Well done Soldier!

New Book Asks: Negotiate With Terrorists?

July 23 – A one-time senior aide to former British prime minister Tony Blair is calling for Western powers to negotiate with the extremists of the Islamic State militant group and, in a book just published in the United States, argues that history suggests governments nearly always end up talking to terrorists.

TERRORISTS
AT THE
TABLE

WHY NEGOTIATING IS *THE ONLY WAY TO PEACE*

JONATHAN POWELL

CHIEF OF STAFF TO PRIME MINISTER TONY BLAIR

The publication in the U.S. of *Terrorists at the Table: Why Negotiating is the Only Way to Peace* by Jonathan Powell, has sparked debate about whether it really is possible to negotiate with Islamic extremists in the Levant — and what exactly could be negotiated with them.

Blair's former aide acknowledges no one is going to negotiate about the terror group's global caliphate demand, but he argues the extremists may settle for less.

"When it comes to terrorism, governments seem to suffer from a collective amnesia," Powell argues in his book. "Every time we confront a new terrorist group, we begin by insisting we will never talk to them. As [former U.S. vice president] Dick Cheney put it, 'we don't negotiate with evil; we defeat it.' In fact,

history suggests we don't usually defeat them and we nearly always end up talking to them."

Defining terms

Powell's opponents ask what the West could agree to when it comes to IS. Not a global caliphate, but a more limited one, confined to the borders of the territory that the group currently occupies straddling Syria and Iraq?

Should the West be ready to accept the legitimacy of a caliphate in the Levant, deserting current allies and condemning hundreds of thousands of people to the viciousness of millenarian fanatics, much as Neville Chamberlain did in his appeasing search to avoid war with the Nazis?

Powell's argument has received qualified endorsement from Newsweek magazine, which headlined an interview with the 58-year-old Powell earlier this month, titled, "Dear ISIS, We Need to Talk." A line in the article reads, "The insights Powell offers have perhaps never been more relevant."

Critics assert, though, Powell's insistence that governments should always talk to terrorists — including the jihadis of the Islamic State group — will be music to the ears of the Islamic State's leaders. They say negotiating with the group would provide it with legitimacy, something the group's leadership has been eager to secure.

Since Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announcement a year ago of a caliphate straddling Syria and Iraq, the terror group's online English-language propaganda magazine Dabiq has regularly peddled the argument the West's war strategy is futile and in the end there will have to be talks.

Through its social media propaganda outlets, the terror group also has strenuously sought to portray the 'caliphate' as functioning like a 'normal' state — from the claimed minting of currency to the reopening of schools, and from the announcement of a medical school to the refurbishment of the so-called state's very own five-star hotel.

Hostage situation

The IS propagandists have been using one of the group's

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remaining Western hostages, British photojournalist John Cantlie, as a conduit for floating cease-fire ideas.

"At some stage, you're going to have to face the Islamic State as a country, and even consider a truce," he argued in an article last winter, one that is no doubt shaped by his captors. "What's the alternative, launch airstrikes in half-a-dozen countries at once? They'll have to destroy half the region if that's the case."

Building off his experience as a negotiator with Northern Ireland's Irish Republican Army during Blair's term in office, Powell argues, "The terrorist groups we encountered in the past also put forward demands that would never be acceptable.

"No British government was ever going to concede a united Ireland against the wishes of a majority of the people in Northern Ireland," he said. "Once discussions were begun with the

Urging dialogue
Powell cites a long list of terrorists-turned-negotiating-partners to further his argument for dialogue. He mentions Ireland's Eamon de Valera, Israel's Menachem Begin, Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta, and the Cypriot Archbishop Makarios, who was exiled to the Seychelles but then after peace negotiations, reappeared as the first leader of an independent Cyprus.
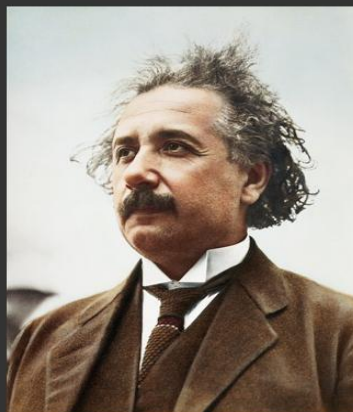
"This is a question of religious radicalism versus nationalism," said Jonathan Schanzer of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, a Washington-based research institution.

"Salafi-jihadi ideology is far less conducive to dialogue and compromise than nationalist ideologies. Moreover, the British government had concessions to give the IRA," he said. "The West has nothing to offer the Islamic State. That complicates Powell's premise considerably."

Powell insists there is "no evidence that religious armed groups are harder to engage than secular ones." He cites past peace agreements with Islamic armed groups, including the Free Aceh Movement in Indonesia and the Moro Islamic

"The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything."
– Albert Einstein

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Irish Republicans, we discovered that they were prepared to settle for something else."

For Michael Rubin, a former Pentagon official and author of *Dancing with the Devil: The Perils of Engaging Rogue Regimes*, Powell's book is a reflection of British officials' tendency to see all terrorism through the prism of Northern Ireland.

"The notion that every problem in Northern Ireland is an increasingly chronic mental disorder among British diplomats and officials," Rubin told VOA. "But, Powell's argument actually takes the cake for self-parody of the naiveté and self-destructiveness of Western diplomatic culture."

He also said, "There's an unfortunate tendency among diplomats and policymakers to allow time to launder the most atrocious regimes."

Liberation Front (MILF) in the Philippines.
Critics note the Free Aceh Movement was more of a separatist-based movement than a jihadi one wanting global domination, and MILF hardliners massacred 44 policemen after a firefight only this January.

In Uganda, years of negotiations with the quasi-religious Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) have proven fruitless.

Negotiations with the tribes and Sunni fellow travelers who have thrown in their lot with the jihadis in Syria and Iraq do hold out the hope of deconstructing the Sunni insurgency underpinning the 'caliphate,' according to some of Powell's opponents. Sunni tribal leaders in Syria and Iraq say Western officials have reached out to them.

The French Jihadist 'Foreign Legion' in Syria and Iraq

By Timothy Holman

Source:http://www.jamestown.org/programs/tm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=44202&tx_ttnews[backPid]=
26&cHash=3dcae98c9bea4f66e46e3a39d10e4eba#.VbPABvk41OA

July 24 – **It is probable that before the end of 2015, more than 1,000 French residents or nationals will have travelled to Syria and Iraq to join one of the various armed groups active in the two countries.** This mobilization dwarfs all prior French jihadist travel to other conflict theaters, which is estimated at approximately 500 individuals (Europe 1, June 28). In response to this unprecedented mobilization, in June 2015, a French parliamentary commission produced its final report on jihadist networks in France. [1] The 500-page report provides an overview of the French foreign fighter mobilization for Syria and Iraq, observations on the resulting terrorist threat to France, recommendations on how the government can mitigate the threat and also provides the following figures:

- The French foreign fighter contingent is the largest from Western Europe, with an estimated 843 French jihadist fighters or supporters having been in either Syria or Iraq since 2012;
- The contingent increased rapidly from 20 persons in Syria in February 2013 to 843 by May 2015;
- The French volunteers are predominantly male (75 percent), although among minors, females are the majority;
- Approximately 20 percent are converts to Islam;
- More than half of the travelers were unknown to the French intelligence services prior to their departures;
- Six regions in France have provided the majority of the foreign fighters: Ile-de-France, Rhone-Alpes, Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur, Languedoc-Roussillon, Nord Pas De Calais and the Midi-Pyrenees;
- French jihadists are believed to be mainly joining the Islamic State and to a lesser extent, Jabhat al-Nusra.

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The French-speaking ISIS fighters show their faces, an indication that they have no intention of coming back to France. (Screengrab courtesy of TRAC)

The French authorities have separately said that by June 2015, an estimated 119 French residents or nationals were believed to have died in either Syria or Iraq (Europe 1, June 28). This means that over the course of the conflict, the total casualty rate has climbed from five percent to 12 percent of the in-country contingent. In other words, a French foreign fighter currently dies on average approximately every three days, compared to every 10 days between September 2013 and September 2014. The coalition airstrikes on the Islamic State since mid-2014 may also have led

to an increase in jihadist returnees from Iraq and Syria—from 150 by August 2014 to 278 by May 2015, of whom 217 have returned to France. However, the number of persons reported to be in transit to Iraq and Syria now stands at some 300 with another 600 individuals interested in leaving France (Europe 1, June 28).

The National Assembly report also found that there was no general profile for a French foreign fighter, and that they came from a mix of religious and cultural origins, including recent converts. This finding is similar to French journalist David Thomson's in-depth account of his interaction with a number of French foreign fighters, arguably the most comprehensive study so far. [2] For instance, some have had educational difficulties, while others had attended university. Many appear to have come from difficult social circumstances, experiencing unemployment and financial problems. Others, however, appear to have held good jobs and been financially stable. In a number of cases, there are prior histories of criminal activity, although these are predominately minor offenses. Some have additionally come from complex family environments with separated parents or absent parents. An example of this diversity is Raphael Amer, a Jewish convert to Islam and reportedly a brilliant student; Amer was a member of the Lunel jihadist cluster and, within the same cluster, had friends with notably lower levels of educational achievement from single parent families (*Libération*, November 18, 2014; *Libération*, February 26).

The motivations of the fighters also appear to depend on the personal circumstances of the fighter, and, to some extent, the point at which they travelled to Syria or Iraq. Motivations and reasons for travel include a mix of political engagement, humanitarian concerns, religious obligations, peer group solidarity, a desire for adventure and finally, some who simply want to fight. A French investigative magistrate has also gone so far as to claim that 90 percent of the foreign fighters are going for reasons linked to wanting to fight, or for adventure, and only a small number are travelling due to adherence to coherent religious beliefs (*Le Telegramme*, June 27).

In terms of reaching the battlefield, French fighters seem to have organized their entry into the conflict zones of Syria and Iraq in a number of ways. An early channel of entry for the

French foreign fighters at the beginning of the conflict was through Tunisia, where they were connected to Tunisian militant networks providing fighters to Iraq. [3] Meanwhile, Iraq war-era networks dating to the mid-2000s were also active; an example of French nationals who traveled via this path are the al-Harzi brothers, both of whom were killed in Iraq and Syria in June 2015 by U.S. military operations (Mediapart, June 27). Tariq al-Harzi (a.k.a. Abu Umar al-Tunisi) may have been the Abu Umar named in Sinjar documents as previously facilitating Egyptian, Libyan and Tunisian foreign fighters through Damascus in 2006 and 2007. [4]

Once the first French volunteers had established themselves in-country, likely by sometime in early 2013, they then organized themselves on social media to facilitate the travel of other interested individuals still in France. An example of an individual involved in this activity is Mourad Fares, a French national who first joined the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (the previous incarnation of the Islamic State) and then moved to Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria. He was later linked to many of the late 2013 and early 2014 departures which including the two minors from Toulouse, a female minor from Avignon, a cluster from Strasbourg and a group from Lyon and Switzerland (*Le Monde*, September 12, 2014; FranceInfo, September 12, 2014; VICE News, February 12, 2014). Fares eventually handed himself over to Turkish authorities and was deported to France (*Le Monde*, September 15, 2014). Despite the efforts of the French authorities to disrupt such loose clusters and micro-networks that are facilitating travel, their decentralized nature and use of social media platforms has meant that the ability for would-be fighters, recruits and volunteers to exchange information and create opportunities for travel remains largely intact (*Le Monde*, April 23, 2014).

Representative of the localized and personalized nature of French jihadist mobilization and travel is the case of Lunel, a small town in southern France with approximately 25,000 inhabitants. From here, a cluster of approximately 20-30 persons, mostly male, but including wives, single females and children, have travelled to Syria and Iraq during the last two years (*Libération*, December 10, 2014). They

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originally joined Jaysh Muhammad, a small hardline jihadist group based around Aleppo in Syria, before moving across to the Islamic State (*Libération*, July 2). The earliest travelers from Lunel left in late 2013 and were joined by others in the summer of 2014. The last traveler may have left as late as mid-2015 (*Midi Libre*, June 5). The first travelers used Facebook contacts with an individual in contact with Mourad Fares to enter Syria (*Libération*, July 2). The cluster is comprised of a core group of friends who met in high school, as well as family members, including brothers and wives (*Libération*, February 1). The group financed their own trips through taking out loans and leasing a BMW, which was sold in Syria (*Paris Match*, October 29, 2014). Accounts of the group suggest no prior engagement in political violence or militant activity, although a number of the cluster participated in an informal religious study group run by an individual who was later arrested in January 2015 (*Libération*, July 2). The group's members range in age from 18- to 44-years-old and include a mix of converts; some had jobs, businesses or were

in tertiary education, while others were unemployed (*Le Parisien*, October 25, 2014). The Lunel micro-network has so far seen seven or eight of its volunteers killed, one while conducting a suicide attack, and at least two return to France, where they were arrested (*Midi Libre*, May 21). In January 2015, the French police arrested five persons alleged to have been involved in aiding the group; two of those arrested were recently returned from Syria, and a third was the brother of two others, who had travelled to Syria and are believed dead (*Libération*, February 1, *Libération*, July 2).

