which to conduct violence and pursue political ends. Yet, this article proposes to supplement such explanations with other explanations that perceive terrorism not simply as a technique, but as a form of violent subjectivity.[11] A prospective cyberterrorist must embrace both hacker subjectivity and a violent subjectivity. This leads to two additional explanations: a bodily and social challenge for the cyberterrorist. The addition of more explanations is needed to explain why cyberterrorist attacks that do not require as high technical barriers of entry as spectacular cyber 9/11-style attacks have not happened. Furthermore, and importantly, the additional explanations help to identify what to look for when searching for the cyberterrorist. In other words, this article attempts to draw the profile of the most likely future cyberterrorist.

The article's explanations and arguments find support in examples from existing research on well-known Islamist terrorist groups and from Anders B. Breivik, a Norwegian right-wing terrorist. Additionally, the article draws on anecdotal evidence from previous cyber incidents ranging from ransomware attacks to activities of so-called hacktivist groups, including the Cyber Partisans in the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war and Anonymous, whose computer-savvy online subgroups were part of the early discussions on the possibility of a future cyberterrorist attack.

The article argues that the technical difficulties and uncertainties involved in developing spectacular, fear-inducing physical destruction are harder to overcome for cyberattacks than for conventional terrorist attacks. It is further argued that the online distrust and lack of ability to express oneself physically means that a future cyberterrorist is likely to look very different from the terrorists currently dominating Western political discourse. The article concludes by drawing a profile of what a future cyberterrorist is likely to look like.

The Cyberterrorist's Technical Challenge Revisited

The expectation that terrorism will take place using hacking techniques is tied to some general characteristics of cyberattacks. Cyberattacks hit with lightning speed. They can be executed and affect computers independently of geographical distance. Most are cheap to develop and easily accessible. They are also difficult to defend against and it is possible for the attacker to remain anonymous.[12] Several researchers have pointed to these characteristics when arguing that cyberattacks are an attractive tool for terrorists.[13] Yet, not all computers are of interest to the terrorist who wants to create fear through violence. This means that violence and destruction through the use of computer network intrusions are not as straightforward as alarmists tend to suggest. The simplest and most common explanation as to why e.g. the Islamic State and their violence-prone sympathizers have not turned to cyberterrorism is that they do not possess sufficient technical know-how.[14] In short, hacking with the aim of producing physical violence requires more skills than simply issuing fancy recruitment videos, spreading online propaganda on Twitter and sending standardized phishing emails to target audiences.[15]

This point is connected to the fact that computer code only causes violent destruction indirectly. In other words, the primary effect of computer code is always to alter computer code in another computer. This is why cyberterrorists must "weaponize" the targeted computer in such a way that it enables it to cause material destruction or bodily harm.[16] As a result, the cyberterrorist must have in-depth knowledge, not only about how to access, read, find vulnerabilities and write computer code, but also possess specific knowledge about the technical processes that can cause destruction in the selected target. If a cyberterrorist seeks to derail a train, destroy a dam or melt down a nuclear reactor, it is necessary to be more than a good hacker. The hacker must also acquire sufficient understanding of how a train network, a dam or a nuclear reactor actually works, and understand which part of the computer code controls the potentially damaging elements. At the same time, the cyberterrorist must be careful not to get caught in the planning phase while also ensuring that no manual override functions are enabled on the side of the receiver, preventing the malicious code from having the desired effect. Such a planning process tends to require more time and more specialized resources than conventional terrorist attacks.[17]

The fact that terrorists are currently not spending their time developing sophisticated and targeted cyberat-

tacks does, however, not mean that the necessary skills are nowhere to be found. Since the last big wave of academic contributions on cyberterrorism in the early 2010s, more and more actors have become capable of producing harmful cyber effects. However, such actors do rarely consist of lone individuals. They are instead collectives of skillful hackers, whose specialized technical skills complement each other in the process of developing highly targeted malware. Previously, these skillful hacking collectives were located almost exclusively in the states' intelligence agencies or militaries. However, today private companies and criminal groups develop and sell sophisticated ransomware and surveillance software, which—with minor adjustments—could cause destruction.[18] This development has caused concern among some scholars. They fear that top criminal hackers can be hired to conduct cyberterrorist attacks, thereby overcoming the technical challenges.[19]

Yet, it remains unlikely that terrorists will succeed in hiring gray or black hat private hacking companies or cybercriminal hacker collectives. Such entities are currently experiencing great economic benefits by staying below the threshold of states' national security politics—something the facilitation of terrorism would change immediately. The Colonial Pipeline ransomware attack is illustrative here. On May 7, 2021, the Russian cybercriminal syndicate DarkSide successfully targeted the 5,500 mile Colonial Pipeline—one of the largest and most vital oil pipelines in the United States—causing the company to halt all operations. DarkSide extracted \$4.4 million in ransom. However, what appeared to be a straightforward ransomware incident quickly became a national security issue. The long queues of cars in front of American gas stations became a political issue and President Biden had to get involved. A week later, DarkSide seemed to have gone dark, a month later the US Justice Department announced it had recovered more than half of the ransom paid, and six months later Russia arrested some of the individuals responsible.[20] This development underlines that ransomware and other forms of cybercrime are both extremely lucrative and of relatively low risk as long as they do not interfere with national security. Supporting the terrorists' agenda by conducting destructive cyberattacks, on the other hand, is, by definition, involving national security policy.[21]

Furthermore, a collaboration between cybercriminals and terrorists is unlikely for two additional reasons. First, terrorists who are making themselves dependent on, and share information with, people outside the trusted inner circle, significantly increase the risk of being caught. This point touches upon the cyberterrorism's social challenge, which will be further discussed in the last section. And second, it is far from certain that the types of cyberattacks the hackers try to sell to terrorists are what the latter are looking for. This is because terrorism needs a particular visual expression to instill the much-needed fear. This is the second challenge that has dominated the cyberterrorism literature so far.

The Cyberterrorist's Visual Challenge Revisited

For decades, terrorism research has studied the close relationship between the terrorists' need to create spectacular, horrifying acts of violence and the media's desire to report about such events.[22] If no one knows about a terrorist attack (or why it took place), the terrorists face difficulties generating fear and thus ultimately promoting particular political goals. That is why one of the core characteristics of a cyberattack—the possibility of anonymity—is not very useful for terrorists.[23] Terrorists usually take responsibility after an attack—either directly or indirectly—and they are dependent on the media reporting it.

The iconic pictures from September 11, 2001, are arguably the most obvious example of the importance of a spectacular attack: the fear painted in the eyes of the Americans fleeing the dust cloud of the collapsing towers or the lost souls plunging into the nothingness from the burning building was shown again and again in the national and global media. These images have engraved themselves in our collective memory and shaped US security policies ever since. Even lesser acts of terrorism—car bombs, beheadings, suicide bombings—put terrorists and their cause on display in a spectacular fashion: they kill, destroy and make noise, and in a digital age, the violent images can be live streamed.[24] Especially videos of beheadings—as Simone Molin Friis has shown [25]—have the capacity to instill fear in those who identify with the victims.

Cyberterrorism scholars have long emphasized that cyberattacks do not have the same element of visibility.

[26] The most popular worst-case scenario—the large-scale power outage—does not come with an explosion, and although the image of a completely blacked-out city would be spectacular, it is difficult to know if the incident was an accident or an attack. Al Qaeda flew two planes into the World Trade Center for a reason: they wanted to make sure it did not appear like an accident. During power outages, it is not possible to live stream or find out exactly what is going on. Most people also experience power outages every now and then and it often leads to irritation and frustration but rarely creates fear.[27] Michael Stohl points to the 2003 power outage in the northeastern part of the United States as an example of a major power outage that initially was suspected to be an act of cyberterrorism.[28] Later, it became clear that a combination of incompetence, poor maintenance and a fallen tree were to blame.[29] However, even when terrorists were believed to be behind it, it did not lead to fear, to significant economic damage or to a security political mobilization.

While existing cyberterrorism scholars are correct when stressing that cyberterrorists face much difficulty producing images similar to the ones of the suicide bomber, shooter or vehicular terrorist, fear and panic can have several roots. Both the 1984 Rajneeshee food poisoning attack in Oregon and the anthrax letters that killed four Americans in 2001 caused anxiety and public apprehension.[30] In that sense, the scholarly attention to the cyberterrorists' visual challenge, although in most cases valid, is a product of the current focus on certain forms of terrorist acts that today's right-wing and Islamic terrorists seem to prefer. Such perspective risks overlooking that fear-inducing terrorist attacks can take many visual forms.

In early 2021, what is believed to be a lone hacker gained access to a water plant in the Bay Area and a few weeks later in Oldsmar, Florida. In the latter case, an attempt was made to raise the level of lye (NaOH) in the drinking water to poisonous levels. The poisoning was prevented only because an employee saw on his computer monitor the cursor moving on its own and undid the hacker's changes.[31] It is still unknown who was behind the attack and whether the hacker was actually willing to go through with the poisoning or simply was looking to make a statement. What it tells us, however, is that cyberattacks with the potential to cause fear do not necessarily require as high technical barriers of entry as the imaginary cyber 9/11 spectacle.

This article has so far revisited the existing explanations for the absence of cyberterrorism. The first two sections echo the existing literature's claim that cyberterrorism faces technical and visual challenges—but, importantly, do not deny the possibility of future cyberterrorism. The technical barriers of entry are not static and not all forms of terrorism need big explosions to induce fear. Hacking with the purpose of causing fear and destruction, however, remains a time-consuming exercise. Those engaging in this exercise must embrace and enjoy the practice of sitting in front of a computer searching for mistakes in computer code or network settings and getting access to IT systems. Such practice makes it difficult for a non-tech-savvy violent extremist to opt for, and prefer, destructive cyberattacks as a tactical tool to deploy. Thus, a cyberterrorist must both embrace a hacker identity and a capacity of conducting acts of violence from a distance. The following sections take this as their analytical point of departure, hence adding two additional explanations that aim to bring more nuance to the literature. Such nuancing not only adds ammunition to those scholars who insist that cyberterrorism remains unlikely, it also helps to identify characteristics possessed by a future cyberterrorist. The first additional explanation ties to terrorists themselves, and more specifically to the antithesis between violence as part of the terrorist's (em-)bodied performance and hacking as a nonviolent prank subjectivity. This will be addressed next.

The Cyberterrorist's Challenge of Violent Corporal Subjectivity

For years, studies of violent radicalization and extremism have sought to identify what gets people—mostly young men [32]—to carry out acts of terrorism. It has proven extremely difficult. The causes, whether at the individual, group, community or societal level, are not reducible to single factors. The role of religion and ideology, formative events in childhood, involvement in criminal environments, experiences of discrimination and exclusion, etc. are part of a complex interaction that has led many radicalization researchers to recognize that there are as many causal combinations as there are radicalized subjects.[33] Much of current scholarship has stopped short of making concrete suggestions on how subjects who embrace violent radical ideas actually become capable of performing violent acts.

There are, however, a few notable exceptions. For example, Michael Kimmel demonstrates that the performative act of testing and proving one's manhood in the United States through restorative violence is woven through a historical tapestry of the self-made man and violent frontier masculinity.[34] Manni Crone draws on Foucault's "care of the self" and Marcel Mauss's "techniques of the body" when arguing that the terrorist's readiness for violence is not only shaped cognitively, but mainly through bodily practices—or *techniques*—which are learned through exercise and mimicry.[35] From her fieldwork with prospective militants in Denmark and her study of al Qaida and ISIS videos, Crone argues that while the jihadi video provides the (male) viewer with the ability to identify with the mujahedeen and imagine himself as performing the life of jihad, the mimetic practice of walking, talking, training and even producing fake reenacted beheading videos is transforming the subject and its violent capacities.[36] Similarly, Jonathan Ilan and Sveinung Sandberg argue—here, with inspiration from Bourdieu—that there is much continuity in attitudes and behaviors of the embodied, violent "street capital" of gang member and the violent jihadi, ultimately creating a resonance between the two fields.[37] Through case studies of "Jihadi John" and three Norwegian foreign fighters, the two scholars show that the practical and psychic cultivation of the capacity to effectively dispense violence and commit daring crimes, which the subjects experienced "on the street," are naturally reinvested in violent jihadi milieus.

In other words, individuals rarely become prone to violence solely by participating in intellectual, religious or political discussion about *jihad* or the need to prevent a "Muslim invasion" of Europe. They learn it by staging themselves in the images of idealized figures whether these be mythical cowboys, abstract others or specific gang leaders, jihadists, anti-fascists or right-wing extremists—and be it both in the way they train their body in the gym, mingle with violent (sub-)cultures and criminal environments or travel to training camps, where they get the opportunity to fire real guns.[38] Thus, the violent body of the (male) terrorist literally comes into being in the interaction with the weapons and the artefacts that have come to represent a soldier's or freedom fighter's subjectivity.[39, 40]

This does not mean that the emergence of the violent body has to take place in physical communities. Anders B. Breivik's narcissistic self-portrayal in connection with his description of his preparations for the terrorist attack in Utøya on 22 July, 2011 not only mirrored the temple-knightly representation of the defenders of Christianity, but also involved a cold, masculine, militaristic aesthetic known from first-person shooter games.[41] According to his own statement, Breivik even practiced his shooting skills playing Call of Duty, and he described his goals and missions in the same sober tone that characterizes such video games.[42] He even invested £400 to pose in a homemade uniform, complete with fake medals.[43]

Yet, prospective terrorists' violent, bodily mimetic practices stand in contrast to the hacker groups that have been labeled cyberterrorists in the past such as the online phenomenon Anonymous.[44] Anonymous grew out of the more obscure parts of Internet chat forums where sexual deviations and violence were often very explicitly portrayed.[45] Yet for those who identify as part of Anonymous (Anons), their body performances seem fundamentally different from the one of prospective violent militants. Anons' hacking practices are neither violent nor related to the aesthetic of the physically performing body.

To digital anthropologist Gabriella Coleman, it is in the hacker's DNA to sit still for hours and patiently search for mistakes in almost endless lines of computer code and network settings just to get the thrill of gaining access to a system, simply to prove one's ability to outsmart others or to prank unaware targets.[46] In other words, the bodily thrill of the hacker primarily relates to the moment a technical puzzle is solved and access is gained, not the moment a (violent) body is sacrificed or put on the line. This is clearly evident for the 18-year-old hacker who in September 2022—without having any idea what to do with data—gained full admin access to several Uber systems and thereby to an embarrassingly large amount of sensitive information. The hacker simply ended up posting that Uber had suffered a data breach on the company's Slack channel.[47] This example is consistent with Coleman's argument that the techniques that are learned and mimicked online by hacker communities, and Anons in particular are those that aim to humiliate, prank and display the incompetence of others through the manipulation of online information or the access to it.[48] Therefore, it is not surprising that nonviolent tactics such as the hacking and leaking of confidential

documents and denying access to, or defacing, websites remain the modus operandi of not only Anonymous' activism but hacktivism in general.

During the 50 days in 2011 that the technically capable Anonymous subgroup, LulzSec, existed, it managed to leak classified information from Sony, took the CIA's public website offline and posted fake stories on various official news websites.[49] Similarly in the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war, hacktivists including Anons joined forces with the Ukrainian IT Army and have since taken credit for posting classified information from Russian government agencies and about Russian soldiers fighting in Ukraine, for playing Ukrainian music and anti-war songs on Russia state radio and for creating traffic jams in Moscow by ordering hundreds of taxis to the same location.[50] Such activities suggest that politically oriented hackers are information warriors rather than violent freedom fighters.

So far, this section has approached hacking not simply as a tactic anyone can deploy but as a particular form of subjectivity without a violent corporality. However, trying to embrace this form of subjectivity comes with a caveat. Obviously, there are hackers out there who—while being structured, meticulous, patient and systematic when searching for programming or IT administrative mistakes and when developing exploits—do not embrace the prankers-identity that Coleman describes. In the above instances, the highly skillful criminal hackers or those working in private cyber surveillance companies are clearly driven mainly by economic incentives when they patiently work to outsmart other network administrators, end users or programmers.

Yet, a cyberterrorist not drawn toward a violent corporality, whether emerging from radicalized online collectives or from a successful recruitment campaign by terrorist groups such as IRA or Aum Shinrikyo, faces a last challenge, namely distrust. As is argued in the next section, online distrust is a serious challenge to terrorist groups.

The Cyberterrorist's Social Challenge

The first section on the technical challenges emphasized that the development of sophisticated, targeted cyberattacks is generally a team sport. And it was argued that it remains unlikely that non-state terrorist groups can simply procure the technical capabilities from private companies or cybercriminal syndicates. This means that the few sympathizers of terrorist groups who actually manage to recruit individuals with a high degree of technical skills, in all likelihood have to facilitate cooperation between these individuals in order to be able to develop and execute targeted cyberattacks. However, as the skills are in both high demand and in low supply, it is unlikely that such individuals can be brought together physically. This is especially the case, as argued in the previous section, because it is unlikely that hackers are drawn to the same kind of physical training and bodily performativity as most prospective terrorists. As a result, the attempts to coordinate and collaborate to conduct acts of cyberterrorism are more likely to be reminiscent of what we have experienced around the online phenomenon Anonymous or other hacktivist collectives where all interaction, planning and execution continue to take place exclusively online.

Anonymous is hard to pin down. The individuals identifying with the phenomenon vary in technical skills and political interest and include hackers, nerds, spammers, activists, and sexual deviants.[51] The online collective (or collectives) around Anonymous is characterized by anonymity (or pseudonymity) and lack of leadership, which has often led to spontaneous and relatively random forms of mobilization. However, anonymity—which is otherwise described as cyberspace's greatest asset [52]—is part of the social challenge for prospective cyberterrorists. The online operations and hacktivism carried out by some of the most skilled of Anonymous' breakaway groups, LulzSec and AntiSec, are again illustrative. First, the social nature of the Internet led to the capture and conviction of the vast majority of the group members. The members obtained social recognition online and were not willing to give up their pseudonyms, as this would inevitably mean the loss of the much-sought-after idol status that the groups' activities had given them. The desire for social recognition enabled the police to collect data on the pseudonyms and wait for carelessness and errors that made actual, physical identification possible.[53] By the time LulzSec transitioned into AntiSec and members became increasingly political and revolutionary in their rhetoric as well as more ambitious in their

hacking operations, the police had collected enough evidence to arrest the majority of the participants.[54] The lesson from this is that those groups that emerge, develop and radicalize their political identity exclusively online are challenged by the social dynamics that exist in the online community supporting the group. However, already-constituted terrorist groups also face a social challenge if they seek to recruit a cyberterrorist, namely the challenge of trust.

Second, anonymity and pseudonymity are not conducive to building trust in social communities. Although mistrust and trust building are often inevitable conditions of terrorist groups,[55] the lack of physical interaction in online groups makes it less risky to pretend to be a sympathizer, thus rendering infiltration easier. And it makes it more difficult to build the “thick trust”—to use Putnam’s formulation—that several terrorism scholars have argued is vital for recruits to become properly involved in the terrorist organization’s activities.[56] Furthermore, trust not only relates to interpersonal relations, but to the technology as well. Terrorists must trust that the encryption software and servers actually ensure their anonymity. The more members suddenly disappear from the communication platforms, the more the online communities will become permeated by mistrust. When it became evident that one of the founders of LulzSec, Hector “Sabu” Monsegur, was an FBI informant, it led to outright paranoia among the other group members and supporters. Coleman described how the mistrust since then has almost eradicated the attempts to engage in more serious and explicitly political collaborations in Anonymous.[57]

Political collaborations both in the context of Anonymous and other hacktivist groups, however, have seen a revival with increasing tension in Eastern Europe and particularly after the outbreak of the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war. Groups such as the Cyber Partisans have been active in targeting the authoritarian governments, and their recent coordinated cyber activities provide more nuance to the issue of trust. The Belarusian Cyber Partisans whose members, apart from the spokesperson, are anonymous even to each other, have successfully compromised dozens of databases in the Lukashenko government and most spectacularly disrupted the Belarusian railway system to prevent mobilization efforts of Russian troops near the Ukrainian border.[58] The group’s capacity to collaborate or coordinate exclusively online without the usual amount of distrust relates to the fact that all its members are believed to be exiled Belarusian IT professionals.[59] Living in exile (most likely in the West) means that they do not fear being prosecuted as criminals or terrorists by Russia or Belarus—even if they could be identified. Since the Russian war of aggression started on 24 February, 2022, many Western governments allow hackers to actively support the Ukrainian IT Army. [60] This would most likely also be the case if groups such as the Cyber Partisans succeeded in performing destructive cyberattacks. Thus, distrust becomes problematic mainly when those involved fear prosecution.

However, if hacktivists in peacetime were able to create widespread fear in society through destructive cyberattacks for political or religious ends, then international efforts to trace, arrest and bring to court the hackers as cyberterrorists would be significantly more likely. As a result, the social challenges associated with recognition and trust-building mean that a prospective cyberterrorist is most likely going to be working alone and is willing to work isolated for months to secretly plan, develop and ultimately execute a destructive cyberattack.

Conclusion: Identifying the Potential Non-State Cyberterrorist

The article opened with the question of why no instances of cyberterrorism have occurred until today. In response to this question, the article provided a pair of well-known and a pair of new explanations: a technical and visual explanation on the one hand, and a corporal and social on the other. Based on these four explanations, it becomes possible to suggest the likely characteristics of the cyberterrorist of the future. The cyberterrorist embodies a fundamentally different figure than the Islamist or right-wing terrorists who dominate the current Western security discourse. The figure is also fundamentally different from Hollywood’s representation of cyberterrorism in the form of the evil, psychotic Bond movie-type villain who wants to produce a cyber 9/11 or the anarchist collective in the TV series Mr. Robot that comes together physically in one place to throw the world into chaos. If we are to experience cyberterrorism, we will most likely face an antisocial Unabomber-like figure who has independently acquired the necessary technical know-how, while

not being drawn to a violent visual spectacle or to the dominant imitations of a violent jihadi or right-wing corporality. Instead, the figure is likely drawn to the meticulous, solitary and patient practice of hacking but must not get enough bodily thrill from gaining access to an IT system or from receiving praises online for having outsmarted others. Rather, the cyberterrorist must somehow be drawn to, and be bodily capable of, conducting acts of violence without having possessed a hacker figure—or other unrealistic, evil Bond movie-type villains—to mimic. Thus, if and when cyberterrorism is to occur, the non-state cyberterrorist will first have to overcome the four challenges outlined in this article.

About the Author

Jeppe T. Jacobsen, PhD, is an assistant professor at the Institute for Military Technology, the Royal Danish Defence College where he focuses his research on new military technologies and states' political and military behavior in cyberspace. Jeppe is the editor of the *Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies* and has published in several journals such as *International Affairs*, *Review of International Studies*, *European Journal of International Security*, and *Critical Studies on Security*.

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Research Notes

Findings and Implications from a Project on White Supremacist Entry and Exit Pathways

by Matthew DeMichele, Wesley S. McCann, Kathleen Blee and Peter Simi

Abstract

This Research Note provides an overview of the main findings from a project on white supremacist pathways - or why some individuals join and leave white supremacist groups - with a specific focus on elucidating common themes, theoretical applications, main takeaways, and providing recommendations for academics and policy-makers. One key lesson is that identity is central to entry and exit pathways.

Keywords: white supremacy, extremism, P/CVE, pathways

Introduction

The spread of, and involvement in, domestic extremist organizations are some of the most pressing issues facing the criminal justice field. Although researchers, policymakers and criminal justice practitioners have studied, developed policies, and prosecuted violent extremists, there is little research studying the trajectories of former members of extremist organizations. The current Research Note attempts to address the gaps in knowledge about white supremacist pathways by gathering firsthand accounts from former members of white supremacist organizations in the U.S. and presenting the findings from the extant literature. The literature on white supremacy is vast, but there have only been a few studies on entry to and exit from these groups and movements using in-depth qualitative field interviews.[1]

The goal of this note is to understand the pathways to disengagement and deradicalization among former white supremacists to provide justice and community organizations with useful information to support prevention and intervention strategies. There is a dearth of systematic information about the motivations, trajectories, and barriers involved with disengagement and deradicalization processes. In this Research Note we chart the social and psychological processes involved in exiting domestic extremist organizations by analyzing the detailed life history accounts of 47 former domestic extremists.

Disengagement and deradicalization are the processes involved in ending violent extremist behaviors and beliefs, and each require significant cognitive work to dismantle racist identities. For example, some individuals may distance themselves from the extremist group and the related violence but retain lingering extremist views.[2] The findings demonstrate that former white supremacists have childhoods that include neglect, violence, abuse, and family socialization supportive of racist, homophobic, and anti-Semitic views, and these childhood backgrounds fostered vulnerable individuals looking for belonging (i.e., improved self), but after various periods of extremist involvement support for an extremist identity waned. Notions of intentional change coupled with identity transformation provide offramps for these disillusioned members.

Data Sources and Design

1. Sample

The data for this note come from in-depth life history interviews with former members of domestic white supremacist organizations. We identified interviewees by snowball sampling from multiple starts to ensure variety in the location and type of extremist groups.[3] We developed initial contacts for the snowball chains through our research team's extensive prior research with white supremacists, identifying them through public presence (e.g., media, book authors, lecture series), and referrals from our project partners.

The sampling method produced in-depth life history interviews with 47 former members of U.S. white su-

premacist groups. Participants were interviewed in 24 states across all regions of the United States and two provinces in Canada. At the time of the interviews, the individuals were no longer affiliated with organized extremist groups, and all the individuals saw themselves as “former” members. Interestingly, however, not all of the interviewees were deradicalized as some continued to hold onto their white supremacist beliefs.

2. Interview Procedures

The interviews were conducted by one or two of the authors at a time. The authors held regular phone calls and met in-person to cover the logistics, review the interview guide, and discuss general approaches to the interviews. The interview team also regularly discussed the interviews, challenges faced, and made minor adjustments to the interview protocol. This allowed the research team to maintain similar interview processes across its members while enabling discussion of data prior to transcription. The interviews usually lasted between six and eight hours.

We established rapport and vetted individuals prior to agreeing to conduct an interview. We contacted subjects via telephone or e-mail to inform them about the nature and scope of the interview, ensure they fulfilled our inclusion criteria (e.g., prior group affiliation, not an active member), and discuss interview logistics. Interviews followed a semi-structured protocol and took place in private spaces (e.g., homes, hotel rooms) and public spaces (e.g., parks, restaurants). Interviews focused on obtaining in-depth life history information to extract narratives that capture the complexity and interconnectedness of identity, ideology, and experiences.[4]

3. Analytic Strategy

We use a grounded theoretic approach to craft a conceptual framework for examining the data. The interviewing procedures comport with our study foci to understand a variety of social and psychological processes associated with entry to, and exit from, extremist groups. The findings provide a nuanced mosaic of the micro-level processes inherent in extremist pathways. The narratives obtained from participants are illustrative of how individuals make sense of their lives.[5] Each interview ended with structured questions to ensure comparable information was obtained across subjects in terms of background data. The structured items were asked at the end of the interviews after we developed more trust and comfort with the interviewees, which, in some cases, may have contributed to them disclosing more valuable information.

Findings

1. Sample Characteristics

Across the sample, childhood maladjustment issues, prior involvement in crime and delinquent groups, and family background concerns were quite prominent. Over two-thirds (71.7%) of the sample considered themselves either working- or middle-class. More than half of the sample had an individual annual income between \$25,000 and \$74,999 (54.3%) and some reported individual incomes above \$75,000 (10.8%). Most had at least a high school education (89.1%), but close to 37% were chronically unemployed. In terms of family status, close to 59% were either married or cohabitating with a partner, 73.9% had children, and close to 61% were involved in the rearing of their children.

Two-thirds of the formers reported zero family involvement in extremism, but about the same number reported being socialized during childhood with movement ideas. About 18% of our sample reported being coached to perform violence (i.e., encouraged by a family member to engage in violence), and almost three out of ten grew up with a father that had been incarcerated.

Over half of our sample experienced physical abuse during adolescence (56.5%) and a comparable number witnessed neighborhood and/or domestic violence (58.7%) during childhood. About one-third experienced sexual abuse during childhood (32.6%), almost half were neglected by their primary caregiver (45.7%) or abandoned by a parent (44.4%).

Close to three-quarters (76.1%) were part of a delinquent peer group, almost 70% had self-reported problems with authority, 65% had engaged in truancy, 58.7% in property offenses, and 11.1% in starting fires. Almost half (45.7%) of the sample consisted of adolescent runaways, with almost one-third being affiliated with gangs, while 71.7% were academic failures. Over half had a history of mental illness (54.3%) and suicidal ideation (56.5%). Over a third reported a family history of mental illness (39.1%), and a majority of the sample committed some combination of violent, property, or other offenses (60.0%), with many having spent time incarcerated (65.0%). Overall, most formers reported some type of adolescent maladjustment issues and prior involvement in crime.