The Lunel cluster remains the subject of debate as to how the individuals came to travel to Syria and Iraq, the role of the local mosque and religion, the impact of unemployment and debates about integration (France24, March 3). This debate reflects broader national discussions about the causes of the large-scale French mobilization, and what, if any, of the solutions recommended in the parliamentary report will actually aid in stemming the growth of would-be travelers to Syria and Iraq.

Notes

1. "La commission d'enquête sur la surveillance des filières et des individus djihadistes, Rapport fait au nom de la commission d'enquête sur la surveillance des filières et des individus djihadistes," (Paris: Assemblée Nationale, June 2, 2015).

2. David Thomson, *Les Français Jihadistes*, (Paris: Les Arenes, 2014).

3. *Ibid*, pg. 167-168.

4. See: https://www.rewardsforjustice.net/english/tariq_al_harzi.html and Felter, Joseph, and Brian Fishman. 2007, "Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: a First Look at the Sinjar Records," Harmony Project, Combating Terrorism Center (US), pg. 23.

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Is ISIL running out of oil?

Source: http://www.aljazeera.com/blogs/middleeast/2015/07/isil-oil-running-150719152330158.html

It has been alleged that the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has made millions in Iraq, smuggling oil from various sites that they control around the country. According to the US, the figures could run into millions of dollars a week.

While it is true that ISIL had control of Iraq's largest oil refinery, Beiji, until recently, it also controls a number of oil wells and continues to exploit them.

When ISIL fighters arrived in June 2014, they found themselves in possession of rich oil wells in Nineveh province, south of Mosul.

This allowed them to establish smuggling operations, following criminal routes long established and join them up with smuggling routes in Syria. A common route came into being.
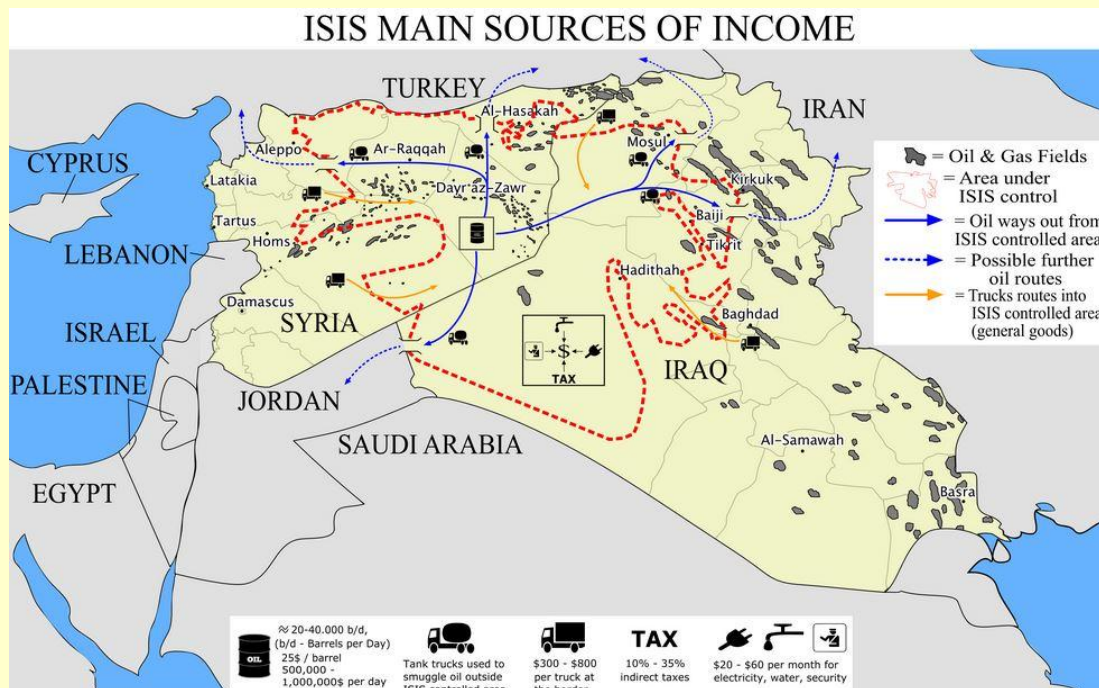
Husham al-Brifkani, the head of the energy committee of Nineveh's provincial council, said: "ISIL would smuggle oil by trucks through Syria and other neighbouring countries.

They would then find willing middlemen who sold to the merchants. They sold around

10,000 barrels a day using this method."
However, it was not just fields near Mosul, but others they exploited as well using the same

Since the beginning of the year, ISIL has also come under a significant pressure in other places, including the north of the country.

ISIS MAIN SOURCES OF INCOME

route.
Iraqi sources inside the country's oil ministry told Al Jazeera on condition of anonymity, because they are not authorised to talk on the subject, that ISIL sold the oil at a huge discount.
"ISIL get around $10 a barrel for the oil that they sell. The merchants won't pay more than that," said one of the sources.
Peshmerga sources also confirmed the routes used. According to them, "the only successful route used by ISIL to smuggle out oil is through Syria. From Mosul on to Raqqa in Syria, then Ayntab [Arabic name for Gazientep city] in Turkey."
But Iraqi security forces have managed to disrupt ISIL oil operations and retaken key sites in Nineveh and Salahuddin province back from ISIL, which has significantly degraded the group's ability to profit from the black gold.
"ISIL used to sell 10,000 barrels a day. We now know that has been reduced to 2,000 barrels a day mainly through the Syria-Turkey route," said Brifkani.

Under pressure
After operations in Tikrit by Iraqi security forces that liberated the city, ISIL oil took a hit once again. More routes into Syria were lost by the group as well as access to middlemen.

There, US-led coalition air strikes, Peshmerga operations and Iraqi security forces have managed to reduce the number of trucks leaving Mosul, which acts as a staging hub for some ISIL oil operations.
Peshmerga sources say that the trucks leaving Mosul are down from hundreds to dozens.
Turkish smugglers, however, remain an issue.
Turkey does not have any natural resources of its own and relies on exports.
The Iraqi Kurdish authority is a key trading partner for the Turks and supplies a lot of oil. But for unscrupulous middlemen, Turkey's desire for oil provides them with an opportunity. When trucks arrive in Turkey, the fuel is dumped into pipelines that service illegal filling stations and legal petrol stations.
Turkey has said it has cracked down on this trade but, according the Iraqi oil ministry sources, it remains a favoured destination.
Syrian oil is also a problem as ISIL face less resistance in that country and so the smuggling continues both within the country and outside it.

Significant success
Reports in the media in recent months suggest that the Syrian government buys oil from

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smugglers from fields outside of their control.

If that is true, it means in effect President Bashar al-Assad is buying oil from ISIL and indirectly funding the war against himself.

Iraq, though, has had significant success in taking down ISIL'S smuggling operation, and this has meant that revenues for the group from oil have dropped to a level not seen before.

> **However, even conservative estimates suggest that the trade could still be worth $250,000 a day.**

Iraq has also used legal means to try and stop individuals trading oil with ISIL by introducing charges under the country's anti-terrorism laws some of which carry the death sentence.

As long as there is demand for oil and a supplier, though - ISIL or otherwise - there will be a buyer.

For now the only consolation Iraq has is that ISIL's access to oil is being cut off, a fact that might not make the group immediately weak due to their taxation and other sources of revenue, but will in the long term have an effect.

Female Pirates: Not a Myth

The history of piracy is full of clichés. Thanks to classics like *Treasure Island* and blockbusters like *Pirates of the Caribbean*, the word "pirate" still conjures the image of a rugged British man

with an eye patch, a parrot and a horrid accent. Yet **the world's most successful buccaneer might have been Chinese — and a woman. Ching Shih — also known as Cheng I Sao — instilled fear in the hearts of merchants across the China Sea in the early 19th century.** During her relatively short run as a pirate lord — only about a decade — this ruthless and cunning woman went from being a

prostitute to commanding the famous "Red Flag Fleet" and sending hundreds of thousands of men into battle.

She was a prostitute in one of Canton's floating brothels when pirates captured her at age 26. To her surprise, she was asked to marry one of them, Cheng Ch'i, who belonged to a long and famous dynasty of sea thieves. From then onwards, they were partners in bed and business. With her help, Cheng Ch'i managed to assemble one of the largest and most dangerous fleets in China.

But only six years later, Cheng Ch'i died in a typhoon and his wife Ching Shih skillfully maneuvered to replace him. The mourning widow rushed to secure the support of her late-husband's family and chose his protégé, 21-year-old Chang Pao, as her lieutenant, right hand and lover.

Ching Shih was strict and controlling, requiring written application to her for all kinds of actions. She issued her own code of laws and enforced them severely. Crewmembers were not allowed to steal from the loot or the villagers — at risk of losing their heads — and female captives were to be released. At least the unattractive ones; if they were beautiful, they could be kept as concubines or wives. But pirates had to be faithful to their spouses and those who raped or hit female prisoners without permission were sentenced to death.

Following the great tradition of the Empress Wu Zetian, who ruled China from 690 to 705, Ching Shih was ruthless. Her goal was profit and anyone who defied her direct

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orders or tried to impose their own were beheaded on the spot. She was also notorious for chopping off the ears of her enemies or those who tried to desert her fleet. And, despite her experience as a prostitute, she owned a vast and lucrative chain of brothels.

The queen of the pirates had a child, opened a brothel and lived a comfortable life until she died, aged 69, a wealthy aristocrat.

The Qing emperor, Jiaqing, raised a large fleet of ships against her to no avail. After several failed attempts, the Chinese navy enlisted Portuguese, British and Dutch ships for help. But even they could not sink the Red Flag Fleet.

In 1810, the Emperor finally capitulated and offered her and most of her followers amnesty in exchange for abandoning their bloody trade. For Ching Shih, the timing was perfect, as serious internal differences over spoils and women had already started splintering her organization. She signed a treaty agreeing to dismantle her fleet in exchange for freedom and the right to keep their loot. She even received the noble title of "Lady by Imperial Decree."

After marrying Chang Pao, who joined the Chinese navy as a captain, she went on to retire at the ripe age of 35. The queen of the pirates then had a child, opened a brothel and lived a comfortable life until she died, aged 69, a wealthy aristocrat. Her name has been largely forgotten, but her infamous legacy still lives today on the pirate-infested waters of the South China Sea.

At the height of her success, Ching Shih's pirate armada boasted 1,600 ships, and she commanded more than 70,000 male and female pirates, spies and suppliers. Her sphere of influence stretched from the waters of the South China Sea through much of Guangdong Province and she even had spies working within the ruling Qing Dynasty.

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Tunisia parliament approves death penalty for terrorism charges after Islamic State attacks

Source: http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-07-26/tunisia-parliament-approves-anti-terror-law-after-islamic-state/6648418

July 26 – Tunisia's parliament has overwhelmingly approved legislation allowing the death penalty for those convicted on terrorism charges after Islamist militant attacks that killed dozens of foreign visitors in the past few months.

Last month, a gunman killed 39 tourists, most of them British, in the Tunisian seaside city of Sousse.

In March, two gunmen killed 21 foreign tourists and a policeman at Tunis's Bardo Museum. Both attacks were claimed by Islamic State militants.

MPs approved the bill by an overwhelming margin after three days of debate in what parliament speaker Mohamed Ennaceur called an "extraordinary effort" to make the North African country a safer place.

Human Rights Watch had criticised the bill, which also eases arrests of suspects, saying it "would open the way to prosecuting political dissent as terrorism, give judges overly broad powers, and curtail lawyers' ability to provide an effective defence".

Tunisia has undergone a largely peaceful transition to democracy since its 2011 popular uprising. But its army has been fighting a rise in Islamist militancy.

Tunisia is especially concerned about militants entering from adjacent Libya, where IS has established a toehold amid chaos caused by two rival governments battling for control, leaving a security vacuum. Tunisia said it has started building a wall and trench along the insecure 168 kilometre of its frontier with Libya.

The Sousse gunman obtained training with militants in Libya before carrying out his attack.
On Thursday, security forces killed an Islamist militant and arrested 13 in a security operation in the northern state of Bizerte, the interior ministry said.
Three more were arrested during raids on homes of suspected militants on Friday.

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> **EDITOR'S COMMENT:** Terror – Terrorists – Freedom fighters – innocent victims – Human Rights Watch: a very complicated puzzle!

After shooting, some wonder if movie theaters need more security

Source: http://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/shooting-renews-debate-on-cinema-security/

July 22 – Melissa Holt took in "Minions" at the ArcLight Cinemas in Hollywood on Friday with little worry about her safety.

But the day after the deadly shooting at a movie theater in Lafayette, La., Holt said she'd be OK with additional security measures at theaters.

"If that's something they need to keep people safe, they should do it," said Holt, 42, a cinematographer. "I could see how you could sneak in with guns."

John Russell Houser, a 59-year-old drifter, opened fire at Lafayette's Grand Theatre on Thursday night, slaying two people and injuring nine others before killing himself, according to authorities.

The shootings renewed the debate on security that began three years ago when a gunman killed 12 people and wounded 70 in a movie theater in Aurora, Colo.

Increasing security at the nation's 5,000 theaters would be expensive. Walk-through metal detectors, for example, can cost about $5,000. In addition to the price of such devices, security systems require training personnel and paying their wages.

Maintaining a strong security installation at a multiplex could cost between $250,000 and $1 million a year, according to security consultant Michael Dorn. Such a system would include metal detectors, X-

ray machines, workers to operate those devices and additional armed security.

"There's a difference between having a metal detector at the door and actually having

effective screening," said Dorn, executive director of Safe Havens International, a nonprofit security-consulting firm that works with schools and other facilities. "My fear is that we may see theaters throw in metal detectors without proper utilization."

Representatives of the major theater chains did not respond to requests for comment.

Any changes that threaten to make the moviegoing experience less smooth would probably meet industry resistance.

The theater business has seesawed in recent years, with box-office receipts eroded by new entertainment platforms. Consumers are increasingly staying home, enjoying video-on-demand and home-entertainment technology that has made watching movies from the living room an immersive experience.

The total domestic box-office take fell 5 percent last year, to about $10.3 billion. This year, however, blockbusters such as "Furious 7," "Avengers: Age of Ultron" and "Jurassic World" have lured audiences back into theaters.

"Audiences today understand that in the world we live in, safety is a high priority," said Paul Dergarabedian, a senior media analyst at Rentrak. "But to suddenly put a metal detector

in every theater — I don't know if that is an overreaction or the appropriate response. It's a conundrum of major proportions."

The Lafayette shooting occurred during a showing of "Trainwreck," a comedy in its second week of release.

After the Aurora shooting, the National Association of Theater Owners worked with the Homeland Security Department to increase security at multiplexes.

Theaters were given simple directions, such as to ensure that emergency plans were up to date and sensitive areas were properly secured. But, outwardly, not much has changed since then.

Most cinemas in the U.S. don't have metal detectors or extensive security checks, and moviegoers can still wander around the multiplex without fear of raising suspicion from employees.

Theater security could also be affected by litigation filed after the Aurora shooting.

Twenty lawsuits representing 40 Aurora victims or their family members have been filed against Cinemark, the owner of the theater where the attack occurred. The cases were consolidated, and a civil trial is scheduled to begin in July 2016.

Attorney Christina Habas, who represents 18 victims and families, said the Louisiana shooting should force people to think about "how vulnerable they are when they attend a movie."

Some moviegoers aren't so sure more security is necessary.

"I'm not worried," said Hector Carias, 37, who took in a Friday

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morning showing of the superhero picture "Ant-Man" at the ArcLight. "I don't really think I'd want additional security measures. That would change our way of life. Bad things and crimes are going to happen, but we can't let them change our American way of life."
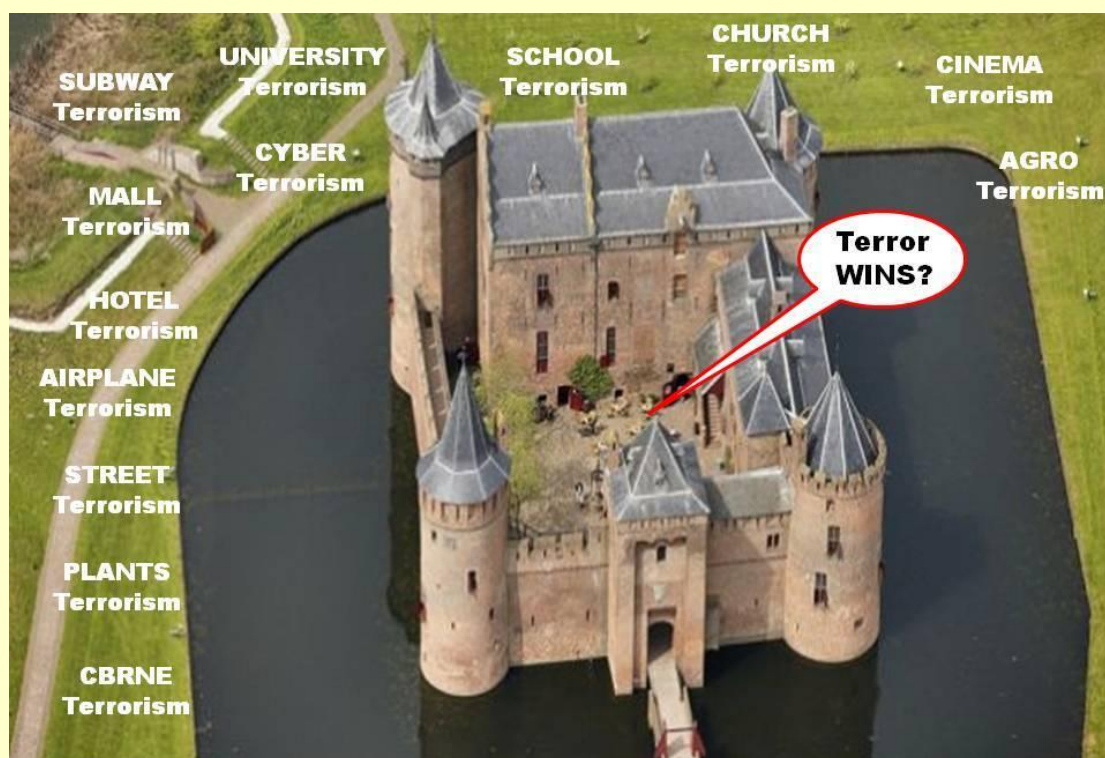
For moviegoers who don't want intrusive safety protocols, more security could make visiting a movie theater an enervating process. Although people are already accustomed to passing through metal detectors or other screening devices at airports and sports arenas, Dorn said, the nature of visiting a theater could make their use impractical.

"At places like a theater, you get large surges of people in groups," he said. "It's not a steady flow, like an airport. Say you get several hundred people showing up in a 30-minute window. Patrons are going to have to wait 15 to 30 minutes."

Whether or not tougher security measures are mandated, Habas said, the threat of violence in a movie theater clearly remains.

"I am certain that everyone who was in that theater in Aurora was hoping that was the last time it happened," Habas said. "They are heartbroken for the folks in Lafayette."

Editor's Comment

Sweden's 3rd largest city hit by multiple blasts, police plead for help to tackle violence spike

Source: https://www.rt.com/news/310757-sweden-malmo-blasts-crime/

July 27 – **Four grenade attacks this week have rocked Malmo, the third largest city in Sweden, prompting police to sound an alarm over the increasing violence.** Multiple explosions, shootings and arson struck the city, which has a large migrant population.

On Sunday, the southern Swedish city of Malmo saw the fourth grenade attack in under a week as the a hand grenade was detonated in a car park in the district of Värnhem in the morning, local media reported.

The attack came after a blast on Friday in the Solbacken neighborhood, which occurred less than 12 hours after another explosion in the residential area of Limhamn in the

west, and two days after a car bomb attack that injured a man outside a community center in the south.

"It is the thirtieth explosive attack since the New Year. We have a situation that is serious," said the Malmö police chief, Stefan Sintéus, about the explosion on Friday, as quoted by the Local.se on Saturday.

The local police have called for expert help

from the national police operational department. *"We have asked for shared expertise on various issues,"* said Lars Förstell, a spokesperson for the city's police, as quoted by the media.

This week's unrest continues a series of numerous shootings, explosions and arsons that have occurred since the beginning of the year in Malmo, infamous for high crime rates, multi-ethnic and gang-related violence.

Since the beginning of 2015, 18 explosions rocked the city prompting the Swedish police's national bomb squad (NSB) to be called in. Over the whole 2014 a total of 25 explosions took place which shows a significant increase, Goran Mansson, head of NSB Malmo, told regional newspaper Sydsvenskan on Friday.

Police said they believe this week's explosions are linked with the court sentencing of three young men on July 10 for their roles in the Christmas Eve bombing in Rosengard – the city district which has been dubbed by media as Sweden's *"most notorious refugee ghetto."*

The Financial Times reported that nine out of 10 in Rosengard have a foreign background. Following the spike in violence in the neighborhood in June, police announced that they would step up their presence in known trouble-hit areas such as Rosengard and Seved.

Rosengard, a district in Malmo, was built in the 1960s and has long been associated with immigrants. Over 80 percent of residents there are immigrants, hailing from the Middle East, Africa and Eastern Europe. Only 38 percent of residents in the district are employed, according to the Economist, prompting restive youth to take to rioting and crime. Local authorities maintain they have already managed to revamp Rosengard's image.

"Many visible and physical changes are taking place, and residents are getting involved through participatory processes to bring about ecological, social and economically sustainable development."

Forstell told RT that there are 30 to 40 people with criminal background and weapons in the city. He explained that criminal activity is connected with internal conflicts between different gangs or ethnic groups.

"Some of these people are involved in selling drugs and some of them are in other kinds of economic relations with each other and are not happy with the way things work out. It's more of a business-like conflict," he said.

According to statistics provided by local authorities, 31 percent of the city's 300,000 population were born abroad and nearly 41 percent of the residents have a foreign background. The main countries from which immigration takes place are ones which have been recently plagued by conflicts – migrant groups from Iraq, Syria, the former Yugoslavia and Somalia are among them. The data also says that the Muslim population constitutes about 20 percent of Malmo's population; this is one of the most significant percentages in Scandinavian cities.

Adrian Groglopo, professor of social science at the University of Gothenburg said that the conflicts are fueled by racial and economic tensions.

"People growing up in different areas segregated racially and economically are trying to keep their own business, protect their own areas and sometimes create a very violent climate," he told RT.

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Malmo is a rather young city and its population is mostly young as well, with almost half under

the age of 35, according to local authorities.
 In March, a secondary school Varner Ryden in Malmo's Rosengard had to close due to increasing tensions between students that resulted in violence. "*Fighting among the students means that security can't be guaranteed,*" said Catharina Niwhede at the

National Union of Teachers in Malmo to the local Sydsvenskan daily. A nearby Ortagard school closed last autumn as well.
Groglopo believes that the young population is being hit the hardest by the *"racism and segregation in Sweden."*
"We have living conditions which are not good for the youth, that's one of the problems," he explains. He also pointed to the problem of unemployment in Sweden which is *"about 8-9 percent and for young people it's about 25 percent."* He stressed that one of the main problems is ethnic discrimination in the labor market as most of the unemployed are *"not Swedes."*

"In the last 15 years the gap between the rich and the poor has grown enormously and of course it has racial connotations – you find very rich people that are white people and the poor people are non-white people," he added.
He urged the Swedish government to implement political measures for non-discrimination. There have been controversial incidents involving security forces and refugees, among which was the February case at the Malmo train station. The incident involved a refugee child reciting an Islamic prayer and a law enforcement officer who pushed the child onto the ground, sat on him holding his hands over his mouth. A further child watching the altercation was detained by the other guard.
Though the actions of the guards caused a nationwide stir, in April the prosecutors said that they will not be charged.