2. *The Role of Identity in Extremist Pathways*

Identity transformation is at the center of our exploration of white supremacist pathways, consistent with Paternoster and Bushway's identity theory of desistance.[6] Identity is a psychological mechanism connecting individuals to the world they inhabit (i.e., social structures), and identity transformation occurs during both entry and exit processes. Before describing key features of the identity transformations involved, we highlight three findings that fit with prior research:

1. *Hate as an outcome*: Most people did not join white supremacy because they are adherents to an ideology. Hate is a learned outcome of group membership. Individuals find meaning and purpose from the sense of empowerment gained from their new knowledge, awareness, or political awakening.[7]
2. *Vulnerabilities as a precondition*: Individual vulnerabilities make one want a new possible self.[8] Significant life experiences - including maladjustment, abuse, and instability - foster a longing for an improved and 'better' self. White supremacy was perceived to provide an empowered self with friends, purpose, and belonging. This comports with prior scholarship in that a sense of purpose predisposes people to adopt a collective identity during the transformation process.[9] Many extremists can be described as having experienced a loss of significance in their lives.[10]
3. *Temporary membership*: Group membership is often temporary, as most extremists do not remain members for life.[11] This is despite many facing significant challenges in leaving.[12]

2.1 *Identity Construction*

Becoming a white supremacist requires an initial identity transformation. The formers shared recruitment tactics that focused on grooming vulnerable individuals through a process of incremental exposure to build community and a sense of belonging. The grooming process provides recruits with potential benefits of membership, including friendships and a surrogate "family." The initial grooming processes include slowly learning the acceptable language, values, and attitudes. As recruits come to define themselves as racial extremists, they insulate themselves with other extremists and narrow their interactions and opportunities for non-extremist influences. This in turn produces a collective identity. Rituals and various experiences over time galvanize this collective identity.[13]

2.2 *Formers' Identity Transformation*

The second identity transformation is when extremists shift to become a former. The narratives reveal that individuals were motivated by both positive (i.e., becoming a better person) and negative future selves (i.e., avoiding becoming a worse person) as they disengaged and deradicalized. Creating a future possible self[14] is a matter of calculating how to be satisfied and pleased with one's life relative to their current self as a white supremacist. Formers were able to perceive that the white supremacy lifestyle was not going to provide long term benefits such that many developed a fear of what their future might hold if they maintain involvement with white supremacy. Desistance scholars have demonstrated that individuals move away from crime to avoid a feared future self.[15]

The exit process is gradual as formers reported slowly becoming dissatisfied with the ideology, tactics, or politics of a group. Formers described an identity that became filled with negative encounters with other

members; even breeding distrust among other members. White supremacy requires the development of a totalizing identity that results in the isolation of members from non-extremists. This marginalization fosters a sense of social stigma that makes white supremacy less attractive and further supports disengagement and deradicalization processes. We highlight five key features from our work on disengagement and deradicalization processes amongst white supremacists:

1. Exit processes are non-linear;
2. Disillusionment with the organization and ideology;
3. Negative group dynamics (e.g., betrayal, infighting);
4. Emotional fatigue (e.g., shame, remorse, exhaustion);
5. Asymmetrical gender dynamics.

Extremist pathways are characterized as lengthy, non-linear, and emotional in which vulnerable individuals (e.g., due to childhood mistreatment, maladjustment) are recruited into extremist organizations. The formers detailed a life-course not only characterized by abuse, neglect, and loneliness, but also by active participation in reprehensible violent acts against people of color, homosexuals, and Jewish persons. In addition to specific acts of violence, many formers described that their lives focused on a disruptive political agenda that included supporting a Racial Holy War.

A central feature of disengagement and deradicalization is that they are non-linear processes of cognitive transformation. The formers indicated struggling to let go of their commitment to hate, something they equated to an addiction.[16] The struggle to let go of their former identity (and hate) existed as members described employing exit tactics to reduce their frequency of involvement (e.g., attended fewer events), intensity of involvement (e.g., engaged in less violence), and level of commitment to the group.

Disillusionment is a leading reason cited for exiting white supremacy and it interacted with other motivations for exit. Disillusionment is complicated because it manifested both as prior to, and following, exit – meaning it was cause and consequence of exit, depending on the former.[17] Formers were disillusioned with the organization due to negative group dynamics (e.g., infighting) and with the ideology as they came to see inconsistencies with the ideology (e.g., having positive encounters with people of color).

Being a former is also emotionally draining. A recurring theme among formers was one of shame, regret, and exhaustion. Many formers were shameful about the violent acts they committed during their involvement with white supremacy, and they regretted spending so much of their life dedicated to hate. The formers expressed feeling anxious, fearful, and dissatisfied with their life as an extremist, which encouraged them to perceive the possibility of exiting the lifestyle as these emotions weakened their extremist identities and social ties.[18] This conforms to prior scholarly findings as well, as most extremists do not stay in forever,[19] and many become disillusioned and eventually burn out.[20]

We also uncovered a series of asymmetrical gender dynamics due to the male dominated nature of white supremacy.[21] Specifically, women tend to act within and against gender defined roles based on the opportunities available, given group structures and dynamics, as well as the role violence plays within group processes and tactics. Furthermore, the process of becoming disillusioned and eventually leaving is influenced by women's roles and relationships within the group.

White supremacist organizations provide members with the emotional and cognitive tools to overcome any potential moral objections to engaging in violence[22] and to conduct a series of activities to support the broader white supremacist agenda of securing future racial hegemony. The formers provided a nuanced understanding of the individual and social characteristics that support various pathways out of radicalization as they work to eschew these prior attitudes and behaviors. The findings demonstrate that disengagement and deradicalization are not single events, but rather complex processes of requiring commitment to change through cognitive transformation vis-à-vis a desire to avoid a negative future self.

Implications for Criminal Justice Policy and Practice

The lack of firsthand accounts of the exit process from extremism has created a blind spot in the search for practical solutions and policy development. We identify five areas that the findings can contribute to criminal justice policy and practice:

1. Knowledge and Awareness;
2. Missed Opportunities;
3. Community Supervision;
4. Community Partnerships;
5. Centering Identity.

First, there is a lack of knowledge about the radicalization and exit processes, especially related to white supremacy in the U.S. Increasing knowledge and awareness for criminal justice practitioners and relevant service providers is a foundation for our other recommendations. Understanding the cognitive motivations for joining and leaving extremism, is crucial for policy and practice. White supremacy involves a series of overlapping organizations that have a detailed language (e.g., RaHoWa), use of symbols (e.g., 88, 14 words), and literature (e.g., *Turner Diaries*). Criminal justice stakeholders need to know more about the nuances of white supremacy to develop effective policies and practices. This is especially true for those involved in P/CVE work. Although there is a dearth of P/CVE programming in general, very little tailored programming in the U.S. has been implemented and even less evaluated.[23] More work should center on evaluating the barriers to disengagement, with a specific focus on how white supremacists can discard their racist identities. In fact, many “formers” often fail to eradicate their racist ideology (e.g., de-radicalize) even after disengaging.[24]

Second, the lack of knowledge about the nuances of white supremacy can lead to missed opportunities to intervene with active extremists. Formers revealed that, despite wearing clothes and exposed tattoos that are associated with white supremacy, criminal justice stakeholders did not address their potential affiliation with extremist groups. These interactions are missed opportunities to understand where individuals stand in the course of their extremist career. Increasing knowledge among criminal justice practitioners has the potential to make routine interactions with extremists more effective, especially considering so many of them have significant prior involvement with the criminal justice system. Such interactions could provide viable referrals to exit programming or services that target the underlying causes of their membership in such groups. Practitioners should develop training protocols to enhance criminal justice stakeholders’ ability to identify, interact with, and respond to these types of actors during the course of their interactions.

Third, supervision plays an important role in combatting future offending patterns. Many community corrections agencies have adopted risk, needs, and responsivity tools for offender supervision. Community corrections officers (CCOs) should determine if supervision conditions are responsive to whether an individual is, or has been, involved with extremism. However, police need to be educated about the role of community supervision and the capabilities of CCOs, specifically, how intelligence can be used to better inform CCO decision-making and the reintegration process.[25] Of course, reintegration efforts must resist become intelligence gathering operations.[26] Some have identified that the risks and needs for extremists is largely the same as the general offender population, but that CCOs may need to probe not only the underlying reasons for offending and group membership, but also the ideological beliefs as well, which poses numerous challenges.[27] For example, the Proactive Integrated Support Model (PRISM) - which is an intervention tool targeting inmates with terrorism-related convictions and those at risk for radicalization - has shown promise in using risk needs assessments coupled with individually-tailored intervention plans in a correctional setting to get individuals to desist from extremism.[28] Another example is London Probation Trust’s (LPT) Central Extremism Unit (CEU), which provides community supervision to bolster reintegration efforts. Although this unit is specifically focused on Islamic extremists and conclusions about program efficacy are largely inconclusive, one study argued that for such an approach to be successful, supervision must be individualized to reduce re-offending, ensure reintegration, promote identity transformation, and create

new routes to express grievances.[29] Substantial progress has been made in the extremism risk assessment field, but more validation of such instruments is needed.[30] Research like this can be of significant utility in developing and validating instruments, as such instruments often serve as the foundation for many interventions. However, research using in-depth life-history interviews is still rare in this arena.

Fourth, criminal justice systems cannot respond to radicalization alone. Instead, law enforcement, courts, and corrections need to develop connections with local resources. Preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) is predicated on a “whole of community” approach that leverages all community resources, including educators, social workers, mental health practitioners, and non-governmental organizations. There is some evidence that police-led multi-agency approaches to P/CVE are ineffective,[31] community-based public health models are not very promising to date,[32] and over-securitized prevention programming (ex: Prevent) can backfire. Yet community-based disengagement programming often leverages these types of resources and has found some success in the form of mentoring programs,[33] while general exit-programming in Norway and Sweden shows promise.[34] The key to success seems to hinge on community collaboration, however. A broad whole-of-community approach that centers on fostering strong partnerships in the community while encouraging transparency and dialogue with community members is one way to do this alongside the inclusion of law enforcement, when practical and necessary.[35] A robust cooperative relationship between public and civil actors as well as NGOs helps to solidify program legitimacy and proper reintegration.[36] However, more work needs to be done in these areas in terms of pilot studies that include formative, process, and outcome evaluations.

Fifth, our research and the work of others has concluded that identity transformation is central to understanding why people join and leave extremist groups. For example, aside from our work presented here, others have found that identity transformation is important to understanding white supremacist’s pathways into and out of these groups.[37] It has also been argued that extremists in general tend to submit to a group identity due to an underlying psychological or identity-based need.[38] Uncertainty about one’s own identity is remedied by joining a group and adopting its attitudes, norms, and behaviors, and - most importantly - identity.[39] This collective identity thereby provides the individual with a sense of purpose.[40] P/CVE programs need to focus on fostering healthy identity transformation and practitioners need to take into consideration the meaning group membership provides to one’s sense of self and belonging. For example, the Motivational and Engagement Intervention (MEI) and the Healthy Identity Intervention (HII) have shown significant promise in facilitating positive shifts in cognitive rigidity and fostering a healthier identity. However, such interventions may not be suitable for people whose behavior is *not* driven by engagement and identification with an extremist group or some ideology.[41] Methods to obtain disengagement and deradicalization need to be tailored to context, but identity must be considered. Programs that have a reflection- on identity component are an important part of successful desistance interventions, as not all extremists are driven by a strong ideological conviction.[42] Because the disengagement process can induce an identity crisis, some argue that individuals who participate more in pro-social activities during this process are better at reconstructing their identity.[43] Some even argue that adopting a new role and identity acts as a protective factor from re-engagement.[44] Nevertheless, more work needs to be done in this area.

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About the Authors

Matthew DeMichele is a Senior Research Sociologist in RTI’s Applied Justice Research Division. He is the Director of the Center for Courts and Corrections Research and has conducted criminal justice research on correctional population trends, risk prediction, terrorism/extremism prevention, and program evaluation. He has worked with local, state, and federal agencies, and philanthropic partners to conduct research that addresses complex policy issues. His research has recently been published in several journals, including *Crime & Delin-*

quency, *American Sociological Review*, and *Criminology & Public Policy*.

Wesley S. McCann is a Research Social Scientist at RTI International. His research interests center on extremist pathways, P/CVE program evaluation, terrorists' pursuit of CBRN weapons and interdiction efforts, immigration and border security, and criminal law. He has taught at half a dozen different universities and has published over 30 articles, books, and chapters on many of the foregoing topics.

Pete Simi is a Professor of Sociology at Chapman University and member of the Executive Committee for the National Counterterrorism, Innovation, Technology, and Education (NCITE) Center at the University of Nebraska, Omaha. He is co-author of the book *'American Swastika: Inside the White Power Movement's Hidden Spaces of Hate'* and has published more than 60 articles and book chapters on issues related to political extremism, street gangs, and juvenile delinquency.

Kathleen Blee is Distinguished Professor of Sociology at the University of Pittsburgh. She has written extensively about organized white supremacy, including *'Inside Organized Racism: Women in the Hate Movement'* and *'Women in the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s'*, as well as published articles on methodological approaches and the politics and ethics of studying racist hate groups and strategies for combatting racial hate. She has also studied progressive social movements, including *'Democracy in the Making: How Activist Groups Form'*, and, with Dwight Billings, the origin of regional poverty in *'The Road to Poverty: The Making of Wealth and Hardship in Appalachia'*.

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Understanding Drivers behind Offenders Attacking European Religious Sites – Five Cases

by Katalin Pethő-Kiss

Abstract

This Research Note presents an empirical examination of five violent extremist offenders who attacked European places of worship between 2010 and 2020. This focuses on both personal and socio-economic circumstances that may have been influencing these lone actors. First, the drivers and factors are organized in a matrix. Then the attackers are examined in the light of these matrix elements. Finally, based upon the findings, a number of recommendations are made.

Keywords: religious terrorism, lone actors, root causes

Introduction

A clear surge in violence against religious places in Europe can be witnessed in recent years. Compared to the first decade of the 2000s, since 2011 there has been a 340% increase in the number of violent acts targeting religious communities.[1] In Europe, places of worship were attacked in 117 instances between 2000 and 2020. On the European continent, violent acts targeted 49 Catholic churches and chapels, 52 Muslim mosques, twelve synagogues, two Evangelical, one Presbyterian and one Methodist church. This Research Note seeks to explore the reasons behind some of these attacks, asking questions like: who are the offenders and what were the factors that drove them to commit such acts of violent extremism? Can we identify indicators that signal their radicalization and if so, how could we recognize, prevent or counter these warning signs?

Existing studies indicate that involvement in terrorism is best approached in a multidisciplinary way.[2] The process of radicalization can be better understood by looking at the complexity of relevant factors.[3] It has been argued that open-source information can provide useful insights allowing a better understanding of the pathways to radicalization.[4] With this in mind, this Research Note attempts to focus on five offenders who plotted to attack European religious sites. While previous studies have organized underlying factors into structural [5] and individual-level explanations,[6] this Research Note attempts to assess their relevance in a matrix diagram. At the same time, this Research Note aims to contribute to existing knowledge by focusing specifically on five individuals behind attacks on European religious places.

A database containing the profiles of offenders attacking religious sites within the European Union for the years between 2010 and 2020 was compiled. Offenders were selected from across the ideological spectrum. This wide heterogeneity within the sample allows for comparisons across different attacks. The cases were derived from the Global Terrorism Database (University of Maryland). A set of incidents was examined where there was detailed enough information available to ascertain the correlates of key determinants. All data were gathered from open sources such as newspaper articles and government reports. It is acknowledged that the sample size of the analyzed case studies is small, and that there are also limitations in relying on open-source material alone.

To analyze the five selected offenders' pathways, motivations and actions, twelve potential key influencing factors were identified. Information was collected across their class origins, parental and family factors (married/children), age, gender, temperament/personality, criminal record, education, vocational achievement, living area, associates and substance abuse. These underlying elements were organized in a matrix. The matrix diagram can visualize the complex risk factors.[7] The impact of each element in the matrix was evaluated on a 5-grade scale, ranging from *no information available* (white color), *no impact* (green color), *low impact* (yellow color), *medium impact* (orange color) and *high impact* (red color). The purpose of this categorization is not to quantify the nexus between determinants and perpetration, but to depict its dynamics.

The outline of this Research Note is as follows. First, the selected cases and the matrix evaluation of key influencing factors are presented. In the discussion section, the twelve key variables across the five attackers are examined. Based on these, the Research Note offers some policy recommendations.

Selected Incidents and Offenders

1. Omar el-Hussein

22-year-old Danish Omar el-Hussein killed a civilian at a public cultural event on the evening of February 14, 2015. The Swedish artist, Larks Vilks—previously threatened because of his drawings of Muhammad—also attended the gathering. Later that night the armed el-Hussein killed a young Jewish man on security duty outside Copenhagen’s Great Synagogue in Krystalgade. A bat mitzvah ceremony with 80 people was taking place there. El-Hussein pretended to be drunk to get closer to the 37-year-old security guard without suspicion, then upon approaching him, he fired his gun. Later that night the assailant was shot dead by police. El-Hussein’s motive for the act remained unknown.[8] The following matrix shows underlying factors deemed relevant in his radicalization:

Lower class origins	Parental factors	Family factors (married/kids)
Age	Gender	Temperament/Personality
Criminal record	Education	Vocational achievement
Living area	Associates	Substance abuse

2. Adel Kermiche

Adel Kermiche and Abdel Malik Petitjean were the two assailants who stormed a church in the French town, Saint-Étienne-du-Rouvray on July 26, 2016. The 19-year-old attackers entered the church while morning mass was taking place. They took two parishioners and two nuns as hostages, then slit the throat of the 86-year-old priest. Both assailants were shot dead by French police as they were leaving the church. They had pledged allegiance to Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, which claimed responsibility for the attack.[9] The underlying factors in Kermiche’s case are deemed to be these:

Lower class origins	Parental factors	Family factors (married/kids)
Age	Gender	Temperament/Personality
Criminal record	Education	Vocational achievement
Living area	Associates	Substance abuse

3. Abdel Malik Petitjean

The following table represents the influencing factors in Petitjean’s criminal behavior:

Lower class origins	Parental factors	Family factors (married/kids)
Age	Gender	Temperament/Personality
Criminal record	Education	Vocational achievement
Living area	Associates	Substance abuse

4. Ibrahim Issaoui

21-year-old Ibrahim Issaoui was suspected of stabbing two people to death and beheading a woman at Notre-Dame de Nice in Nice, France on October 29, 2020. His motive for the act has not been clarified.[10] The underlying factors are depicted here:

Lower class origins	Parental factors	Family factors (married/kids)
Age	Gender	Temperament/Personality
Criminal record	Education	Vocational achievement
Living area	Associates	Substance abuse

5. Pavlo Lapshyn

Five days after arriving in the United Kingdom, 25-year-old Pavlo Lapshyn stabbed to death an 82-year-old man on April 29, 2013. Lapshyn had placed an explosive device at a mosque in Walsall, England in June 2013. No injuries were reported, and the explosion caused little damage to the building. Another device targeted Wolverhampton Central Mosque seven days later. The explosion was heard by witnesses, but the device was found only three weeks later. The third device was the most powerful, packed with 600 grams of nails. It went off outside the Kanzul Imam Masjid Mosque in Tipton on 12 July. Pavlo Lapshyn claimed that his motivation was to kill and harm non-whites.[11] The matrix on assessing the main factors in his radicalization is presented below.

Lower class origins	Parental factors	Family factors (married/kids)
Age	Gender	Temperament/Personality
Criminal record	Education	Vocational achievement
Living area	Associates	Substance abuse

Discussion

Low Class Origins

There is limited research on how individual-level socio-economic grievances influence a person's willingness to perpetrate terrorist attacks.[12] Research findings suggest a consensus that there is only a weak link between political violence and the offender's socio-economic circumstances.[13] However, it is important to highlight that social conditions should be understood in relative terms.[14] Accordingly, not absolute poverty, but individual and social factors of its perception may be a cause of radicalization.[15]

Arguably, relative deprivation as a discrepancy between expectations and reality can be a precursor to radicalization.[16] This was the case in el-Hussein's instance, who had high aspirations regarding his future. His former headteacher noted that he was "a talented and smart student." [17] He was eager to graduate from high school in order to proceed to university studies. He was in prison when the school-leaving exams were due. Nevertheless, with an extension, he managed to finish school with good marks. However, he was unable to get into university, as in the meantime he had been charged with stabbing a man on a Copenhagen train.[18] Outside school he was a talented kick-boxer with a "Terminatorish-physiqhe".[19] Prior to serving a two-year prison sentence for stabbing, he had been a rising star at Copenhagen's Muay Thai kickboxing club.[20] Migrating to Europe was Issaoui's opportunity for a better life.[21] He had arrived on September 20, 2020 at Lampedusa, Italy—one of the main landing ports for illegal migration from Africa.[22] His brother later told media that since Ibrahim did not have enough money to pay the smugglers, he received a place on the boat after having clandestinely procured the fuel for the trip.[23] For some weeks he was working illegally in an olive grove in Italy to get by, then he was told he would have better chances to get a permanent job in France and thus decided to travel there.[24]

El-Hussein, Kermiche, Petitjean and Issaoui all had immigrant roots. Although their parents were reported to be well educated, they resided in urban problem areas.[25] El-Hussein lived in the low-rise Mjølnerparken estate in north-west Copenhagen, where most families had immigrant roots.[26] Petitjean's mother settled down in a social housing development in Aix-les-Bains.[27] Issaoui had arrived in Nice only one day prior to his attack. In his home country, Tunisia, his family of seven girls and three boys led a modest life in a working-class neighborhood on the outskirts of Sfax city.[28] These examples point to social marginalization associated with living in peripheral urban districts. Alienation in society tends to lead to a search for identity, often resulting in an increased religiosity.[29] Positive social interactions may effectively mitigate the influence of this factor. By constructive youth-oriented practical activities and gatherings, young people could be exposed to positive role models.[30] Establishing local organizations would create a more concerted focus on district-specific features and also help vulnerable individuals.[31]

These findings seem to contradict the thesis of a weak link between radicalization and the offender's socio-economic circumstances. In light of this, lacking actual opportunities to achieve personal aspirations can beget aggression.[32] Programs for facilitating transition from school to work by providing access to information about careers [33] could diminish this frustration. Offering funding to business firms willing to employ disadvantaged young people may help expand their job opportunities.[34] El-Hussein's story confirms that there was in his case a willingness to ask for help. He was released from jail two weeks prior to the shooting. Within these 14 days, he was unemployed and homeless, and had asked municipal authorities for assistance in finding permanent housing and a job.[35]

Parental Factors

At the time of their offending, two of the five examined attackers lived with their parents. Both Adel Kermiche and Abdel Malik Petitjean were born in France to a family of Algerian origin.[36] Kermiche's mother worked as a teacher and his elder sister was reported to have been studying to become a doctor.[37] His mother told authorities that Petitjean had never talked about the Islamic State.[38] The day after Petitjean got in contact with Kermiche on Telegram, he traveled 700 kilometers to Saint-Étienne-du-Rouvray, where Kermiche was spending his house arrest with his parents. Petitjean sent a message to his mother upon arrival to inform her,

he had left to visit a cousin in northeastern France.[39] Petitjean spent the first night at Kermiche's home and then slept in a tent in the garden.[40]

In another three instances, assailants had separated from their parents' home prior to the attack. Copenhagen shooter el-Hussien reportedly had "a happy childhood and good relations with his parents and a younger brother." [41] His parents got divorced [42] and his teachers remembered his mother—who was a biochemist[43]—being frustrated over el-Hussein's behavior. He could not get along with his classmates in primary school.[44] Nice attacker Issaoui lived with his seven female and two male siblings in Tunisia prior to setting off in a boat toward Europe.[45] Pavlo Lapshyn coming from Ukraine[46] was a PhD student in the United Kingdom. His grandmother on his father's side had Muslim (Tatar) origins.[47] It was his father with whom he was regularly speaking.[48] His mother was in a serious car crash some days prior to Lapshyn's arrival in Birmingham.[49]

Mothers and fathers have a strong influence in shaping their children's attitudes [50] and this can have a profound impact on the children's decision-making.[51] All attackers went through a process of searching for their identities and their place in society.[52] Belonging to a radical group and sharing its ideology can provide vulnerable young people that sense of belonging and identity that family might have failed to provide.[53] Education programs could successfully fill in this void.[54] First, youngsters should be taught how to strive for their ideals in nonviolent ways.[55] Second, constructive criticism on radical ideologies can help to foster independent critical thinking.[56]

In each case discussed here, there is a reason to assume that parents might have recognized their children's suspicious behavior or interactions. Therefore, efforts should be made to teach family members how to identify signs of radicalization [57] and inform them what to do if they have noticed such signs. It would be beneficial for authorities to establish communication channels [58] with the direct environment of vulnerable individuals.[59] Such safe channels could operate as a means for parents to report worrisome activities.[60] Family members' reporting about concerning circumstances should be considered a process and not as a single event. Accordingly, constant efforts are necessary to provide information and support channels of communication. [61] Additionally, family support should also be viewed as a key influencing factor in the process of de-radicalization.[62] However, it is important that family members should be able to report troubling signs "without the fear of prosecution or stigmatization." [63] At the same time, it is of great importance to make sure frontline officers are well trained and well equipped to respond properly to radicalization.[64]

Nuclear Family (Spouse and Children)

Having a spouse and young children[65] may seem to be incompatible with a violent extremist lifestyle. LaFree et al.[66] argued that "individuals who are unmarried, separated or widowed will be more likely turn to violent extremism." [67] All examined male perpetrators were younger than 30 at the time of engaging in an act of terrorism. In their cases, a stable family life with a wife and children was absent.

Age

Criminological research findings show that acts of political violence are undertaken "disproportionately" [68] by young people. As these studies conclude, the chance of engaging in violent extremist activities decline as an individual gets older.[69] All the assailants in our small sample were younger than 35. But what do we mean by young? The definition of youth varies per national legislative context. For the purpose of this analysis, Sommers' concept will be applied. In accordance with this, youth are in a "period of transition from childhood to the cusp of adulthood." [70] Generally speaking, finding a meaning for one's life and taking responsibilities upon one's shoulders is considered to be an expression of an adult-like mindset. The challenges associated with this process are of relevance when investigating the root causes of radicalization.[71]

The energy and creativity of the youth should be a primary source for building resilience against violent extremism.[72] Their familiarity with novel technological solutions and social media can offer innovative ways in countering violent extremism.[73] Young people should be empowered with appropriate instruments to fa-

facilitate dialogue with vulnerable members in their community.[74] With this in mind, existing local youth-led organizations should be mapped and their working methodology should be taken into account.[75]

Gender

Gender is a crucial element of identity. Hegemonic masculinity pervades Western and non-Western societies and is perceived as an essential pillar of “adult manhood”.[76] It manifests itself as “economic success, dominance, achievement, power, independence”.[77] The examined young perpetrators in our case were “unemployed, single with prior criminal record,”[78] not having a dominant position. Extremists strive to prove their maleness by committing violent acts. Failing to reach ‘real man’ standards inherently triggers personal grievances. These frustrations can be combined by extremist ideologies that enable them to shift responsibility for failure to others.[79] In this sense, the cult of masculinity can be viewed as a driver for radicalization.

Temperament/Personality

Symptoms of frustration and anxiety have been recognized in relation to two of the five offenders. While serving his ten-month sentence in prison, Kermiche’s mother told authorities that “He said it wasn’t possible to live peacefully in France. He spoke with words that did not belong to him. He was mesmerized, like in a sect.”[80] Aggressive behavior characterized one attacker. El-Hussein’s teachers from school described him as “a smart student with a short fuse and prone to violence.”[81] He was very passionate about political discussions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; he was a rebel without any clear cause.[82]

In one case there was an indication of a mental health disorder. Kermiche was regularly hospitalized since the age of six with “psychological troubles”[83] and was sent to a special school for children with behavioral problems when he was 13.[84] Families are often ill-informed about mental health services and what they can do for their children with behavioral problems.[85]

It is also noteworthy that the direct environment of three of the examined attackers did not notice any indications of a radical mindset. Those who knew el-Hussein considered him “a smart and nice guy,”[86] and were shocked when they learned about the shootings. Petitjean’s acquaintances knew him as a “polite”,[87] “kind”,[88] “calm”[89] and “serious”[90] young man.[91] Lapshyn was known to be a “shy and polite student.”[92] As his tutor said, “he was not very social.”[93] This should remind us that individual socio-psychological factors should be analyzed together with other influencing drivers and personal vulnerabilities.