"Sweden is going through political period very complex and bad," Groglopo said. *"We [are witnessing] a raise of fascism and Nazism in Sweden…they are getting political power."* Two major polls (by YouGov for Sweden's Metro newspaper and Novus) conducted in June showed that the far-right anti-immigration party 'Sweden Democrats' has the support of about 20 percent of Swedish voters.
Meanwhile, according to figures from the EU's statistics watchdog, Eurostat,

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issued in May, Sweden has been taking in a larger share of asylum

seekers than any other EU state compared to its existing population size. Sweden's population is about 9.6 million while in 2014

Terrorism in Sweden

Source: http://www.sakerhetspolisen.se

Terrorist-related activities in Sweden are primarily carried out by those who are motivated by Islamist extremism and such activities most often serve to support terrorist offences in conflict zones such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen and Syria.
Several people are also known to have travelled from Sweden to conflict zones to engage in terrorist training or other unlawful acts of violence. There are a number of individuals who are supporting or financing terrorist offences in other countries and doing so from Sweden. Sweden is obligated under international law to counter such terrorist offences. Facilitating terrorism abroad also includes the recruitment of new followers in Sweden.

Threat assessment
There are a number of factors assessed as having the potential, in the near future, to affect the present threat. The most significant of these are:
The attention given to perceived insults to Islam and the presence of foreign troops in Muslim countries.
An increasingly important driving factor for terrorists is perceived insults to Islam. In addition, perceived military aggressions against Muslim countries are likely a motivating factor.

Dynamics of terrorist networks in Sweden
Many of those who have been most active in the recent past are of a younger generation, where there are individuals who show an interest in travelling abroad to join armed groups and many of these act almost entirely on their own initiative.

Attacks carried out by lone attackers and/or encouragement of small-scale attacks
In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of cases in which attacks have been carried out in Europe by individuals lacking links to established terrorist networks and who are previously unknown to security and intelligence services. The concept of "lone

asylum was granted to more than 33,000 refugees, the report said.

wolves" is not new and has been observed in various ideological contexts for many years. On a global basis however, al-Qaeda has increasingly encouraged individuals acting on their own to carry out attacks using simple means.

New arenas for Islamist-motivated terrorism
International terrorist networks are affected by global political developments, and the events of the so-called Arab Spring have opened up a new opportunity for terrorists to operate in certain countries where this had been hardly possible to that point. It is probable that the countries experiencing temporary instability now present new arenas for Islamist-motivated terrorism. This in turn is assessed to have an impact on those in Sweden who engage in activities linked to terrorism in these countries, for example in financing and travelling to join terrorist groups.

Cooperation between al-Qaeda-inspired terrorist networks
Followers in Sweden are affected by changes to and between international terrorist networks, including changes in leadership, cooperation, and alliances, as well as mergers of various networks. The Security Service currently assesses it as likely that al-Qaeda-inspired ideology will continue to inspire violence-promoting Islamist networks in the coming year.
The majority of violence-promoting individuals do not act upon their violence-promoting ideology. Our challenge lies in finding the few individuals who are prepared to do so.
Great resources and time are needed for our counter-terrorism efforts – it takes just as long to rule out a threat as it does to confirm it.

Al-Qaeda
Al-Qaeda in this context refers to followers, in Sweden or with links to Sweden, of al-Qaeda and its global violent fight against perceived enemies of Islam. Depending on their

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specific ethnic backgrounds, there may be a greater interest in certain countries and the fight carried out by like-minded in these countries, either against what they view as non-legitimate Muslim regimes or Western occupation and dominance. What holds together al-Qaeda however is the idea of a global struggle and the idea that attacks on targets outside traditional Muslim territory (for example in Europe) are legitimate.

Sweden as a potential attack target

The terrorist threat to Swedish interests stems mainly from violence-promoting Islamism, or so-called al-Qaeda-inspired groups. Since the autumn of 2010, intent has been displayed in a number of Swedish cases to carry out attacks against Sweden or Denmark.

The justification used for these threats is primarily perceived insults to Islam and secondarily the presence of Swedish and other foreign troops in Afghanistan. These few cases in which there was intent to attack targets in Sweden reflect a broader ideological change in which al-Qaeda-promoting ideologues based abroad have been pointing out Swedish targets as valid since 2007. This change gives cause for concern.

In spite of this change, the Security Service does not assess there to be any growth in violence-promoting Islamist circles in Sweden. Most of those involved are not planning attacks in Sweden, but are supporting terrorism through recruiting activities, financing and travel facilitation. Recruitment, radicalisation and financing often occur via social contacts and may also take place through lectures and propaganda activities e.g. on the Internet. However certain forces, such as family members and congregations, are actively attempting to counter such recruitment.

International experience shows that the majority of large-scale attacks are planned by networks previously known to security services. For this reason, large-scale attacks are often detected already in the planning stages. In the last few years however there have been several instances of attackers acting on their own. Lone attackers are a significant potential threat. Their actions may have a variety of driving forces. Although "lone wolves" are difficult to detect, traces of their opinions and preparations are often left behind. It is, however, relatively difficult for them to amass

sufficient capability due to their lack of network support. In order to detect such attackers, we are especially dependent on the public's willingness to contribute information.

Furthermore, it cannot be ruled out that groups and individuals with ideologies other than violence-promoting Islamism could also carry out terrorist attacks in Sweden, and it is therefore necessary to remain abreast of and monitor other important trends. Facilitation in Sweden of terrorism abroad is not limited to violence-promoting Islamist groups and individuals. There are other groups (e.g. the PKK) that carry out extensive terrorist facilitation activities, such as recruiting and financing, from Sweden.

Prevention is crucial

An open approach to contact and dialogue is important to our preventative efforts. Not only is receiving information from the public crucial, it is equally important to liaise with other government agencies as this helps us to identify and counter criminal networks.

We also have a role to play in the public debate, as highlighting issues for discussion is an effective counter-terrorism tactic.

There are presently individuals in Sweden who support terrorism in various parts of the world. There are also individuals who travel abroad to engage in terrorist training or other unlawful acts of violence. Our Service therefore works to prevent Sweden from being used as a base for recruitment, logistic support, financing or planning of attacks, and to prevent Swedes from becoming involved in terrorism abroad.

We also work with the Migration Board to prevent foreign nationals associated with terrorist networks from entering Sweden or gaining residency or citizenship in our country.

National and international cooperation

The Swedish Security Service works with other intelligence agencies in Sweden. However, as terrorism is a transnational phenomenon, there is also comprehensive international cooperation in this area, enabling countries to share information with each other in order to prevent future terrorist attacks.

National cooperation
The Swedish Security Service works with other intelligence agencies in Sweden, such as the

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Military Intelligence and Security Directorate (MUST) and the National Defence Radio Establishment (FRA). We also work with the Migration Board and local police authorities. This cooperation mainly involves the exchange of information, so as to prevent terrorist attacks against Sweden and Swedish interests.

During, or after, a terrorist attack we may need support from other authorities. In the event that Sweden should be the target of an extensive terrorist attack, and because our own resources are limited, local police authorities will assist us in the ensuing investigation.

The Counter-Terrorism Co-operative Council, which is made up of fourteen government agencies, aims to strengthen Sweden's ability to counter terrorism.

International cooperation

There are a number of international conventions on combating terrorism. Sweden has signed approximately 20 of these and is therefore bound to provide assistance, mainly in the form of information, in case of any terrorism-related incidents. Such information may e.g. concern Swedish nationals suspected of terrorism abroad or foreign nationals, suspected of terrorism, who are in Sweden.

Cooperation with other services

The ability to prevent terrorist crimes depends on extensive and close international contacts. Bilateral relations, in this context the cooperation between the security and intelligence services of various countries, form the basis of our international cooperation. These relations develop over time and are based on mutual confidence.

The Security Service represents Sweden in multinational bodies

The Service represents Sweden in a number of multinational bodies made up of the security services and police organisations of various countries. We participate e.g. in the Counter-Terrorist Group (CTG), the EU Terrorism Working Group (TWG), the Police Working Group on Terrorism (PWGT) and Europol.

The Counter-Terrorism Co-operative Council

The Security Service is the convener of the Counter-Terrorism Cooperation Council, which works to increase Sweden's ability to counter terrorism. The Counter-Terrorism Cooperation Council consists of:

- The Armed Forces
- The Civil Contingencies Agency
- The Coast Guard
- Customs
- The Defence Research Agency
- The Economic Crime Authority
- The Migration Board
- The National Bureau of Investigation
- The National Defence Radio Establishment
- The Prison and Probation Service
- The Prosecution Authority
- The Radiation Safety Authority
- The Security Service
- The Transport Agency

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Over 10,000 Finns rally in support of multiculturalism

Source: http://www.cpbnews.com/news/over-10-000-finns-rally-in-support-of-multiculturalism-80150/

Over ten thousand people rallied in Helsinki Tuesday to support multiculturalism and protest recent controversial statements by a populist legislator, police said.

"My conservative estimate is that there are well over 10,000 people now, and more keep coming all the time. Thus far everything has gone peacefully," chief officer Tuomo Tuohimaa of Helsinki police told AFP.

The rapidly organised protest came after a parliamentarian from the populist Finns Party, Olli Immonen, launched a Facebook campaign last weekend call for a "fight against the nightmare of multiculturalism."

The Finns Party is one of the three parties in the current coalition governing the country.

Several top politicians, including the prime minister and the president, expressed support for the rally dubbed "We have a dream."

"I wish to remind that the Finnish way of life has always encompassed giving room for diversity and different customs," Finnish President Sauli Niinisto said in a statement read to the crowd at the event.

Prime Minister Juha Sipila also issued a statement congratulating people "campaigning for a multicultural Finland," and adding "people of foreign origin have significantly enriched our culture and business life."

Several top artists performed at the Helsinki event, while similar but smaller demonstrations took place in Tampere and other towns in Finland.

Calls for Immonen to resign from parliament arose over the weekend, but Finns Party leader Timo Soini said the matter will be brought up before his parliamentary group after the vacation period.

"This is not good for the party's reputation," Soini admitted in an interview with the tabloid Ilta-Sanomat, after initially refusing to comment on the incident.

The party chair said he believed that the timing of Immonen's statement was a coincidence in coming two days after the anniversary of Norway's Utoya massacre. On July 22, 2011 far-right militant Anders Behring Breivik killed 77 people he reviled for allegedly embracing multiculturalism.

His appeal was not the first time Immonen sparked controversy, after he posed with members of a neo-Nazi group in June.

The Finns Party was long known for its anti-immigration stance that helped it gain a foothold among voters. In recent years, however, it has shifted the focus of its message to euroscepticism.

Read also:

Muslim Immigration Transforms Finland
Source: http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/2075/finland-muslim-immigration

Deradicalisation 'practically impossible': Counter-terrorism expert warns against reforming radicals

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Source: http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-07-28/counter-terrorism-expert-warns-against-deradicalisation-programs/6652354

Professor Boaz Ganor (centre) believes prevention is more effective than deradicalisation. (ABC News: Danuta Kozaki)

A leading international counter-terrorism expert from Israel has issued a warning to Australia about the success rate of deradicalisation programs.
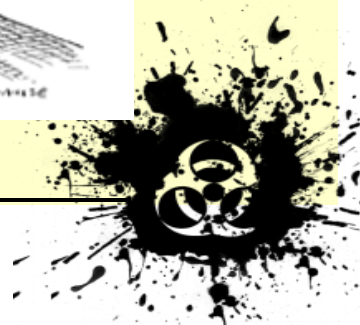
Professor Boaz Ganor, from the International Policy Institute for Counter Terrorism, has told a meeting in Sydney only a minority of deradicalisation cases work.

"I don't believe in deradicalisation in general terms because once those people have been radicalised, it is practically impossible to uproot those ideas in their heads," he said.

"However, I'm a great believer in prevention. A lot can be done in the education and religious systems to prevent those people who might be intrigued."

Professor Ganor was speaking at a forum organised by the New South Wales

Parliamentary Friends of Israel and the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies.

NSW Opposition frontbencher and deputy chairman of the parliamentary group Walt Secord said it was the difficult job of legislators to understand what programs work.

"I don't know what the answer is," he said.

"What do we do as legislators? Do we strip citizenship for foreign nationals if they fight for listed terrorist groups?

"Which programs work? It's an issue jurisdictions around the world are grappling with."

Professor Ganor said prevention was the key.

"We need to understand how terrorist groups such as Islamic State are recruiting young men and women," he said.

He said violent computer games might be fuelling some young people's desire for a so-called 'adrenaline' rush.

"Being offered by representatives of ISIS to do those barbaric things in real life — the adrenaline works.," Professor Ganor said.

Mr Secord said as legislators, one of the most important challenges is weighing up the advice of police, intelligence services and academic experts to deal with the issue of terrorism.

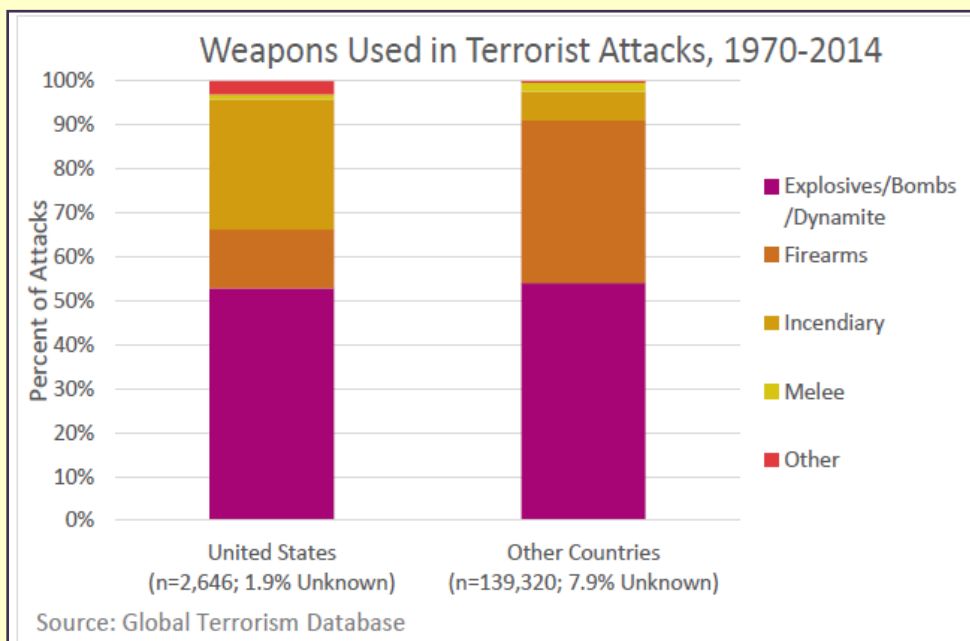"Australia is touched by Islamic extremism and terrorism — in this sense we are not an island," he said.

Use of Firearms in Terrorist Attacks the United States 1970-2014

Source:http://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_FirearmsinTerrorism_BackgroundReport_July2015.pdf?
utm_source=START+Announce&utm_campaign=dbaa46026f-
START_Newsletter_July2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a60ca8c769-dbaa46026f-14081393

Gun violence in the United States and abroad remains a topic of discussion among the general public, government and law enforcement community. To better understand how firearms have been used in terrorist attacks, START examined the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and compiled this report. The analysis within this report pertains only to attacks that meet the GTD's inclusion criteria and definition of terrorism: the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious or social goal through fear, coercion or intimidation.

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Weapons used in terrorist atacks

Between 1970 and 2014, more than half of all terrorist attacks in the United States involved explosives as the primary weapon. This is consistent with the use of explosives in terrorist attacks in other countries.

Also between 1970 and 2014, 346 terrorist attacks in the United States and Puerto Rico involved firearms as the primary weapon. At 13 percent of all attacks for which the weapon type is known, this is approximately one-third as common as firearm usage in terrorist attacks in the rest of the world, where 37 percent of attacks involved firearms as the primary weapon.

In contrast, the use of incendiary weapons, such as arson or Molotov cocktails was much more common

Source: Global Terrorism Database

in the United States. These were the primary weapons in 30 percent of terrorist attacks in the United States, compared to 7 percent of terrorist attacks in other countries.

▶ **Read the full paper at source's URL**.

Who must be killed to beat ISIS and al Qaeda?

Source: http://edition.cnn.com/2015/07/27/world/terror-leadership-decapitation-lister/

Every other week, it seems, U.S. officials disclose that another "key" terror commander has been eliminated -- in Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Afghanistan, etc.
The list this month includes Muhsin al Fadhli, leader of the Khorasan Group -- an al Qaeda offshoot in Syria -- and Abu Khalil al-Sudani, a senior figure in al Qaeda in Afghanistan.
And yet progress in degrading (let alone eradicating) groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), al Qaeda, Al-Shabaab and the Taliban is fiendishly difficult to measure.
Is there a key leader whose demise would deal a hammer blow? Does so-called "leadership decapitation" even work as a strategy? Or do Western counterterrorism agencies face an indefinite process of crossing names from a never-diminishing list? Are there just too many groups in too many places to combat as we witness the emergence of a new generation of terrorist leaders whose significance is yet to be grasped?

▶ **Read the rest of the article at source's URL**.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: What if we rephrase the question to: "Who ISIS and al Qaeda must kill to be beaten?" Think of that!

Are Mumbai's police stations terrorist-proof?

Source: http://www.mid-day.com/articles/are-mumbais-police-stations-terrorist-proof/16404163

July 28 – In the wake of yesterday's terrorist attack in Punjab's Gurdaspur district, wherein armed terrorists seized control of a local police complex, mid-day visited a few police stations across Mumbai to check their preparedness, and even sought opinions from retired top cops about how to secure police stations from such attacks

In July 2014, intelligence agencies issued an alert to all police stations across the state to take extra precaution to keep their police stations and surrounding areas clear after a low intensity blast occurred inside the parking lot located outside Faraskhana police station, Pune.

Marine Drive police station

A year later, police sources claimed that while the superiors initially took keen interest in securing police stations by deploying two constables in 12-hour shifts to keep an eye on the activity around the police stations, the enthusiasm waned with passing time.

Colaba police station

A high-ranking officer, requesting anonymity, said, "After we received the input, two constables were deployed to secure the police station. These officers worked in two shifts. As there was no further development on the alerts issued, the security was called off."

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Borivli police station. Pics/Nimesh Dave, Shadab Khan

Commenting on the issue, Mumbai police spokesperson DCP (Detection) Dhananjay Kulkarni said, "We still have constables deployed at all the police stations across Mumbai. However, after the Punjab attack, we have taken extra precautions in securing our police stations by deploying extra staff." He even claimed that all the sensitive locations across Mumbai have been secured.

"There are around 200 sensitive locations in the city and after yesterday's (Punjab) attack, major cities like Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur, among others, have been put on high alert. All the sensitive locations in the city have been secured by deploying extra police personnel and increasing security checkpoints," Kulkarni added.

Be alert, say top cops

Speaking to mid-day, a few of the retired top-cops alleged that the miniscule budget and manpower crunch were the biggest hurdles before the department, forcing it to limit its response to intelligence inputs.

Former police top cop Y C Pawar said, "Budgets is the main issue. In addition, we lack adequate manpower to act on every intelligence alert. I feel that if every police officer pays attention to the happenings within his jurisdiction, then problems like these can be dealt with more effectively."

Retired police commissioner Julio Ribeiro, who also served as Director General of Punjab police during the state's worst years of terrorism, claimed that intelligence alerts keep

coming in and one of the better ways of dealing with them was to have additional manpower handy. "Alertness should be followed like a religion, by the cops and general public. If citizens are alert enough, there is no need to waste manpower," said former police commissioner Satyapal Singh, who is now a BJP MP from Baghpath, UP.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: What a silly question to ask! No police station is terrorist-proof world-wide! But the thing is not to avoid an attack but to be able to fight back! The element of surprise can not be countered and if a human alarm mechanism successfully activated just seconds before the attack (second perimeter surveillance network) then police officers can return fires from secure bullet proof posts. This is a globally neglected issue and should be addressed as soon as possible. Budget will be spent only once but what is missing is planning. It seems that we are short of brain work – again worldwide! No comments for police stations in pictures…

How the EU is Using Covert Intelligence Systems to Combat ISIS

By Dr. Pamela Collins

Source: http://www.hstoday.us/industry-news/general/single-article/special-how-the-eu-is-using-covert-intelligence-systems-to-combat-isis/a23c0be2302ebc872c61deb02a709017.html

July 27 – With the growing number of European Union (EU) citizens fighting alongside jihadist groups in Syria and Iraq, the number of fighters returning home, potentially radicalized, is posing a clear threat to the security of many European nations.

In order to increase security to protect against ISIS, the EU is intensifying covert intelligence systems that will track the locations of potential terrorists and returning foreign fighters. Despite the concern over privacy, this is an essential step the EU is taking to protect their citizens from radicalized ISIS fighters that can penetrate their borders.

To illustrate the depths of the problem, Charlotte McDonald-Gibson pointed out in the *TIME* report, *How ISIS Threatens Europe*, that, "EUROPOL's intelligence suggests that at least 5,000 EU citizens are either fighting alongside jihadist groups in Syria and Iraq right now. Evidence suggests ISIS is focusing their recruitment efforts on EU individuals who can use their passports to travel across the continent undetected due to the open borders policy.

Editor's note: *Homeland Security Today* has repeatedly reported for years that jihadist organizations like ISIS have aggressively sought to recruit "Westerner" jihadists not on the radars of any intelligence service who are able to travel freely throughout the West. Read the *Homeland Security Today* report, *Migration of Radicalized European Muslims to Syria to Engage in Jihad Widespread Problem, Study Shows*.

For the EU, the concern is that these young men and women will most likely return home radicalized and commit acts of terrorism. To understand the possible magnitude of this problem and the potential growth of the recruits, the total population of 28 EU countries is approximately 500 million, while the Muslim population is estimated at 20 million. ISIS has a large recruitment pool that it could potentially target, and the EU needs to find a way to limit the amount of citizens who become radicalized. The recent arrests and convictions across Europe, including Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK, further highlight the immediacy of the problem. In all of these instances, the arrests involved citizens who had traveled to Syria to participate in the ongoing civil wars. For example, in 2013, the UK police arrested two British citizens who were of Pakistani origin suspected of participating in Syrian training camps. Arrests were also made in France, Italy and Spain which were all related to Internet activity that involved the publication of terrorist propaganda and bomb-making instructions.

There have also been attacks such as the recent events in Belgium, where an attack was carried out by a EU citizen returning from Syria. The attacker, Mehdi Nemmouche, opened fire in a Jewish museum in Brussels, killing four people. This followed an earlier incident where police killed two young Belgian men when they raided a house to disrupt a plot to attack police officers in Belgian cities.

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In 2013 alone, 152 terrorist attacks were carried out in five EU member states. The majority took place in France, Spain and the UK. The total number of attacks for 2011, 2012 and 2013 were 545. While the number of attacks using bombs decreased from 91 in 2012 to 31 in 2013, the number of attacks using firearms has remained constant. The majority of these attacks targeted the business sector and private properties, as noted in the *2014 EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report*. These incidents affirm that the ISIS threat is real. Fortunately, the EU is taking these threats seriously through a number of techniques and strategies that appear to be successful. For example, in 2013 a number of EU member states arrested 535 individuals for terrorism-related offenses.

Again, most of these arrests occurred in France, Spain and the UK. Some of the measures adopted and implemented in the EU to identify and stop ISIS recruits include efforts to limit the recruitment of European jihadists, impede the recruit's travel to Syria and Iraq and place those who return home from Syria and Iraq under close surveillance.

Editor's note: Days after Elton Simpson and Nadir Soofi, two radicalized Muslims and Phoenix, Arizona roommates carried out a jihad attack on a civic center in Garland, Texas where an art exhibition and contest was being held for the best cartoon of Islam's Prophet Muhammad, FBI Director James Comey soberly said there are "hundreds, maybe thousands," of Muslims or new converts inclined to accept radical Islam's call to jihad across the nation. Moreover, they may be receiving recruitment approaches, perhaps even directives, to attack targets in the US from jihadi organizations like the Islamic State and Al Qaeda. *Homeland Security Today also reported in August* that social media-influenced Islamist jihadism had already taken place on US soil, some successfully, and noted that many others were thwarted. Still, the fear of counterterrorists and intelligence officials today is that so many more Muslims are being radicalized by ISIS and other jihadi groups' sophisticated social media efforts.