Grievances, anger, anxiety/frustration, personal vulnerabilities as well as psychological disorders or mental health issues may be driving factors in engaging in acts of political violence.[94] It is important to stress that the link between terrorism and personality traits has not been extensively researched.[95] It may be accepted though, that personal characteristics influence an individual’s actions.[96]

Criminal Record

It has been argued that pre-radicalization criminal behavior of offenders is a strong indicator of future political violence.[97] In our case, all perpetrators had a criminal record. Their criminal background varied, however. [98] Omar El-Hussein had several contacts with law enforcement. First, he was arrested in a Copenhagen nightclub for possessing a long knife and a knuckleduster with a metal spike.[99] In two other instances, he was caught in possession of cannabis but was sent home with only a warning.[100] Later, in November 2013 he stabbed a 19-year-old man on a subway train. At that time, he managed to evade police, but two months later he was arrested in connection with a burglary. He was convicted of grievous bodily harm and was sentenced to two years. In court he explained that he stabbed the man because he {wrongly} thought the victim had previously attacked him. He explained he was high and felt angst and paranoia at the time of the stabbing.[101]

According to Ibrahim Issaoui’s criminal file, he was arrested for a knife crime in 2016.[102] Pavlo Lapshyn was charged and fined three years prior to his attacks. He had caused serious damage in his home when chemicals exploded during his attempt to manufacture an explosive device.[103] While waiting for trial in the United

Kingdom, prison authorities noticed that Lapshyn was making an explosive substance in the cell of a maximum-security jail. It was the smell of bleach that warned guards of his activity. He had hidden substances such as vinegar, artificial sweetener and salt in the bed of his cell.[104]

Adel Kermiche had attempted to travel to Syria twice in 2015. During his first attempt in March 2015, German police stopped him in Munich and accused him of trying to get to Syria to join the Islamic State.[105] Back in France he was placed on parole while awaiting trial.[106] On his second attempt to go to Syria he was stopped in Turkey. In France he was jailed for ten months until mid-March 2016. Over a prosecutor's objections, the judge placed him under limited house arrest with an electronic surveillance bracelet and with the obligation to report to a probation officer once a week.[107] Although he regularly checked in, acquaintances said that two months before striking the church, he had revealed his attack plans.[108] Abdel Malik Petitjean attempted to travel to Syria via Turkey in June 2016, but—for unknown reasons—he stopped in Turkey and went back to France. Upon arriving, French authorities added him to the so-called “S watch list” which contains persons potentially involved in jihadi activities.[109] Petitjean had posted his allegiance to the Islamic State and called on Muslims to strike France on the Telegram website four days prior to the attack. Police noticed this information but could not identify the author of the post.[110]

Any time spent in detention is a significant predictor of engaging in violent extremism.[111] Imprisonment itself tends to increase efforts at searching for meaning in life.[112] It is still not certain whether el-Hussein was radicalized in prison like the perpetrator of the Paris attack. The head of the Danish prison and probation service noted that authorities had noticed changes in el-Hussein's behavior while he was serving his sentence and alerted intelligence services in a timely manner. While in jail, he was flagged multiple times by prison authorities for expressing extreme views on Islam. In one case, he was reported to share a cell with a prisoner who openly supported the Islamic State.[113]

However, prisons may also provide an opportunity for prisoners to disengage from criminal behavior.[114] Well-trained prison staff can involve inmates in a constructive manner [115] which can also facilitate a more accurate assessment of their risk status.[116] Sentence plans should be designed in line with the situation of individual prisoners.[117] It is also essential to incorporate periodic reviews of the intervention and thereby assess implementation and effectiveness.[118] When tailoring the route to disengagement, the complexity of individual accounts needs to be taken into consideration.[119] The criminal justice system should aim for rehabilitation and for the reintegration of prisoners into the community—something that requires concerted preparations.[120] Support to obtain employment, suitable housing and financial security should be provided in prerelease programs.[121] A multiagency approach,[122] with a systematic exchange of information,[123] close consultations with family and community-based service providers can ensure the continuity of this care.[124] Moreover, post-release supervision can help to reduce the risk that the individual reoffends.[125]

Education

Research findings tend to show that many terrorists are well educated; in several instances they have education even beyond high school.[126] No information was available about Adel Kermiche's schools. In all the remaining four cases, offenders had graduated from a secondary educational institution, and one of them attended a university program. Omar el-Hussein's head teacher remembered him as “a talented and smart student,”[127] saying he was eager to graduate from high school with prospects for entering university studies. It was his prison sentence that stopped these endeavors. Pavlo Lapshyn was a PhD student at the National Metallurgical Academy of Ukraine. He won a prestigious competition and as a result was given the opportunity to visit Coventry University and get work experience at a UK company called Delcam.[128] Petitjean graduated from a vocational school in 2015 and worked part-time in a sales job.[129] In his free time, he would watch sci-fi movies and play video games.[130] Issaoui dropped out of high school and worked as a motorcycle mechanic.[131]

Education, by offering skills to enhance economic opportunities, also contributes to the adoption of an identity and lifestyle that does not favor a career characterized by crime and violence.[132] Schools should foster pro-social behaviors and provide students with a sense of belonging.[133] Reinforced by advice and support

from local partners, this can result in real lifestyle changes.[134] A multiagency approach, combined with close interaction between police and educators, is recommended to bring about good results.[135] Such collaboration between stakeholders is also helpful when it comes to bringing about reintegration into society for those who have served a prison sentence.[136]

Vocational Achievement

Stable employment can divert an individual from deviant behavior and crime.[137] Unemployment can exacerbate grievances and thus become an influencing factor when it comes to turning to terrorism.[138] Individuals without permanent employment are more likely to be attracted by violent extremism.[139] Research findings underpin a positive relationship between unemployment and domestic terrorism.[140] It is, however, considered to be only one of many factors that can lead to extremism.[141]

High rates of unemployment have been observed among lone actors. More specifically, compared to single-issue and Islamist terrorists, there are more right-wing attackers without a paid job.[142] In the case of the five terrorists, however, only one was without employment, while three had some form of employment (no information was available on the fifth perpetrator).

Omar el-Hussein was released from jail two weeks prior to his shooting attack. In those 14 days, he was unemployed and homeless.[143] After leaving school, Abdel Malik Petitjean worked, until April 2016, as a baggage handler at Chambéry Airport.[144] Ibrahim Issaoui worked as a motorcycle mechanic in Tunisia prior to migrating to Europe.[145] Upon arriving in Lampedusa, Italy, he worked for six weeks in an olive grove in Italy. Then he was told he would have better chances of getting a permanent job in France and decided to travel there.[146] Pavlo Lapshyn was a PhD student,[147] and, as a chemical engineer, had “a longstanding interest in pyrotechnics.”[148] While residing temporarily—for a year—in the United Kingdom on a visa, he was employed by the Delcan software company.[149] No information was available about the employment status of Adel Kermiche.

Having a permanent job tends to create a sense of belonging and lead to greater social cohesion. Where such connectedness is missing, outdoor, extracurricular activities might fill this void.[150] Young people can develop important social and interpersonal competencies through interactions with others. Sport as a remedial can compensate for deficit in socio-economic circumstances and provide new opportunities.[151]

Living Area

Individuals residing in vulnerable residential areas are more exposed to negative social influences. Weak social networks in poor communities make them less able to solve problems. When there is a high level of crime, youth violence is not far away.[152]

Three out of the five offenders examined here were living in disadvantaged suburbs. Already before Omar el-Hussein’s conviction, he was well known in the low-rise Mjølnerparken estate in north-west Copenhagen. Most families living on this estate have immigrant roots.[153] The area has been notorious for gang activities. When el-Hussein was around 15 years old, there were turf wars between various immigrant groups and motorcycle gangs about control over local cannabis markets. The availability of weapons and the presence of gang violence may have provided el-Hussein with fighting experience.[154] It is, however, not documented whether or not el-Hussein was himself involved in gang fights. Local sources told media that he was rejected by gangs as being one of those whom gang leaders could not control.[155] Abdel Malik Petitjean lived in Aix-les-Bains with his mother in a social housing complex.[156] In Tunisia, Ibrahim Issaoui lived with modest means in a working-class neighborhood on the outskirts of Sfax city.[157] He had no permanent residence after his migration to Europe.[158]

Social housing projects may keep newly arrived migrants off the streets. Threat assessments ought to be made to localize the residential areas that are most affected by crime and unrest.[159] The objective should be to promote social cohesion and reach out to marginalized youth. Frontline practitioners should be given guidance on

how to detect and report worrisome indicators as well as on options on how to exit from radicalization.[160]

Associates

There is much evidence to suggest that both online and offline associates can play a crucial role in engaging in extremism.[161] Via these interactions individuals can be more easily convinced about the righteous nature of their activities.[162] There are also numerous instances where individuals had no physical interventions, but affiliated themselves with like-minded peers and started to feel related to an online community.[163] Radical online content played a crucial role in three out of the five cases examined here.

Kinship or friendship ties played a role in Ibrahim Issaoui's case. His family told authorities that he turned to religion after being arrested for violence with a knife, taking drugs and drinking alcohol in his teenage years.[164] He was released from prison because, at 17, he was still a minor.[165]

Omar el-Hussein's conduct on February 15, 2015 shows several similarities with the Charlie Hebdo shooting in Paris a month earlier.[166] First, the Paris assailants also had parental immigrant roots but were born in Europe. Second, El-Hussein also targeted a cartoonist who had depicted Mohammed as well as members of the Jewish community. The Charlie Hebdo attackers were linked to Yemen's al Qaeda affiliate.[167] If the Copenhagen shooting was indeed a copycat crime, el-Hussein would have followed the Paris attacks while in a Danish prison, as he was serving a two-year sentence for stabbing a 19-year-old man on Copenhagen's inner-city railway. El-Hussein was released from prison only two weeks prior to the Copenhagen attack.[168] The April edition of Islamic State's Dabiq covered el-Hussein's attack in its pages, but did not take direct responsibility for his actions. "The magazine called him Abu Ramadan Al-Muhajir, and linked him to a Facebook page with that name and a picture of a bare-fanged white wolf as its profile photo." [169] It is still not clear whether el-Hussein acted alone or was a part of a wider group.[170] Two other men were also arrested on February 15, 2015. They were charged with helping el-Hussein to evade police and get rid of his weapon.[171]

The two 19-year-old attackers Adel Kermiche and Abdel Malik Petitjean got to know each other only four days prior to their attack; they were communicating via the encrypted application Telegram. Investigators suggested that an Islamic State affiliate may have introduced them to each other.[172] Petitjean's cousin, 30-year-old Farid K. was also arrested on the night of the attack. Police charged him with being a member of a terrorist association and claimed that Farid had been familiar with Petitjean's plans, except for the exact date and time of the church attack.[173] One of Kermiche's schoolmates told authorities that he started to embrace radical ideologies after al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula claimed the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris in January 2015.[174] This was a turning point in his relationships; he broke away from friends and started to reach out to extremists on the Internet.[175]

It has not yet been revealed how Pavlo Lapshyn became radicalized. Investigators could not identify any group affiliations. Lapshyn was reportedly not a member of any wider group; he acted as a "loner".[176] He grew up in Dnipropetrovsk in Ukraine, while in the United Kingdom he lived in an apartment above his place of work in Birmingham.[177] When searching his apartment, police found chemicals and other bomb-making equipment.[178] No fewer than 98 videos with bomb-making tutorials were discovered at his place. His camera also included shots documenting his attempts to make a bomb.[179] Lapshyn had a video game called "Ethnic Cleansing" on his computer.[180] It is known that he prepared the explosions, repeatedly visiting the surroundings of several mosques and also studied their web pages.[181] In court he admitted that he wanted "to increase racial conflict." [182] When he was asked why he targeted mosques, he replied "because they are not white—and I am white." [183] He did not show any remorse or regret for what he had done.[184]

Substance Abuse

Alcohol or substance abuse can also play a role as a driver for both criminal and ideologically motivated violence.[185] Individuals prone to use drugs are arguably more vulnerable to radical influences.[186] Alcohol and drugs can serve as coping mechanisms when engaging in extremist activities.[187] Substance abuse and alcohol were present in three of the five examined cases. Omar el-Hussein admitted that he had been suffering

from anxiety and had used cannabis.[188] Ibrahim Issaoui had been arrested for taking drugs and drinking alcohol in his teenage years.[189] CCTV cameras recorded Pavlo Lapshyn buying a bottle of wine after planting the explosive device at Walsall Mosque.[190]

Similar factors may play a role in a person's decision to turn to harmful substances and extremist ideologies.[191] Generally speaking, both may be a way to seek to cope with difficult life circumstances.[192] Drug abuse prevention and extremism prevention might find some common ground.[193] Local communities in their efforts to increase social resilience might wish to focus their efforts on both in new ways.[194]

Conclusion

The present Research Note, although based on a very small sample of cases, reaffirms the viewpoint that there is no such thing as a 'typical extremist'. Those involved in violent extremism come from a range of backgrounds and have had nonuniform experiences. Radicalization has multiple drivers. It is the complexity and diversity [195] of these driving forces that need to be better understood. The root causes of violent extremism are multifaceted but intertwined. Hence, countermeasures need to be taken and combined across various domains.[196] As there is no single pathway into or away from radicalization, responses need to be tailored on a case-by-case basis.

Radicalization is a multidimensional phenomenon. We should remember Weine et al.'s words "If we really want to identify and support resilience in communities under threat, we cannot do so from a distance. We need to listen and observe its residents and learn about its history, culture, social structure, values, needs, resources and daily experiences, in order to determine precisely what resilience means for them." [197] Bottom-up approaches address violent extremism at a local level. Good programs increase the engagement of stakeholders and raise awareness of community-specific risk factors of radicalization. Well-designed initiatives motivate local actors, strengthen community relations with local authorities and advance the involvement of youth and women in efforts of preventing violent extremism. Their ultimate goal should be to build resilient communities.[198]

Radicalization should be examined and countered not only at the "micro-level of vulnerable individuals"[199] but also in the context of the "meso-level radical milieu"[200] as well as the "macro-level of radicalizing public opinion and political parties." [201] We need to raise awareness in our communities about early warning signs of extreme behavior.[202] The first line of defense are families that may require support from outside when their children go astray. Maintaining a consistent relationship with vulnerable families can facilitate identifying their concerns early on and helping them.[203] Engaging with them in informal community meetings can help build trust while also avoiding possible stigmatization resulting from direct contact with authorities.[204] Specific risks should be assessed against the background of individual circumstances.[205] On the other end, social workers and others who have been tasked with monitoring vulnerable individuals should be given appropriate guidelines and be well trained.[206]

One finding that emerges from the five cases discussed here is that all offenders were searching for purposes and bonds in their lives. Seeking meaning, discovering one's identity [207] and striving for significance are human needs and if not guided into the right direction can become drivers of extremism.[208] Mental health care should therefore also include the development of skills for "meaning-making".[209] That can both be taught and learned.[210] People may also endorse extreme beliefs because of a need for belonging.[211] Prevention programs should build more strongly on strengthening social connections that can satisfy the human need for belonging.

Each criterion in the matrix used for this Research Note points to one way of detecting signs of extremism.[212] This also points to the need for comprehensive prevention strategies based on a multiagency approach that should include police, social and health care services, the education domain, youth work and relevant civil society stakeholders. Regular mechanisms and forums should facilitate the exchange of information between them.[213] It is important to stress that establishing working arrangements in a holistic network takes time.[214]

About the Author

Katalin Pethő-Kiss is a senior fellow at the Global Peace Institute and a senior analyst at the Counter Terrorism Information and Criminal Analysis Centre in Hungary. She is the former deputy head of the Central European CBRNE-Training Centre in Budapest. Responsible for counter-terrorism and violent extremism, she covered explosives and CBRN at the law desk of the Hungarian Europol National Unit. She completed her Master of Research Studies in Policing, Intelligence and Countering Terrorism at Macquarie University, in Sydney, as an Endeavour Scholarship recipient.

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Resources

Counterterrorism Bookshelf: 11 Books on Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism-Related Subjects

Reviewed by Joshua Sinai

So many books are published on terrorism- and counterterrorism-related subjects that it is difficult to catch up on a large backlog of monographs and volumes received for review. In order to deal with this backlog, this column consists of capsule reviews and tables of contents of eleven recently published books.

Godfrey Garner and Maeghin Alarid-Hughes, *Origin of Terrorism: The Rise of the World's Most Formidable Terrorist Groups* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2021), 194 pp., US \$ 128.- [Hardcover], US \$ 39.96 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-3677-7186-7.

This is a highly interesting and well analyzed examination of the roots, origins and evolution of Islamist terrorism. It examines the varieties of Islamist terrorism from a practitioner focus that addresses the motivations, agendas, and *modus operandi* of its leading figures and insurgent terrorist organizations. Terrorist organizations such as al Qaida, the Islamic State (ISIS), the Taliban, Boko Haram, and others are profiled. This book is recommended as a useful introductory resource for courses on terrorism and counterterrorism and for the general public, as well. Dr. Godfrey Garner, a former U.S. Army Special Forces officer, is a permanent faculty professor at Mississippi College, as well as adjunct at Tulane University and Belhaven University, in Homeland Security and Counterterrorism. Ms. Maeghin Alarid-Hughes is an Adjunct Professor in Terrorism and Risk Analysis for Arapahoe Community College, in Colorado.