The EU has revised and updated procedures that a number of the member states are cooperating on including counterterrorism coordination, antiterrorism legislation and regulation of political activities. This cooperation includes The Schengen Agreement, which permits people to travel freely within the "Schengen" area that consists of 26 European Countries. The Schengen Area has grown rapidly, both geographically and in terms of the number of people benefiting from free movement. Today, over 400 million Europeans from 25 European countries enjoy passport-free travel across the area.

The EU has ramped up international counterterrorism cooperation among these member states and currently Turkey is the primary country used as the entry point for jihadists going from Europe to Syria. This is the "weak link" in the system. As noted in a recent *Business Insider* report, "The relaxed border policies Turkey adopted between 2011-2014 enabled extremists who wished to travel to Syria and join the rebels in their fight against the regime of Syrian president Bashar Al Assad."

As part of this covert counterterrorism cooperation, the EU is using the Schengen Information System (SIS) to create a passenger data system that can be shared among the member states. The system creates a Passenger Name Record (PNR) system that provides police and intelligence agencies with shared access to several years of passenger data, which allows them to trace suspected militants.

An example of how this has been used was the terrorist attack in Belgium. The terrorist was a French national of Algerian heritage and had spent a year in Syria. He flew from Turkey to Frankfurt, Germany. The German customs officials, using the SIS system, alerted the French. Unfortunately, he was allowed to continue his travels to Brussels, where he carried out an attack on a Jewish museum.

Up until that attack, there had been some resistance by some of the EU member states to deploy these technologies -- in part because of privacy concerns and the possible impact on slowing entry into the different countries resulting in long lines and waits by passengers. However, after the Brussels attack, more countries are moving to adopt these PNR programs.

Hans-Georg Maasen, head of Germany's domestic intelligence service, is a staunch supporter of these type of intelligence gathering systems, and has

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publicly warned of returning jihadists and the danger they pose to not only Germany, but all EU member states, particularly France, which has more homegrown ISIS militants than any other European country. France has responded to this threat by creating what they call the Vigipirate counterterrorism program.

This initiative is similar to the US Homeland Security Advisor System and includes five different levels, each marked by a certain color to signify various threat levels. In February 2014, the code was simplified to just two levels — a vigilance level and an attack alert level, which is now in effect for the first time.

The terrorism threat has become more diffuse and continues to increase at a rapid pace. This increased threat is requiring the EU member states to intensify their covert intelligence systems allowing for greater exchange of operational and intelligence information regarding the movement of terrorists including both national and foreign terrorist fighters, especially those individuals who are EU citizens.

Dr. Pamela Collins is a security consultant and professor at the Eastern Kentucky University School of Safety, Security and Emergency Management. She's worked for the Department of Homeland Security as a principal and program manager since 2005.

UK's Plan to Deploy 5,000 Soldiers to Prevent Terror Attacks is Dangerous

Source: http://sputniknews.com/europe/20150729/1025187142.html

July 29 – Last week, the plan to deploy over 5,000 military personnel was mistakenly disclosed on the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) website for a short period of time during which it was spotted by the Daily Mail newspaper. The plan was presented a means

Fire Arms Unit, and even more in the Diplomatic Protection Corp. They all were "taught how not to shoot the wrong people," she stressed.

However, "the military won't have the same type of training, procedures and culture,"

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Baroness Jones warned. "Putting several thousand troops on to the streets would be a sign that Islamic terrorists had grown in strength and we had lost the vital flow of intelligence from within sections of the Muslim community that would prevent such an attack," Baroness Jones said.

Baroness Jones added that proposed changes to UK counter-terrorism legislation, to make it

of supporting armed police officers engaged in security duties in Britain.

"I recognize the need to provide some military personnel to support the police at a few key locations, but the deployment of 5,000 troops seems an overreaction and raises many questions about whether their role is to support civilian personnel, or to replace them?" Baroness Jones explained.

She noted that the London Metropolitan Police already had over 500 officers in the specialist

harsher and more intrusive, would in fact leave the country more vulnerable to terror attacks.

"I think that some of the proposed changes to Government policy could make us more vulnerable to terrorist attacks in the future because we are abandoning democratic values and starting to criminalize people for what they think rather than focusing on whether they have broken any law," Baroness Jones told Sputnik.

She explained that such an intrusive government approach is "the quickest way to alienate people and put barriers in the way of that flow of intelligence which we need to stop terrorist attacks."

"We can either remain an open, democratic society, or we can censor, fuel divisions and let the terrorists win," Baroness Jones said.

Military activity on the streets has previously proved controversial in the United Kingdom. In 2003, troops in armored vehicles patrolled Heathrow Airport in response to warnings that

certain London sites could be targeted by terrorists, which resulted in speculation and public outcry.

Earlier this week, media reports emerged that the British Army had resisted the idea of deploying thousands of troop on the streets in the event of a terrorist attack on UK soil.

Since early 2015, Europe has been especially conscious of its anti-terror security in the wake of January's Islamist shootings on the office of the Charlie Hebdo magazine in Paris, which claimed the lives of 12 people.

What Turkey Wants in Syria

By Burak Bekdil

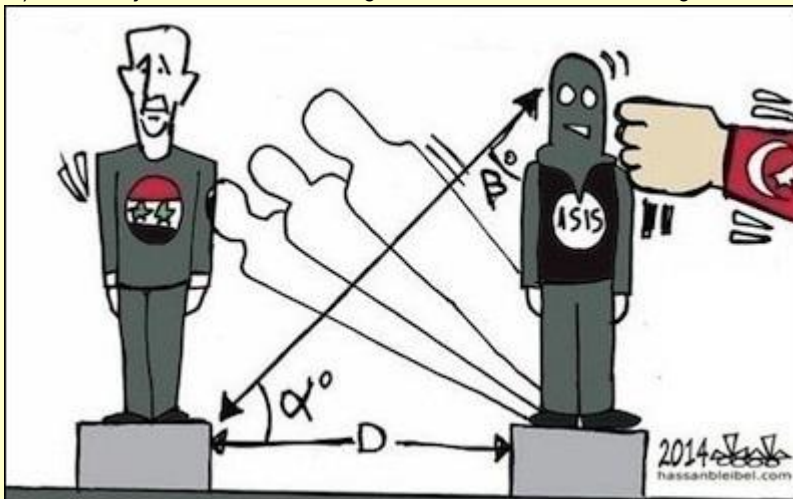Source: http://www.meforum.org/5415/what-turkey-wants-in-syria

July 31 - After several months of reluctant negotiations, Turkey has anxiously decided to join the allied battle against the radical Islamists who fight under the flag of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (or Islamic State, ISIS, IS). Turkish jets bombed IS strongholds inside

Syria, and police detained hundreds of IS supporters operating in Turkey, including two leaders.

Moreover, Turkish ministers hastily signed a decree that would allow the U.S. military to use the critical Incirlik air base for strikes against IS targets. Incirlik, in southern Turkey near the Syrian border, is close to many IS strongholds and will cut response times for U.S. aircraft, increasing the efficiency of anti-militant operations.

Turkey says that it, together with the U.S., wants an IS-free zone in northern Syria. That is fine. But who will fill the vacuum in areas cleared of IS? That is an extremely important question Turkey's American allies should think

about with extreme care. Turkey simply finds joining the international campaign against IS an opportunity to install pro-Sunni Islamist rule in areas now controlled by IS.

This is how Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu describes, with all the unrealistic euphemism he could think of, the militias he apparently wishes would replace IS's brutal Islamists:

We need to support moderate opposition forces there. Moderate opposition forces means all those forces who are tolerant of other Syrian citizens, who do not commit any terrorist crimes and who do not collaborate with the Syrian regime, which is responsible for all these humanitarian tragedies in the last four, five years.

The key word here is "moderate." In all reality, Davutoglu wants to replace extreme Islamists with less extreme Islamists. And the less extreme ones come under a different flag: the Free Syrian Army (FSA), which Turkey has vehemently supported over the past few years, in the hope that it would fight and topple Turkey's regional nemesis, Syria's President Bashar al-Assad.

The FSA was formed in August 2011 by Syrian army deserters, and was based in Turkey. Unsurprisingly, its fighters are

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90% Sunni, which explains the real appeal to the Sunni supremacist Davutoglu. The FSA militias are a ragtag group of rebels with a cause: to build a Sunni Islamist Syria, albeit not a Salafist Syria. The group does not have a real structure, money or sophisticated weapons to fight either Assad or the Islamic State.

In Syria's civil war, it is not uncommon to see fighters moving from one group to another. In March, for instance, the US-backed "moderate" rebel group, Harakat Hazzam, disbanded and its members joined extremist groups such as the al-Nusrah Front (ANF), an al-Qaeda offshoot, and the Levant Front, a coalition of rebels, also with ties to al-Qaeda. The ANF has, in addition, picked up thousands of men who once fought under the flag of the FSA.

Almost invariably, the groups fighting in Syria, with varying degrees of violence, are Islamists. If Davutoglu can market the FSA to his American allies, he will be nurturing, on his private agenda, another Islamist group that can potentially become another band of jihadists. Davutoglu is trying to make Syria an extension of Turkey for Muslim Brotherhood Sunni Islam.

In 2012, the Human Rights Watch (HRW) issued an open letter to opposition groups in Syria, including the FSA, accusing them of carrying out kidnappings, torture and executions. A United Nations-sponsored inquiry commission documented war crimes committed by these groups.

Some FSA-aligned groups have been criticized for having an affiliation with radical Islamists. The FSA itself was accused of summarily executing innumerable prisoners it held. Furthermore, the UN offered credible allegations against opposition groups, including the FSA, that they were recruiting children as soldiers. The FSA was mentioned in a 2014 HRW report detailing the widespread practice of using child soldiers -- just as the IS is doing. All that is reasonable when you recall that some FSA-aligned brigades are working with hardline Islamist groups, including al-Qaeda and Ahrar Al-Sham.

Such is the profile of the "moderate" rebel groups that Turkey supports and tells the U.S. are the "good guys" fighting for democracy in Syria.

In other words, with U.S. help, Turkey wants to build, in parts of Syria, a Sunni Islamist rule, which it hopes will expand into other Syrian regions, finally reaching Damascus.

This may not be a realistic scenario, but even its progress can potentially create new Frankenstein monsters in Syria, with, most likely, "moderate" Islamists taking off their masks and becoming the radicals they in fact are.

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ISIS or Al Qaeda? American Officials Split Over Top Terror Threat

Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/05/world/middleeast/isis-or-al-qaeda-american-officials-split-over-biggest-threat.html

Aug 04 – The Obama administration's top intelligence, counterterrorism and law enforcement officials are divided over which terrorist group poses the biggest threat to the American homeland, the Islamic State or Al Qaeda and its affiliates.

The split reflects a rising concern that the Islamic State poses a more immediate danger because of its unprecedented social media campaign, using sophisticated online messaging to inspire followers to launch attacks across the United States.

Many intelligence and counterterrorism officials warn, however, that Qaeda operatives in Yemen and Syria are capitalizing on the turmoil in those countries to plot much larger "mass casualty" attacks, including bringing down airliners carrying hundreds of passengers.

This is not an academic argument. It will influence how the government allocates billions of dollars in counterterrorism funds, and how it assigns thousands of federal agents, intelligence analysts and troops to combat a multipronged threat that senior officials say is changing rapidly.

The issue already has prompted a White House review of its counterterrorism policy toward the Islamic State. And the National Counterterrorism Center has diverted analysts working on longer-term extremist threats to focus on the Islamic State, also

called ISIS or ISIL, intelligence officials said.

In June, the F.B.I. had so many people under surveillance in terrorism-related investigations — mostly related to the Islamic State — that supervisors reassigned criminal squads to monitor terrorism suspects.

For all the concern, there have been no Qaeda

personnel yet in one direction or the other. But it is the first time senior American officials have spoken so openly about the evolution.

How much the United States spends on counterterrorism is difficult to pinpoint because many of the main actors and agencies — American troops, C.I.A. analysts and F.B.I.

Major events: ● Attacks directed by/linked to ISIS   ○ Attacks inspired by ISIS   ○ Arrests of suspected ISIS militants or supporters

Outlined countries are where ISIS is conducting regular military operations.