Table of Contents: Preface. Author biographies. Chapter 1: Insurgency, Religion and Terrorist Relationships. Chapter 2: Terror Mind Manipulation. Chapter 3: Terrorist Landscape: Laying a Foundation. Chapter 4: How bin Laden Rose to Fame: A Historical Perspective. Chapter 5: A Closer Look at bin Laden. Chapter 6: What about Russia? Chapter 7: Meeting Key Players: Mullah Omar and the Taliban. Chapter 8: Osama bin Laden; Mullah Mohamad Omar; Their Focus During this Period. Chapter 9: Abu Musab Zarqawi. Chapter 10: Birth of the Islamic State. Chapter 11: Women within Terrorism: New Tactics and What Can We Expect Next.

Murat Haner and Melissa M. Sloan (Eds.), *Theories of Terrorism: Contemporary Perspectives* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2022), 396 pp., US \$ 128.- [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-3674-5761-7.

The contributors to this interesting volume apply some of the major academic theories of terrorism to examine issues such as trajectories of how individuals become radicalized into terrorism, as well as the processes involved in disengaging from terrorism. Also discussed are topics such as the ideological, strategic and organizational factors in terrorist target selection, women's involvement in terrorism, far-right wing White Supremacist terrorism, religious terrorism and suicide martyrdom, and the application of the criminology theory of situational crime prevention (SCP) in understanding terrorism and how to prevent it. The final chapter by Leonard Weinberg on "How Terrorism Ends" updates his earlier writings on this topic. The book is recommended as a primary textbook for academic courses on terrorism and counterterrorism.

Table of Contents: Preface; Part I. Becoming a Terrorist; The Psychological Processes of Terrorism; Explaining Political Terrorism; Explaining Religious Terrorism; Explaining White Supremacy and Domestic Terrorism; Part II. Being a Terrorist; Gender and Terrorism. Terrorist Target Selection; Explaining Suicide Bombings; Code of the Terrorist; Part III. Beyond Terrorism; Desistance from Terrorism; Terrorism and Deterrence; Situational Crime Prevention and Terrorism; Fear of Terrorism; How Terrorism Ends?

Daniel Koehler, *From Traitor to Zealot: Exploring the Phenomenon of Side-Switching in Extremism and Terrorism* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 350 pp., US \$ 110.- [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-

1-1088-4294-5.

This is a conceptually innovative, empirical study on what the author terms as “side-switching” by extremist individuals and groups, primarily in Germany. The book’s case studies present significant examples of turncoats - individuals and groups who become, in one example, neo-Nazis, radical left-wingers, and then devout Salafists. To explain this phenomenon, the author applies theories such as social identity theory and devoted actor theory to develop his own theory of motivations and what he terms the defector life cycles. To counter these processes of radicalization into violent extremism, the author proposes a new approach to “become an ex” which is based on understanding the importance of how ideology is interpreted by these individuals’ “confused identities.” The concluding chapter presents the author’s findings and future directions in examining these issues. The author, a veteran practitioner expert in analyzing radicalization and how to counter it, is well suited to explaining this phenomenon. The author is Founding Director of the German Institute on Radicalization and De-Radicalization Studies (GIRDS) and editor-in-chief of the Journal for Deradicalization.

Table of Contents: Foreword: John Horgan; Preface; Betraying the Cause? Side-Switching and Violent Extremism; Nation, Race, and Anti-Semitism: Switching to Far-Right Extremism; Joining the Far Left; Fighting on the Path of Allah: Joining Islamic Extremism from the Far Right and Far Left; Who Are Extremist Side-Switchers and What Drives Them? Toward a Theory of Motivations and Defector Life Cycles; Breaking the Cycle: Learning How to Improve Counter-Radicalization, Counterterrorism, and Deradicalization Programs; Conclusions.

David Lowe, *Terrorism, Law and Policy: A Comparative Study* [Second Edition] (New York, NY: Routledge, 2022), 368 pp., US \$ 128.- [Hardcover], US \$ 34.36 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-0320-5013-3.

This is a comprehensive and authoritative textbook by a veteran British law enforcement official covering subjects such as how to define terrorism, governments’ anti-terrorism-related legislation and policies around the world, the nature of violent extremism and how to counter it, investigating terrorism cases (including surveilling terrorists), and the need to balance security and civil liberties. As a textbook, each chapter begins with topics to be covered, an introduction, student learning outcomes, points for reflection, short case studies, and a conclusion. The author is a retired British Detective Sergeant, and currently a senior research fellow at Leeds Law School, where he researches terrorism and security, policing and criminal law.

Table of Contents: Preface; Introduction; Part I – Current Terrorist Threats; Islamist-inspired terrorist groups; Nationalist causes: The on-going political cause in Northern Ireland; Far-right and extreme far-right (neo-Nazis); Part II – Government and international bodies anti-terrorism policies and roles of international and national counter-terrorism agencies; Inter-governmental and state government anti-terrorism policies; Part III – Legal definition of terrorism and statutory powers used in counter-terrorism investigations; Legal definition of terrorism; Planning acts of terrorism; Passport and border controls and statutory measures to deal with returning fighters; Statutory preventative measures; Surveillance of electronic communications; International terrorism intelligence exchange, Snowden revelations, the courts and data protection; Handling informants in terrorist investigations; Funding terrorism and asset-freezing; Part IV – Extremism, freedom of expression, hate crime and prevent strategies; Extremism and radicalization; Freedom of expression and hate crime: Analysis looking at the extreme far-right; Prevent strategies.

John A. Lynne II, *Another Kind of War: The Nature and History of Terrorism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), 520 pp., US \$ 40.- [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-3001-8881-3.

This is a comprehensive account by a veteran military historian of the history of modern terrorism over the past 150 years. While drawing on David Rapoport’s four historical waves of modern terrorism framework, it adds additional dimensions to it by beginning the account with what the author regards as the origins of the first historical wave: the French Revolution in 1789. The discussion of the second, third, and fourth historical waves of terrorism are complemented by the author’s discussion of the Palestinian – Israeli conflict from 1881 to 1985, Marxist urban guerrilla warfare, Islamist Jihadist groups, narcoterrorism, as well as the components of homeland security and countering terrorism. The book is accompanied by a website for

additional materials and reference resources. The author is emeritus professor of history at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and former president of the United States Commission on Military History.

Table of Contents: A Brief Note to the Reader; On Terrorism; Rule by Fear: State-Regime Terrorism; War on Civilians: Military Terrorism; White Knights: Social Terrorism in America, 1865-1965; Propaganda of the Deed: The First Wave of Radical Terrorism, 1848-1920; Second Wave: Ethno-Nationalist Terrorism: The FLN and the PIRA; Tales of Two Tragedies: Palestinians and Israelis, 1881-1985; Urban Guerrillas: Marxist Terrorism during the 1960s and 1970s; Islamist Terrorism: Ideology and Radicalization in the Third Wave; Regional Jihad: Hezbollah and Hamas; Global Jihad: Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State; Radical Right-Wing Violence in the United States; Narcoterrorism; Homeland Security; Confronting Terrorism; Appendix: A Descriptive Model of Four Strategies of Terrorism.

Yair Sharan, Ted J. Gordon, and Elizabeth Florescu (Eds), *Tripping Points on the Roads to Outwit Terror* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2021), 222 pp., US \$ 139.99 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-3-0307-2570-9.

This is one of the first accounts of the impacts of recent transformative catastrophic events in terms of new technologies, including the COVID-19 pandemic, on potential future scenarios in the world of terrorism. As explained by the authors, “The objective of this book is to help reduce the probability and severity of terrorism by anticipating new opportunities, errors, and tipping points that may occur in the terrorists’ efforts to extend their influence or in the efforts to thwart their planning and attacks” (p. v). To examine these future-oriented issues over the next 20 years, the authors apply “existing technologies (such as CRISPR, the tool for modifying genes, and forensic genealogy) and entirely new technologies (such as deep fake counterfeiting) that may be used by terrorists or those seeking to shut them down” (p. 2). More than a dozen “tripping point” scenarios are discussed, with the scenario vignettes providing “a story with plausible cause and effect links that connect a future condition with the present, while illustrating key decisions, events, and consequences throughout the narrative” (pp. 2-3). Utilizing the Delphi forecasting tool (based on numerous expert respondents), the authors conclude with a series of findings on future trends, such as increasingly effective propaganda and disinformation by terrorists and state actors, “Meaningless terrorism – thousands of people performing small actions that together would have a big effect to disrupt elements of society,” and the emergence of “super-empowered individuals” who are “able to harness bio-weapons or technology to wreak mass-scale disruption, destruction and loss of life” (p. 134). The authors’ innovative approach and worrisome findings about future trends in terrorist warfare make this book an important contribution to advancing our understanding of the types of terrorist warfare that need to be anticipated by governments’ counterterrorism campaign planners. Yair Sharan, is Director of the FIRS2T Group (Foresight Insight Research Security Society and Technology) in Israel, and is active in the security and technology field. Theodore J. Gordon is a specialist in forecasting methodology, planning, and policy analysis. Elizabeth Florescu is Director of Research and Board Member of The Millennium Project.

Table of Contents: Introduction; Instead of Executive Summary. Tripping Points: An Overview; Defining Terrorism: Future Perspectives; Pandemics; CRISPR and the New Biology; Identification: Forensics and DNA Databases; Artificial Intelligence and Autonomous Weapons; Challenges in Space; The Little Things Sometimes Count; The Fuzzy Line: Are We at War?; Technology Early Warnings: A Plethora of Threats and Opportunities; Deep Fakes; Unintended Consequences; Conclusions; Appendix: Evolution of the Definitions of Terrorism: Results of a Real-Time Delphi.

Al Qaida

Nelly Lahoud, *The Bin Laden Papers: How the Abbottabad Raid Revealed the Truth about Al-Qaeda, its Leader and his Family* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2022), 384 pp., US \$ 28.- [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-3002-6063-2.

This is a fascinating inside account of al Qaida and its leader Usama bin Laden, based on the author’s unique access to the nearly 6,000 pages of Arabic private communications that were captured by the U.S. Special Forces who had successfully killed bin Laden at his hideout in Abbottabad, Pakistan, on May 2, 2011. These materials outlined bin Laden’s plans for future attacks, and al Qaida’s position towards countries ranging

from Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Pakistan to the United States, its “far-enemy.” The author’s conclusions are worth noting, as she describes al Qaida’s jihadists as “variously hiding, incompetent, unruly, extremists, and disunited, and Usama’s optimism border [ing – JS] on delirium” (p. 285). She adds that bin Laden was “not worldly,” as he “had only a perfunctory understanding of international relations,” and his “political goals were alarmingly sophomoric” (p. 286). This book is highly recommended for its insights in exposing the true nature of Usama bin Laden and al Qaida. The author is associate professor of security studies in the Department of National Security and Strategy at the U.S. Army War College.

Table of Contents: Prologue: Eighteen Minutes; Introduction; Part I: “Afflicted” Al-Qaeda (2001-2011); “The Birth of the Idea”; Jihadis Between Borders; Global Jihad on Autopilot; Al-Qaeda “Hides”; The “Calamity”; The “Americans”; Part II: The Rise of the “Brothers” (2004-2011); Some “Brothers” Are More Brotherly Than Others; Part III: The Family; The “First Martyr”; The Escapes; The Final Chapter; The Real Courier; Epilogue; Appendix One: Usama bin Laden’s Will; Appendix Two: Dramatis Personae.

Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK)

Murat Haner, The Freedom Fighter: A Terrorist’s Own Story (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 498 pp., US \$ 208.- [Hardcover], US \$ 56.76 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-1381-0451-8.

This is an extensively detailed account of the PKK, using the life-story of “Deniz,” a high-level PKK terrorist who was incarcerated in a Turkish prison (and whom the author interviewed), to shed light on the processes of radicalization and activism of Kurds into PKK-type terrorism to achieve national independence. In the concluding chapter, the author observes that “the PKK is a decades-old, very sophisticated military organization,” and that “Attempts to eradicate it through a concerted Turkish military campaign are unlikely to be effective” (p. 443). The author is a Visiting Professor in the Department of Social Sciences, Program of Criminology, at the University of South Florida, Sarasota-Manatee.

Table of Contents: Foreword by Francis T. Cullen; Preface; Part I: Terrorism in Context; Meeting Deniz; The History of Kurds and the PKK; Part II: The Freedom Fighter’s own Story; Section A: Becoming a Terrorist; The Early Years; Joining the PKK; Mission Trainings; Section B: Being a Terrorist; Rangers and My First Mission; Turkish Oppression Toward the Kurdish Villagers; The PKK Organization; On the Way to Damascus, Syria; War against Barzani’s Peshmergas; Chaotic Situation at Central Headquarters; The Women Guerillas of the Organization; The War against the YNK; The Invasion of Iraq by U.S. Forces; That’s All She Wrote!; The Trip to Amed; Recruiting New Guerrillas; Decision to Keep My Hands Off; Section C: Prison and Beyond; Leaving the PKK; The Prison and the General; Penitence (Second Thoughts); The Turks, The Kurds and the Last Chance; Part III: Conclusion; Lessons from a Terrorist’s own Story; Appendix: List of Major Individuals and Abbreviations in the Life History.

Military Warfare

B. A. Friedman, On Operations: Operational Art and Military Disciplines (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2021), 256 pp., US \$ 31.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-6824-7706-9.

With military warfare conducted at the strategic (overall vision and end-states), operational and tactical (combat unit) levels, this book covers the operational level of warfare. It is defined by the author as “the planning, preparation, synchronization, and sustainment of tactics over a sustained period of time, a large geographic expanse, or both” (p. 5). To examine the operational level of war, the book’s chapters cover topics such as administration, operations, fire support, logistics, command and control, and campaigns and battles. These topics are illustrated in five historical case studies. In the conclusion, the author insightfully observes that “there are no levels of war” because “Neither tactics nor strategy are a level, but rather activities or functions that operate continuously and in parallel” (p 141). The author, a Marine Corps Reserves field artillery officer, is enrolled in King’s College London.

Table of Contents: Preface; Introduction; Operations and the Napoleonic Revolution; German Operational Thought; Soviet Operational Thought; American Operational Thought; The Operational Level and the Civil-Military Relationship;

A Theory of Operational Art; Administration; Information; Operations; Fire Support; Logistics; Command and Control; Campaigns, Battles, and Decision; Campaign Taxonomy I; Campaign Taxonomy II; Operational Art Actualized through a Modern Staff System; A Note on Force Protection; Conclusion; Case Study 1. The Austerlitz Campaign, 1805; Case Study 2. The Königgrätz Campaign, 1866; Case Study 3. The Atlantic Campaign, 1914-18; Case Study 4. The Battle of Britain, 1940; Case Study 5. Operation Watchtower, 1942.

Mark Galeotti, *The Weaponisation of Everything: A Field Guide to the New Way of War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2022), 248 pp., US \$ 26.- [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-3002-5344-3.

This is a highly informed and authoritative account of the transformation of what used to be ‘conventional’ warfare into what is now termed hybrid war, grey zone warfare, and unrestricted war, in which cyberwarfare, disinformation and espionage play a major role. This book was written prior to Russia’s military invasion of Ukraine, where ‘conventional’ warfare is being waged mainly with long-range artillery fire and weaponized drones, but the author’s insights about future ‘unconventional’ trends in warfare are still pertinent. However, the author is mistaken when he concludes that “‘big wars’ may be in decline”, but he is correct in observing that new technological systems are required to “reinvent war” because “outside explicitly military conflicts, notions of war and peace, victory and defeat become similarly hazy” (p. 223). The author is a London-based political scientist and senior associate fellow at the Royal United Services Institute.

Table of Contents: Introduction; The Renaissance of Weaponisation; Part I: Ain’t Gonna Study (Shooting) War No More; The Deweaponisation of Warfare?; Soldiering-plus and Gig Geopolitics; Part II: Business, and Other Crimes; Business; Buying Friends and Influencing People; Crime; Part III: War is All Around Us; Life; Law; Information; Culture; Part IV: Welcome to the Future; Weaponised Instability; Learning to Love the Permanent, Bloodless War.

Mick Ryan, *War Transformed: The Future of Twenty-First Century Great Power Competition and Conflict* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2022), 312 pp., US \$ 39.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-6824-7741-0.

This is a highly insightful and important account by a retired Major-General in the Australian Army about the future of warfare. It is especially pertinent in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, which, as the author observes, has ushered in a new “era of accelerations” in the form of “the fourth Industrial Revolution, pinned by rapid technological development across the fields of information technology, biotechnology, space, communications, and many others. The COVID-19 pandemic is providing a ‘supercharging’ function in some of these areas, driving change at an unanticipated pace. This, combined with the impact of the ongoing disruptions in our environment, will fundamentally change the structure and resilience of societies and how they interact, as well as the way nations compete and make war” (p. 4). Regarding terrorism, the author observes that surveillance technologies across multiple spectra enable “around-the-clock surveillance across the battlespace” of ‘conventional forces,’ but not the “actions of low-technology insurgents [i.e., terrorists – JS] in the urban or rural environments”, with “No platform in the inventory” able to “see the intentions of a group of insurgents or the strategies of regional terrorist leaders” (p. 90). The author presciently concludes this excellent account by noting that “We must better understand the types of competitions and wars we will face in this new age of war. We need to develop the adaptive mindset to keep pace with threats and keep at bay the major threats to our societies” (p. 225). The author is a retired Major General in the Australian army, and an adjunct fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, in Washington, DC.

Table of Contents: Introduction; Revolutions and Military Change; Future War: New-Era Competition and Conflict; Institutions, Ideas, and Future Military Effectiveness; People in Future Competition and War; Conclusion: War Is Transforming (Again); Epilogue: A Changing Nature of War?

About the Reviewer: Dr. Joshua Sinai is the Book Reviews Editor of ‘Perspectives on Terrorism’. He can be reached at: Joshua.sinai@comcast.net.

Book Review: David C. Rapoport. *Waves of Global Terrorism. From 1879 to the Present*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2022. 440 pp., US \$ 121.78 [Hardcover], US \$ 35.00 [Paperback], US \$ 17.99 [E-Book], ISBN: 978-0-2311-3303-6.

Reviewed by Alex P. Schmid

The author of this monograph, David C. Rapoport, Emeritus Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Los Angeles, has been lecturing and researching on political and religious violence since the late 1960s. He is one of the founding fathers of academic terrorism studies and also founded *Terrorism and Political Violence*, one of the three leading journals in the field. The book under review is a much longed-for and extended version of his seminal article “The Fourth Wave: September 11 in the History of Terrorism” published in *Current History* in December 2001 - an article which two of his critics (Tom Parker and Nick Sitter) called “one of the most influential articles ever written in the field of terrorism studies”. Documented by 90 pages of notes, and equipped with a 44-page index, Prof. Rapoport extends and details over 440 pages his cyclical approach to the surge and decline of four historical waves of global terrorism: (i) the first Anarchist Wave (1879-1920s), the second Anticolonial Wave (1919-1960s), the third New Left Wave (1960s-1990s) and the fourth Religious Wave (1979-2020s).

The volume’s first part (pp. 1-63) focuses on “Terrorism before the Global Form: From the First Century to the Twentieth”. This overview also contains the author’s definition of terrorism: “Terror is violence employed for a religious or political objective and is not limited by the accepted moral norms that limit violence. Both governments and rebels may use terror. (...) Rebels using violence to achieve a political or religious end are terrorists when they operate unfettered by military rules governing violence” (p.3). The author explicitly excludes from his analysis “terrorist groups that fight to protect the dominant system” (p.3) as well as merely local terrorism which has different patterns and durations. His main concerns are secret underground groups; therefore, he also excludes, for instance, the 200,000 Fascist Blackshirts of Benito Mussolini in Italy and the 500,000 Nazi Brownshirts of Adolf Hitler in Germany who showed their true colours above ground and openly when engaging in acts of political violence against their perceived opponents in the 1920s and beyond.

In terms of theory, Prof. Rapoport uses the half-forgotten concept of “generation” as principal conceptual tool, with each generation lasting around 40 years. He finds that “each wave of global terror was generated with the hope that the world could be changed dramatically” (p.10). “A wave”, he notes, “is stimulated by dramatic international political events, [and] consists of the actions of many different organizations sharing similar tactics and/or objectives” (p.10). He argues that “Waves overlap in the sense that during one’s decline, a new one is emerging” (p.270). The book is rich in empirical details. Regarding the first historical wave, Prof. Rapoport notes, for instance, that “At the high point (1890-1910) terror activity occurred on all six inhabited continents and in at least thirty-eight nation-states” (p.102). The third, New Left historical wave, he specifies, “contained 404 groups, 212 ‘separatists’ and 192 ‘revolutionaries’ (p.159). Only about two percent of the third historical wave groups were successful in achieving at least one important aim (p.185).

In the concluding chapter, the author addresses the question whether or not a Fifth Wave is emerging. Based on the criteria Rapoport specified for historical waves, Vincent Augur, among others, has argued in *Perspectives on Terrorism* (Vol.14, Issue 3, June 2020) that Europe’s far right apparently initiated the Fifth Wave in 2010 (p.270). Prof. Rapoport, after listing and discussing far right terrorist attacks since 2010, leaves the question open: “Far-right terror and its distinctive characteristics will certainly persist for a few more years, but will it last long enough to constitute a Fifth Wave?” (p.305).

What makes this volume an especially significant contribution to the academic literature, is the author’s depth and width of historical knowledge, laced with bold observations of parallels between past and present terrorism events and trends. He notes that “The first three waves aimed to achieve various goals the French

Revolution had introduced. But the Fourth Wave was hostile to the French Revolution's aim of creating a world of secular nation-states" (p.199). Prof. Rapoport's writing is crisp and going to the heart of the issues he highlights in his survey of 140 years of modern non-state terrorism. The text is spiced with lengthy insightful quotes from terrorist theorists and practitioners; this gives his narrative both authenticity and vividness. Prof. Rapoport has taken note of the criticism that met his seminal article from 2001 and bolstered his case with new evidence. As a result, his historical wave theory stands stronger than before. However, his book does not stand or fall with the acceptance or rejection of his grand theory. It is a vivid history of how non-state modern terrorism originating in Europe spread across the globe by imitation and contagion.

Rapoport embeds his narrative in the wider history of militant and revolutionary social movements and also takes into account the effects of individual and collective counter-terrorist measures by governments. *Waves of Global Terrorism* is bound to become a classic and deserves to be read as basic text by all students and analysts of modern terrorism.

About the Reviewer: Alex P. Schmid is Editor-in-Chief of 'Perspectives on Terrorism' and a Distinguished Fellow of the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) in The Hague.

Bibliography: Terrorism Research Literature (Part 4)

Compiled and selected by Judith Tinnes

[Bibliographic Series of Perspectives on Terrorism – BSPT-JT-2022-3]

Abstract

This bibliography contains journal articles, book chapters, books, edited volumes, theses, and grey literature on the field of Terrorism Research, its sub-disciplines (such as Critical Terrorism Studies), and related disciplines (such as Security Studies), central concepts, theories, methods, models, approaches, frameworks, and research topics. It focuses on recent publications (up to September 2022) and should not be considered as exhaustive. The literature has been retrieved by manually browsing more than 200 core and periphery sources in the field of Terrorism Studies. Additionally, full-text and reference retrieval systems have been employed to broaden the search.

Keywords: bibliography, resources, literature, terrorism research, terrorism studies, concepts, theories, methods, models, approaches, frameworks, research topics.

NB: All websites were last visited on 17.09.2022. This subject bibliography is the fourth installment of a four-part series (for earlier bibliographies, see: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), and [Part 3](#)). To avoid duplication, this compilation only includes literature not contained in the previous parts. - See also Note for the Reader at the end of this literature list.

Bibliographies and Other Resources

For a compilation of resources (including a meta-bibliography) see:

Tinnes, Judith (2022, August): A Resources List for Terrorism Research: Journals, Websites, Bibliographies (2022 Edition). *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 16(4), 64-101. URL: <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/customsites/perspectives-on-terrorism/2022/issue-4/tinnes.pdf>

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Note

Whenever retrievable, URLs for freely available versions of subscription-based publications (e.g., self-archived manuscripts in institutional repositories, on professional networking sites, or author homepages) have been provided. Please note, that the content of such Green Open Access documents is not necessarily identical to the official publisher versions (e.g., in case of preprints); it might therefore not have passed through all editorial stages publishers employ to ensure quality control (peer review, copy- and layout editing etc.). In some cases, articles may only be cited after obtaining permission by the author(s).

About the Compiler: **Judith Tinnes**, Ph.D., is a Professional Information Specialist. Since 2011, she works for the Leibniz Institute for Psychology ([ZPID](https://www.zpid.de)). Additionally, she serves as Information Resources Editor to 'Perspectives on Terrorism'. In her editorial role, she regularly compiles bibliographies and other resources for Terrorism Research (for an inventory visit <https://archive.org/details/terrorism-research-bibliographies>) and runs the execution monitoring project 'Counting Lives Lost' ([CLL](https://www.countingliveslost.org)). She wrote her [doctoral thesis](#) on Internet usage of Islamist terrorists and insurgents (focus: media-oriented hostage takings). E-mail: j.tinnes@gmx.de, Twitter: [@CountingLivesPT](https://twitter.com/CountingLivesPT)

Recent Online Resources for the Analysis of Terrorism and Related Subjects

Compiled and selected by Berto Jongman

Most of the clickable items included below became available online between September and October 2022. They are categorized under 13 headings (as well as sub-headings, not listed below).

1. Non-Religious Terrorism
2. Religious Terrorism
3. Terrorist Strategies and Tactics
4. Conflict, Crime and Political Violence other than Terrorism
5. Extremism, Radicalization
6. Counterterrorism - General
7. Counterterrorism: Specific Operations and/or Specific Policy Measures
8. Prevention, Preparedness and Resilience and Rehabilitation Studies
9. State Repression, Civil War and Clandestine Warfare
10. Intelligence Operations
11. Cyber Operations
12. Risk and Threat Assessments, Forecasts and Analytical Studies
13. Also Worth to Read/Listen and Watch

N.B. 'Recent Online Resources for the Analysis of Terrorism and Related Subjects' is a regular feature in 'Perspectives on Terrorism'. For past listings, search under 'Archive' at < <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/perspectives-on-terrorism> >.

1. Non-Religious Terrorism

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2. Religious Terrorism

2.1. Al-Qaeda and its Affiliates

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About the Compiler: Berto Jongman is Associate Editor of 'Perspectives on Terrorism'. He is a former senior Military Intelligence Analyst and currently serves as an International Consultant on CBRN issues. A sociologist by training, he previously worked for Swedish and Dutch civilian research institutes. Drs. Jongman was the recipient of the Golden Candle Award for his *World Conflict & Human Rights Maps*, published by PIOOM. He is editor of the volume 'Contemporary Genocides' (1996) and has also contributed to various editions of 'Political Terrorism', the award-winning handbook of terrorism research edited by Alex P. Schmid.

40 Full-Text Academic Theses (Ph.D. and M.A.) on Terrorism in War and Terrorist Warfare Tactics, written in English between 2007 and 2022

Compiled and selected by Broderick McDonald

Abstract

This bibliography contains Ph.D. Dissertations (Ph.D.) and Master theses (M.A.) on terrorism in war and terrorist warfare tactics. Titles were retrieved manually by searching the Open Access Theses and Dissertations Database (OATD), using various combinations of search terms, including – but not limited to – ‘Terrorism in War’, ‘Terrorism and Armed Conflict’, ‘Terrorism’, ‘Civil War’, ‘Insurgency’, and ‘Warfare Tactics’. More than 500 entries were evaluated, of which 40 were ultimately selected for this list. All theses are open source. However, readers accessing them should observe possible copyright restrictions. The title entries below are hyperlinked, or ‘clickable’, allowing access to full texts.

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About the Compiler: Broderick McDonald is a Ph.D. student at St Catherine’s College (University of Oxford) and Assistant Editor for Theses of Perspectives on Terrorism.

Conference Monitor/Calendar of Events (October 2022 and beyond)

Compiled by Méryl Demuynck

The Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI), in its mission to provide a platform for academics and practitioners in the field of terrorism and counter-terrorism, compiles an online calendar, listing recent and upcoming academic and professional conferences, symposia and similar events that are directly or indirectly relevant to the readers of Perspectives on Terrorism. The calendar includes academic and (inter-) governmental conferences, professional expert meetings, civil society events and educational programs organised between October and December 2022 (with a few shortly thereafter). The listed events are organised by a wide variety of governmental and non-governmental institutions, including several key (counter) terrorism research centres and institutes listed in the February 2021 issue of this journal.

We encourage readers to contact the journal's Associate Editor for Conference Monitoring, Méryl Demuynck, and provide her with relevant information, preferably in the same format as the items listed below. Méryl Demuynck can be reached at <m.demuynck@icct.nl> or via Twitter: [@demuynckmer](https://twitter.com/demuynckmer).