Countries and regions in **yellow** are where ISIS has declared provinces.

attacks in the United States in 14 years, though some were thwarted or fell apart. And most of the Islamic State-inspired plots so far have been unsophisticated but increasingly difficult for the authorities to detect in advance.

American officials say this is not a black-and-white debate between those who worry more about Al Qaeda as the main threat to the homeland and those who say it is the Islamic State. Both are worrisome.

It is more a shift in emphasis. The F.B.I., the Justice Department and the Department of Homeland Security are concerned more about the rising risk from the Islamic State, while the Pentagon, intelligence agencies and the National Counterterrorism Center, which focus more on threats abroad, are more anxious about Qaeda operatives overseas.

The White House seems to be leaning toward the Islamic State, increasingly alarmed by what Lisa Monaco, President Obama's homeland security and counterterrorism adviser, recently called the group's "unique threat" to the United States.

The debate is evolving in real time, thus there have been no large shifts in money or

agents, to name a few — carry out other functions, as well. But senior American officials say that counterterrorism programs employ roughly one in four of the more than 100,000 people who work at the C.I.A. and other intelligence agencies, and account for about one-third of the $50 billion annual intelligence budget.

The issue is likely to gain prominence in the 2016 presidential campaign, as Republican candidates criticize the Obama administration for failing to anticipate the rise of the Islamic State from the ashes of the Iraq war. "We didn't finish the job," Senator Marco Rubio of Florida said last month.

The debate was brought to the surface two weeks ago when James B. Comey, the F.B.I. director, said at the Aspen Security Forum in Colorado that the Islamic State posed the greatest danger to the homeland.

Senior leaders of the Islamic State — unlike those of Al Qaeda — have not made a priority of organizing strikes on the West. Instead, the Islamic State has encouraged individual Westerners to carry out

such attacks on their own. "It's currently the threat that we're worrying about in the homeland most of all," Mr. Comey said.

Mr. Comey said the group was focusing on how to "crowdsource" terrorism, by having thousands of its promoters reach out and screen potential adherents on Twitter and other open social media, then switch to communicating on encrypted apps or email programs that American intelligence officials say they have difficulty cracking.

"They're just pushy," Mr. Comey said. "They're like a devil on somebody's shoulders saying, 'Kill, kill kill,' all day long."

A few days later, the attorney general, Loretta E. Lynch, weighed in on ABC News, saying of the Islamic State, "It's as serious — if not more serious a threat — than Al Qaeda."

American analysts say the Islamic State is replacing its combatants in Iraq and Syria as fast as the United States and its allies are killing them there, and the group still maintains as many as 31,000 fighters.

Unlike Al Qaeda, ISIS controls territory, provides civil services and has infrastructure. It remains well funded — earning close to $1 billion a year in oil revenues and taxes, according to Treasury Department estimates — and has expanded to other countries, including Libya, Afghanistan and the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt.

Current and former counterterrorism and intelligence officials, as well as some lawmakers, who closely monitor risks overseas say that although the risks of the Islamic State are real, the overall threat is more complex and requires a nuanced strategy.

"ISIS is all about the quantity of attacks. Al Qaeda, on the other hand, is focused on the quality of the attack," said Representative Adam B. Schiff of California, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee. "For that reason, Al Qaeda still, in that respect, very much concerns me even more than the quantity of ISIS attacks."

Gen. Joseph L. Votel, head of the Pentagon's Special Operations Command, said at the Aspen forum that the Islamic State is "much more prominent right now," but added that Al Qaeda "remains a very, very, significant concern for us."

Nicholas Rasmussen, the director of the National Counterterrorism Center, said in an interview, "There's a greater likelihood of ISIL being linked to attacks in the homeland right now. That said, we still look at A.Q.A.P. as more capable of carrying out larger-scale attacks against the homeland, including against aircraft coming here." A.Q.A.P. is the Qaeda affiliate based in the Arabian Peninsula, in Yemen.

In July 2014, the Transportation Security Administration banned uncharged cellphones and laptops from flights to the United States that originated in Europe and the Middle East after picking up intelligence about the collaboration between the Qaeda operatives in Syria and Yemen.

"I wouldn't put it on a matter of scale as significant as what we faced 10 years ago from Al Qaeda, or even now from Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula or the Khorasan Group, to carry out more significant, perhaps catastrophic, attacks," Matthew G. Olsen, a former director of the National Counterterrorism Center, said of the Islamic State threat in a telephone interview, citing Qaeda groups in Yemen and Syria.

James R. Clapper Jr., the director of national intelligence, told the Aspen forum, "To say one is of greater magnitude than the other, at least for me, is hard."

Yet there is no doubt that the threat from the Islamic State has seized the immediate attention of policy makers and intelligence officials here, in Europe and in the Middle East.

John P. Carlin, the assistant attorney general for national security, told the Aspen forum that the authorities have made more than 50 terrorism-related arrests in the past 18 months, mostly involving the Islamic State, in the jurisdictions of 20 United States attorneys nationwide. Eighty percent of those arrested are younger than 30, and 40 percent are under 21, he said.

In early July, Mr. Comey said the authorities had thwarted multiple attacks being plotted for July 4 by the Islamic State and its sympathizers in the United States, though he did not say what the plots entailed or how many people had been arrested. The F.B.I. has hundreds of investigations pending into such cases across the country, he said.

Twitter accounts affiliated with the Islamic State have more than 21,000 English-language followers worldwide, Mr. Comey said, and thousands of them may be United States residents.

"We are facing smaller-scale attacks that are harder to detect,

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day to day to day," the homeland security secretary, Jeh Johnson, said at the Aspen forum.
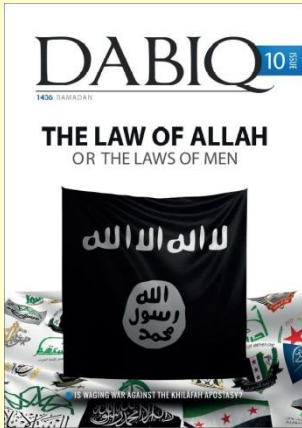
What sets the Islamic State apart from other terrorist groups is its fluid structure and adept appeals on social media, American officials say.

"Al Qaeda tried to be a movement and capture a more global imagination, and it largely failed;

regional groups joined the A.Q. banner, but it never truly became a wholly decentralized movement," said Michael E. Leiter, a former director of the National Counterterrorism Center. "ISIS has been more successful on this front, and this is why it is more dangerous, more difficult to identify adherents, and more challenging to combat."

Dabiq (Issue 10)

Source: http://www.clarionproject.org/news/islamic-state-isis-isil-propaganda-magazine-dabiq

The tenth issue of the Islamic State's *Dabiq* magazine is called **The Laws of All or the Laws of Men**. It opened by praising the deadly simultaneous terror attacks in Tunisia, Kuwait and France and the massive casualties caused. It calls on children to obey Allah (ie. ISIS) before their parents and wives to leave their husbands who fight ISIS. It also boasts of expansions in the Caucasus and recruitment in Afghanistan.

Since it is the Ramadan issue, it discusses the historical victories of some of the early Muslim armies during Ramadan as well as expounding on the holiness of the month.

▶ **Have a look at #10:** *Islamic State (ISIS) Magazine: Dabiq Issue 10*

Welcome to the New Piracy Capital

Source: http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/2015/07/14/welcome-to-the-new-piracy-capital/

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According to a recent report from the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and International Maritime Bureau (IMB), since the start of 2015, Southeast Asia has accounted for 55 per cent of the world's 54 piracy and armed robbery incidents. **According to these statistics, Southeast Asia has regained the reputation as the region in the world most afflicted by piracy.**

The Strait of Malacca is a particular hotspot for piracy in the region, providing passage for approximately one third of world shipping. Separating Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, the straits are the key waterway linking Asian and European trade. Without significant regional efforts to combat the problem, the impact of piracy on trade and shipping costs is likely to be significant.

Piracy and the importance of the Strait
According to the report from the ICC and IMB, pirates in Southeast Asia hijack a small coastal tanker every two weeks, on average. Recent data shows that from January until June this year, 56 cases of piracy had taken place in the

Malacca Strait. Of this number, 21 were cases of suspected piracy, 22 were attempted piracies, and 13 were confirmed piracies.

The ICC and IMB report confirms that Indonesia is the country with the highest number of attacks, accounting for almost 40 per cent in 2015. Vietnam has also seen an increase in armed robbery incidents, with thieves breaking into ships at anchor.

Most acts of piracy are carried out by armed gangs, which target small coastal tankers to steal their fuel. The increased frequency of piracy attacks in Southeast Asia can be compared with incidents in Somalia. According to the IMB report, there were zero incidents of piracy for Somalia in the first quarter of 2015. If these figures are accurate, Southeast Asia has now regained the reputation as the worst region in the world for piracy.

This will be cause for concern for those who rely on the waters for trade and shipping. Almost a third of global crude oil passes through the South China Sea each year, and over half of global liquefied natural gas (LNG).

This is three times more than the oil and gas cargo passing through the Suez Canal.

According to a study compiled by the Nippon Maritime Centre, 217 vessels per day transited the Malacca Strait in 2014. This was up from 201 in 2011. Container ships account for 33 per cent of traffic.However, increased demand for oil means that most growth is occurring in very large crude carriers and LNG traffic.

There has also been an increase in bulk carrier transits, driven by China's demand for raw materials and commodities.

The costs of piracy

Calculating the cost of maritime piracy can be difficult. Cost is usually calculated with regards to ransoms paid, increased insurance premiums for shipping, costs of having to re-route vessels, costs associated with obtaining deterrent security equipment or personnel and the cost of naval forces for piracy deterrence. Secondary costs relate to the effects on foreign investment in the affected region or on commodity prices.

According to a 2014 maritime piracy report published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), **piracy costs range from US$1 – 16 billion a year. In 2012, US$31.75 million was paid in ransoms to pirates.**

Piracy has also affected insurance premiums and coverage. In the past few years, additional premiums paid on cargo transiting piracy regions increased by US$25 to $100 per container. Hull insurance was estimated to have doubled in 2010. The shipping industry pays an estimated US$2.3 to $3 billion per year to re-route ships to avoid piracy prone areas. **The cost of deterrence equipment was estimated to range between US$1.65 and $2.06 billion in 2012.**

Considering these extensive costs, the region cannot afford to allow maritime piracy to go unchecked. The Indonesian Navy's Western Fleet commander recently stated that the navies of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member countries are to join forces and hold a joint operation to combat piracy in the region.

Without sustained regional cooperation, the economic consequences of piracy are likely to continue to increase.

Maritime security: activity moves north and west

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Source: http://www.transec.com/resource-centre/maritime-security-report/

The maritime industry represents 90% of global trade by volume, and while merchant ships have not been taken and held in Somalia since May 2012, maritime security remains a vital aspect of transport security in general. Maritime piracy is but one of the problems that mariners face on a daily basis. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) with the maritime advocacy group Oceans Beyond Piracy (OBP) recently completed a study with prisoners convicted of piracy and found there was a clear economic basis for piracy; the motivation for many who carried out attacks was financial. Interviewees cited incarceration as a major deterrent but significantly they also mentioned the use of armed guards on vessels and the presence of international navies. A different problem is migration and the United Nations High Commissioner for refugees says that during the first half of 2015 137,000 refugees and migrants crossed the Mediterranean Sea. These suggest that where vessels are in areas with a disparity of wealth or high levels of poverty there will be a risk to vessels or mariners. The diverse nature of the world however should not be allowed to confuse the issue that the threats the maritime industry faces in simple terms are – theft, kidnap and terrorism. The challenge is quantifying the risk and finding ways to minimise it.

West African influences

On 29 May Muhammadu Buhari assumed the presidency in Nigeria. As the largest economy in Africa, Nigeria's accounts for approximately 70% of the total maritime traffic in West and Central Africa. President Buhari has so far sought to redefine Nigerian maritime security, by cancelling security contracts with ex militants, dismissing the head of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) and appointing a new Chief of Naval Staff. Since the beginning of June the Nigerian Navy and Air Force have conducted operations against pirate gangs operating out of the Bakassi Peninsula and Calabar /

Cross River area, stoking tensions. At least 53 seafarers have been taken hostage in 2015 so far (all but one off Nigeria) with more incidents likely unreported. It remains uncertain as to how President Buhari's administration will appeal to the southern piracy states that are predominantly supporters of former president Goodluck Jonathan.