October 2022

De Afghanske Tolke: Risikofaktorer, Beskyttelsesbehov og Genbosætning (The Afghan Interpreters: Risk Factors, Protection Needs and Resettlement) [in Danish]

Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), Hybrid

3 October, Copenhagen, Denmark

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@diisd](#)

Understanding Radicalization from a Women, Peace and Security Perspective

Research Network on Women, Peace and Security (RN-WPS), Online

3 October, Montreal, Canada

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@rn_wps](#)

Autumn School on Hate Speech

United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and the Italian Society for International Organization (SIOI), Online

3-7 October, Turin, Italy

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@UNICRI](#) and [@SIOItweet](#)

ICPVTR Webinar Series on Bali Bombings' 20th Anniversary - Evolution of the Drivers of Radicalisation: Ideology, Gender Roles and the Online Space

International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR), Online

4 October, Singapore

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RSIS_NTU](#)

CENS Workshop on Extremism: Old Paradigms; New Frontiers

Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS)

4-5 October, Singapore

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RSIS_NTU](#)

Beyond Militarism: The Importance of Whole-of-Society Partnerships to Effective PVE and CT

UN Women, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), Online

5 October, New York, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@UN_Women](#), [@osce_odihr](#), [@DCAF_Geneva](#)

Meddling or Helping? Foreign Actors in the Sahel

Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI), Online

5 October, Milan, Italy

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@ispionline](#)

Research Launch on Examining the Intersection between Gaming and Violent Extremism

United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), Online

5 October, New York, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@UN_OCT](#)

Future of War Conference 2022

War Studies Research Centre (WSRC) of the Netherlands Defence Academy (NLDA) and the University of Oxford's Changing Character of War (CCW) Centre

5-7 October, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@WarStudiesNLDA](#), [@OxfordCCW](#)

The Sahel: Understanding the Security Challenges in the Wake of Covid-19 and Ukraine

Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), Online

6 October, London, United Kingdom

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RUSI_terrorism](#)

II Congreso Internacional Sobre Fenomenología Terrorista (II International Congress on the Terrorist Phenomenon) [in Spanish]

International Observatory for Terrorism Studies (OIET)

6-7 October, Valencia, Spain

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@OIET](#)

Challenges Annual Forum 2022 The Future of Peace Operations

Challenges Forum International Secretariat (CFIS), and United Service Institution of India (USI)

6-7 October 2022, New Delhi, India

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@ChallengesForum](#), [@USIofIndia](#)

An Armchair Discussion with Fawzia Koofi: Reflections on the Current State of Affairs in Afghanistan

Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), Hybrid

7 October, Washington DC, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@CSIS](#)

The Imagine Forum: Reimagining Peace Processes

Höfði Reykjavík Peace Centre – University of Iceland, Hybrid

10 October, Reykjavik, Iceland

Website: [visit](#) | Facebook: [Höfði Reykjavík Peace Centre](#)

Classless Politics: Islamist Movements, the Left, and Authoritarian Legacies in Egypt

Belfer Centre for Science and International Affairs

11 October, Cambridge, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@BelferCenter](#)

CTF Online Symposium No. 11: Financing Extreme Right-Wing Volunteers in Ukraine

Project CRAFT/Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) Europe, Online

11 October, Brussels, Belgium

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@projectcraft](#), [@RUSIEurope](#)

Emerging Trends and Developments in P/CVE: Anti-Authorities Narratives*Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), Online*

11 October, Brussels, Belgium

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)**Human Rights Law and Counterterrorism Strategies: Dead, Detained or Stateless***Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), Online*

11 October, Washington DC, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@CSIS](#)**ICPVTR Webinar Series on Bali Bombings' 20th Anniversary - Getting the Balance Right: "Hard" and "Soft" Approaches to Counter-Terrorism***International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR), Online*

11 October, Singapore

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RSIS_NTU](#)**Spreading Hate: The Global Rise of White Supremacist Terrorism***International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) and Egmont Institute, Online*

11 October, The Hague, Netherlands

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@ICCT_TheHague](#), [@EgmontInstitute](#)**Iraq and its Ongoing Fight against ISIS: An Assessment***Institute for International & Strategic Studies (IISS)*

12 October, London, United Kingdom

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@IISS_org](#)**The Psychology of War in the 21st Century: The History and Politics of Trauma, from 9/11 to Ukraine***Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS)*

12-13 October, Copenhagen, Denmark

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@diisdsk](#)**ADI Public Policy Forum - Twenty Years on from the Bali Bombings: Reflections on Two Decades of Transformative Challenges and Cooperation in Countering Terrorism***Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation (ADI), Hybrid*

13 October, Melbourne, Australia

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@Deakin_ADI](#)**Afghanistan Under the Taliban and its Regional Impact***Stimson Center, Online*

13 October, Washington DC, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@StimsonCenter](#)**Dangerous Incentives: Challenges Facing Emerging Scholars of Far-Right***Center for Research on Extremism (C-REX), and Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab (PERIL), Online*

13 October, Oslo, Norway

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@CrexUiO](#), [@PERIL_AU](#)

Polarized and Polarizing Debates: How to Address Sensitive Topics in an Educational Context

Center for the Prevention of Radicalization leading to Violence (CPRLV), Online

13 October, Montréal, Canada

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@info_radical](#)

What Happened to Women, Policing & Security in Afghanistan?

Monash Gender, Peace and Security (GPS) Centre, Online

13 October, Melbourne, Australia

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@GpsMonash](#)

EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) 2022 - Methodology, Process and Findings

European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), and EUROPOL, Online

14 October, Budapest, Hungary

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@EU_CEPOL](#), [@Europol](#)

Back From Raqqa – The Prosecution of Returnees in Germany and France

Counter Extremism Project (CEP), Online

17 October, New York, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@FightExtremism](#)

Understanding the Opportunities and Constraints of EU Security Policy

Swedish Defence University, Online

17 October, Stockholm, Sweden

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@Forsvarshogsk](#)

Stability and Threat in the Middle East

International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR)

18 October, Singapore

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RSIS_NTU](#)

High-Level International Conference on International and Regional Border Security and Management Cooperation to Counter Terrorism and Prevent the Movement of Terrorists

Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union (EU), the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the State of Qatar

18-19 October, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@UN_OCT](#)

Terrorism Experts Conference (TEC) Combined with Executive Level - Defence Against Terrorism (DAT) Seminar 2022

Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism (COE-DAT)

18-19 October, Ankara, Turkey

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@NATO](#)

90th INTERPOL General Assembly

Interpol

18-21 October 2022, New Delhi, India

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@INTERPOL_HQ](#)

ICPVTR Webinar Series on Evolving Dynamics and Strategies in the Rehabilitation of Radical Extremists: Ideology and Psychology: Drivers of Radicalisation*International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR), Online*

19 October, Singapore

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RSIS_NTU](#)**Striking Back: The End of Peace in Cyberspace and How to Restore It***The Hague Program on International Cyber Security, Online*

20 October, The Hague, Netherlands

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@TheHagueProgram](#)**Faces of Conflict: Security Challenges in a Changing World***JASON Institute for Peace and Security Studies*

21 October, The Hague, Netherlands

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@JASONInstitute](#)**Cannes International Resilience Forum 2022***Cannes International Resilience Forum, Online*

23-26 October, Cannes, France

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@cirforum](#)**VOX-Pol Research Workshop: The Normalisation of Extremist Subculture***VOX-Pol Network of Excellence (NoE), Online*

24 October, Dublin, Ireland

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@VOX_Pol](#)**Bargaining with the Taliban: Women, Peace and Security in Afghanistan***Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA), Hybrid*

27 October, Melbourne, Australia

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@AIIANational](#)**Mere Desolation? On Daesh's Iconoclasm***Orient-Institut Beirut (OIB), Hybrid*

27 October, Beirut, Lebanon

Website: [visit](#) | Facebook: [OIB Orient-Institut Beirut](#)**ENVISION 2022: NCITE Annual Conference***National Counterterrorism Innovation, Technology, and Education Centre (NCITE)*

27-28 October, Omaha, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@NCITE_COE](#)**The Cyber Operations Series: Understanding Offensive Cyber Operations***Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), Hybrid*

28 October, London, United Kingdom

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RUSI_terrorism](#)**Special Meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC): Countering the Use of New and Emerging Technologies for Terrorist Purposes***United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC)*

28-29 October, Mumbai and New Delhi, India

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@UN_CTED](#)

RAN POL – Police Role and Contribution in the Multi-Agency Case Diagnosis of At-Risk Individuals*Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)*

31 October - 1 November, Rome, Italy

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)**November 2022****Minors in Terrorist Organizations: Radicalization and Intervention***Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)*

1 November, Oslo, Norway

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@nupinytt](#)**Pandora's Box: Reflecting on 20 Years of Drone Targeted Killing***Drone Wars, Online*

3 November, Shaftesbury, United Kingdom

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@Drone Wars UK](#)**Political Violence Across Ideological Categories***National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), Online*

3 November, College Park, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@START umd](#)**CASIS 2022 Annual Symposium: Old Threats, New Theatres: Security and Intelligence in the Digital Age***Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies (CASIS-ACERS), Hybrid*

4 November, Vancouver, Canada

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@CASIS ACERS](#)**Annual Conference 2022: Global Power Politics, Counter-Terrorism, and Human Rights***International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT), Hybrid*

7-8 November, The Hague, Netherlands

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@ICCT TheHague](#)**2022 Conference on International Cyber Security: Navigating Narratives in Cyberspace***The Hague Program on International Cyber Security*

8-9 November, The Hague, Netherlands

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@TheHagueProgram](#)**2022 Stockholm Security Conference: Trends of Conflict and Warfare in the 21st Century: Effects and Impact of the War in Ukraine***Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Online*

8-14 November, Solna, Sweden

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@SIPRIorg](#)**Formers: A Challenge to the Discipline***Center for Research on Extremism (C-REX), and Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab (PERIL), Online*

10 November, Oslo, Norway

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@CrexUiO](#), [@PERIL AU](#)

TAT & GIFCT E-learning Session - Moderation Online: Beyond Content

Tech Against Terrorism (TAT), and Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT), Online
10 November, London, United Kingdom

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@techvsterrorism](#), [@GIFCT_official](#)

RAN C&N - What's Going On Online? Emerging Trends and Developments in the Online Landscape of Radicalisation and Polarisation

Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)

10-11 November, Helsinki, Finland

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)

Riding out the Multicrisis

Paris Peace Forum 2022

11-12 November, Paris, France

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@ParisPeaceForum](#)

Reassessing the Financing of Terrorism in 2022 (RAFT22)

Project CRAFT/RUSI Europe, Hybrid

15 November, Brussels, Belgium

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@projectcraft](#)

The American War in Afghanistan

Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC)

15 November, Stanford, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@StanfordCISAC](#)

RAN PRISONS – What is in the European Prison Toolbox of DDR Programmes?

Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)

15-16 November, Berlin, Germany

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)

RAN LOCAL – Pulse Taking: What are Local Effects of Recent Developments in P/CVE?

Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)

15-16 November, Helsinki, Finland

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)

BKA Autumn Conference 2022 – “Wie halten wir Schritt? – Polizeiliche Strategien für die Zukunft” (“How do we Stay Ahead? Police Strategies for the Future”) [in German]

Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA)

16-17 November, Wiesbaden, Germany

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@bka](#)

National Conference on Peace and Conflict Research in Sweden 2022 - Peace and Conflict in a Changing Security Environment

Peace Research in Sweden (PRIS), and Swedish Defence University

17-18 November, Stockholm, Sweden

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@PRIS_Sweden](#), [@Forsvarshogsk](#)

IISS Manama Dialogue 2022

Institute for International & Strategic Studies (IISS)

18-20 November, Manama, Bahrain

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@IISS_org](#)

AVERT Research Symposium 2022 – The Space Between: New Directions for CVE Interventions

Addressing Violent Extremism and Radicalisation to Terrorism (AVERT) Research Network

21-23 November, Melbourne, Australia

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@AvertResNet](#)

Cyber Threats and the Importance of Information Sharing

Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), Online

22 November, London, United Kingdom

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RUSI_terrorism](#)

RAN Y&E meeting – Artistic Methods and Values in Prevention Work

Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)

22-23 November, Stockholm, Sweden

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)

RAN in the Western Balkans - Regional Small-Scale Expert Workshop on “Confronting Hate Speech in the Western Balkans”

Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)

23-24 November, Podgorica, Montenegro

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)

Alternatives in Mobilization: Ethnicity, Religion, and Political Conflict

National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), Online

30 November, College Park, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@START_umd](#)

December 2022 & Beyond**Cybersecurity@CEPS Summit 2022**

Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)

6 December, Brussels, Belgium

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [CEPS_thinktank](#)

Hybrid Ideologies (English)

Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), Online

6 December, Brussels, Belgium

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)

Hate-Motivated Acts: Intersectional Perspectives

Center for the Prevention of Radicalization leading to Violence (CPRLV), Online

8 December, Montréal, Canada

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@info_radical](#)

Cyber Challenge 2023

Swedish Defence University and National Cyber Security Centre

9 February, Stockholm, Sweden

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@Forsvarshogsk](#)

7th International Conference on Hate Studies – The Challenges of Hate in the 21st Century

Gonzaga University Center for Hate Studies, and Community Colleges of Spokane (CCS)

20-23 April, Spokane, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@GonzagaU](#), [@CCofSpokane](#)

Terrorism Studies '23 - International Conference on Terrorism and Political Violence

Eastern Mediterranean Academic Research Center (DAKAM), and BILSAS, Online

19 May, Istanbul, Turkey

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@dakamtr](#)

Acknowledgment

Special thanks go to Alex Schmid and Berto Jongman for their suggestions and contributions to this conference calendar.

About the Compiler: *Méryl Demuynck is an Associate Editor of Perspectives on Terrorism as well as a Research Fellow at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT). Her work focuses on preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE), including on risk assessment, rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist offenders, youth empowerment, and community resilience, with a particular focus on the Sahel region. She holds a Master's degree in European and International Relations from Sciences Po Strasbourg, as well as a specialisation degree on Contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa from Sciences Po Lyon.*

About Perspectives on Terrorism

Perspectives on Terrorism (PoT) is a joint publication of the Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI), headquartered in Vienna, Austria, and the Institute of Security and Global Affairs (ISGA) of Leiden University, The Hague. Now in its 16th year, PoT is published six times annually as a free, independent, scholarly peer-reviewed journal online at the following URL: <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/perspectives-on-terrorism>.

Perspectives on Terrorism has recently been ranked by Google Scholars again as No. 3 in ‘Terrorism Studies’ (as well as No. 5 in ‘Military Studies’). Jouroscope™, a directory of scientific journals, has listed PoT as one of the top ten journals in the category free open access journals in social sciences, with a Q1 ranking. PoT has almost 8,000 registered subscribers and many more occasional readers.

Our journal seeks to provide a platform for established scholars as well as academics and professionals entering the interdisciplinary fields of (Counter-)Terrorism, Political Violence and Conflict Studies. The editors invite researchers and readers to:

- use the journal as a forum for debate and commentary on issues related to the above.
- present their perspectives on the prevention of, and response to, terrorism and related forms of violent conflict; and
- submit to the journal accounts of evidence-based, empirical scientific research and analyses on terrorism.

Perspectives on Terrorism has sometimes been characterised as ‘non-traditional’ in that it dispenses with some of the rigidities associated with commercial print journals. Topical articles can be published at short notice and reach, through the Internet, a much larger audience than subscription-fee based paper journals. Our online journal also offers contributors a higher degree of flexibility in terms of content, style and length of articles – but without compromising professional scholarly standards. The journal’s Research Notes, Special Correspondence, Op-Eds and other content are reviewed by members of the Editorial Team, while its Articles are peer-reviewed (double-blind) by members of the Editorial Board and outside academic experts and professionals. Due to the hundreds of submissions we receive every year, only the most promising and original ones can be sent for external peer-review.

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