Non-traditional security threats on the horizon

Since the start of this year, global media attention has been focused on the growing issue of illegal migration towards Europe that has seen over 70,000 rescued (an 86% rise over 2014) and over 1,000 have been killed this year attempting the crossing (according to the International Organization for Migration). Many of the migrants are escaping from war in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan or extreme poverty in Africa, while some are moving for economic reasons. International conventions including the UN International Maritime Organization's Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS) and UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) place obligations on Masters to render assistance in rescues at sea but with these obligations comes risk. In February and April 2015 Frontex patrol crew were threatened and fired upon by armed human smugglers in the Mediterranean. Officials from the EU, Libya and Italy have warned the Islamic State could use migration routes to enter Europe. Whilst Frontex's Operation Triton and regional co-ordination has assisted in the rescue of migrants at sea, more economic and humanitarian development is needed in the countries of migrant origins to stem the flow of trafficking to North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean.

Conflicts in North Africa have also spilled in to the maritime domain as Islamic State affiliated militants belonging to Sinai Province recently used a guided missile to attack an Egyptian Coastguard vessel 1NM off the coast. Concurrently the conflict in Libya has seen state sponsored actions against merchant shipping. These include the Turkish freighter hit by artillery fire near Tobruk in May 2015, Libyan National Army airstrikes against two fishing vessels approaching Benghazi in July 2015 and a cargo ship attacked in January 2015 whilst approaching Derna, resulting in the death of a Greek merchant sailor.

Asian problems rising

Criminal boarding or 'armed robbery against ships' is the most common risk facing mariners and their ships in Southern and Southeast Asia. Both the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) and the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) have highlighted rising numbers of incidents. Extended Duration Cargo Thefts (EDCT) remains a persistent concern in Southeast Asia with over 30 incidents of hijackings and EDCT so far in 2015. Most recently the ORKIM HARMONY hijacked in June 2015 carrying 50,000 barrels of petrol and its sister ship the ORKIM VICTORY that had 6,000 barrels of oil cargo stolen eight days earlier; both incidents occurring off the eastern coast of the Malaysian Peninsula. Although interstate co-operation and efforts by the Information Fusion Centre (IFC) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has seen greater maritime coordination, it has remained unable to significantly counter piracy in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS) and increasingly the South China Sea. Corruption allegations remain against personnel from the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) in co-operation with government officials and police officers. Five Indonesian Armed Forces personnel were arrested in September 2014 in connection with an organised piracy and smuggling investigation. Insurers are watching closely to see if the region is becoming a more costly risk.

Indian Ocean changes

Though there has been an 80% decline in the piracy incidents in the High Risk Area (HRA), economic and political development within Somalia has not yet matched the strong advances made by African Union forces against Al-Shabaab. As a result international navy missions such as EUNAVFOR and national convoys through the Gulf of Aden remain. As the prisoners interviewed for the UNODC / OBP report indicated, the deterrent effect of these is keenly felt but an economic solution is vital. Efforts to revitalise Somali domestic fishing fleets and Somali national Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) enforcement remain deficient and still allow Irregular, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing within Somali waters.

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Conclusion

The complexity of problems facing mariners and operators means there is no single or simple solution. Each region has a myriad of problems and causal factors but none of these excuse vessel owners and operators from maximising efforts to minimise risks. Identify the most likely and worstcase threats, threats specific to each region and plan accordingly, then update using regular intelligence and information.

Is ISIS a Revolutionary Group and if Yes, What Are the Implications?

By Stathis N. Kalyvas

Source: http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/442/html

The emergence of the Islamic State (or Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-ISIS) as a major rebel organization in Syria, its subsequent expansion at the expense of competing Syrian insurgent groups, and its rapid conquest of vast swaths of territory in Iraq in the summer of 2014 (including the cities of Mosul and most recently of Ramadi) took most observers by surprise. Its subsequent resilience in the face of a sustained US-led bombing campaign in conjunction with the regular deployment of spectacular acts of violence—as well as its ability to attract thousands of volunteers from across Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia—gave rise to a profusion of arguments about the nature and character of what was only recently an unknown entity. Not surprisingly, a large proportion of these arguments converge in stressing the religious dimension of ISIS.[1]

While such a focus is certainly warranted, it is alternatively possible to also see ISIS as a "revolutionary" armed group. In turn, such a framing would imply a different way of understanding ISIS and similar jihadi groups.[2] Doing so has the advantage of eschewing the temptation of exceptionalism and bringing to the fore the rich experience of revolutionary insurgencies during the Cold War—and more generally the wealth of insights generated by the comparative study of civil wars.

How the comparative study of civil wars deals with different rebel types

The comparative study of civil wars constitutes an extensive body of research, primarily located in political science that has gradually moved away from an initial search of a set of master structural variables underlying civil wars (poverty, ethnic diversity, etc.) to focus instead on the characteristics of rebel groups and how they may affect strategic choices and performance. Still, the study of exactly how political identity, including associated ideological differences, help explain variation in group behavior and outcomes remains under-explored.[3]

Until recently, the main dimension of rebel type that had attracted scholarly attention was based on ethnicity. The distinction, first of ethnic and non-ethnic wars, and later of ethnic and non-ethnic rebel groups has generated considerable research output, mainly stressing two variables: political inclusion or exclusion and horizontal (that is, group-level) economic inequality. A different and intriguing (yet less popular) distinction has focused on the economic endowments of rebel groups, thus separating poor from wealthy rebels and drawing several empirical implications, mostly related to the use of violence.[4] Recent studies have emphasized a number of different organizational dimensions, primarily on the rebel side, but also on the state side, including comparisons between "ideological" and "non-ideological" groups and between Islamist and nationalist groups.[5] On the theoretical and conceptual front, a compelling case has been made for the necessity of taking the ideology of rebel groups into account.[6] Perhaps the most important recent contribution in that respect is the social-institutional theory proposed by Paul Staniland, which predicts that the level of cohesion and performance of rebel groups is a function of the prewar networks where insurgent leaders were embedded. Staniland posits four basic types of rebel groups (integrated, vanguard, parochial, and fragmented) reflecting different combinations of reliance on prewar networks which, he argues, hold more predictive power on the level of group cohesion and survival than variables such as ideology,

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ethnicity, state enemy or resource flows.[7]

Overall, this is a new and promising literature, still at an early stage and subject to considerable confusion as the various dimensions of interest proliferate. At the same time, empirical research is primarily located at the subnational level, comparing groups at the local level. Research is now moving to a new level where subnational research projects are producing a set of robust findings that can begin to be compared to each other. In turn, such comparisons will allow us to formulate scope conditions about different subsets of civil wars and their etiology which will eventually substitute present "lowest common denominator" approaches that have been rather unsuccessfully searching for a master set of universal predictors of civil wars.

Revolutionary Rebels

Where does the "revolutionary" dimension fit it—and what exactly does it mean and capture? In its simplest formulation proposed herein, a revolutionary group can be defined as a group that aims not just to gain power but self-consciously to transform society in a deep and radical way, by profoundly rearranging social and political relations. It is probably hard to measure the revolutionary character of a group in a precise way, but the distinction makes sense in a more general way: it is much less hard to distinguish revolutionary groups from groups that just aim to acquire power for its own sake—even when the latter may enact policies that inadvertently may impact on everyday life (hence the self-conscious transformative element). Fidel Castro and Charles Taylor represent two ideal-type leaders in that respect.

The characterization of a group as revolutionary captures a set of other features. A revolutionary group is by definition ideological, although not all ideological groups are revolutionary. Nationalist/secessionist groups can be revolutionary if the nation-state is not the norm (for example in an imperial setting). Revolutionary groups could be either vanguard or integrated, following Staniland's formulation, but not parochial, and they can be either poor or wealthy (if they exploit natural resources, such as the FARC in Colombia, or receive extensive foreign assistance, as the MPLA in Angola). In short, this is a characterization that is general enough to subsume several dimensions analyzed in the

literature, yet specific enough to be analytically useful.

Given this approach, would it be meaningful at all to describe ISIS as a revolutionary group? If we conceive of revolution as the attempt to put a utopian social program into action, such that its resulting application would upend existing social and political relations in a significant way, then clearly ISIS is a revolutionary group (see, for example, Aymenn al-Tamimi's article in this special issue). No one would dispute that ISIS pushes forward an agenda of far-reaching social and political transformation. In fact, one of the foremost (if often, implicit) critiques of the use of revolutionary identity in political analysis—namely, that it is mere window dressing to facilitate access to foreign assistance—obviously does not apply to ISIS, a group that seems to display an excess of revolutionary zeal.

What do we know about the impact of the revolutionary character of certain rebel actors on their behavior and performance? In ongoing research with Laia Balcells, we have investigated the correlates of revolutionary Marxist insurgencies, which flourished during the Cold War.[8] We found that these rebel groups were associated with longer and deadlier conflicts that typically took the form of irregular or guerrilla war. We also found, contrary to our expectations, that they were more likely to end up on the losing side of the conflict than almost any other group, nationalist or simply power-oriented. We explained this puzzling outcome ("the Marxist paradox") by stressing the fact that these groups fought against states that were both stronger and also tended to be strengthened by the revolutionary challenge they faced. In a context characterized by systemic and international rivalries, robust foreign assistance and socially redistributive programs helped shore up the capacity of the state to face these Marxist rebels. In an ironic and indirect way, then, Marxist-inspired rebellions ended up shoring up state capacity. Lastly, we located an interesting exception to the tendency of Marxist rebels to be defeated: Marxist-inspired national liberation movements (i.e. nationalist or secessionist groups) proved much more successful, suggesting that the combination of a social revolutionary agenda and a nationalist identity could be quite powerful.

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Key dimensions of revolutionary rebels

In what follows, I take this analysis a step further by identifying several dimensions at the "meso" level, where a revolutionary identity could provide some analytical leverage—and then see what we can learn in the case of ISIS. More specifically, I focus on three key (and related) dimensions: combat, organization, and governance.

One of the most interesting features of the Marxist rebel groups that fought in major civil wars (which differentiates the large and consequential groups from the hundreds of stillborn ones) is that they almost chose to fight irregular or guerrilla wars. Indeed, modern guerrilla war was invented primarily by Marxist revolutionaries and practiced largely by them, although it spilled over to other groups as well. Why? The answer is that these groups had some organizational characteristics that allowed them to implement this very demanding form of war.

Irregular war is asymmetric by definition, as it pits a militarily weaker actor against a stronger one. In purely military terms, asymmetry makes no sense: it is resolved in the battlefield in favor of the stronger actor. This is why, in a conventional war, the balance of power and final outcome is largely a function of resources plus strategy. Therefore, the very fact that a weaker actor can fight in a sustained way (and, often, for a very long time) against a stronger one is a reflection of factors that compensate for the resource deficit of the weaker actor. These factors are largely organizational.

In the large body of literature covering the organization and practice of insurgency and counterinsurgency,[9] the emphasis is on ideology rather than organization: the ability of the rebels to win over the local population through ideology (their "hearts and minds") is considered of essence for the ability of the rebels to operate ("like fish in the water"). However, in practice, even if ideology is necessary in producing popular support and mobilization, it is never sufficient. When one reads how rebel groups manage to obtain the consent, if not always the support, of the population, one finds three types of stories, which are far from mutually exclusive:

- The first story is about the ability of a group to establish (and provide the public good of) order in areas where anarchy disrupted livelihoods.

- The second story is about the ability of a group to police a territory effectively and identify and punish "defectors" (i.e. individuals assisting or working for their rivals) and reward supporters.[10]
- The third story is about the ability of the group to effectively govern a territory and supply the local population with public goods and governance, thus establishing itself as the de facto rulers.

In all these stories, popular consent and collaboration (what is often described as "support") is the outcome of the organizational ability to perform these tasks. Compared to other type of groups, an argument can be made that revolutionary groups have a better ability to perform these tasks. I focus on this question below.

ISIS as a revolutionary group

The following appears to be largely the story of ISIS: it uses its clandestine organization to infiltrate territories held by its opponents, begins a campaign of selective violence there, and only attacks when the enemy has weakened.[11] This is a hybrid strategy of guerrilla war in a first stage and conventional war in a second one. The main difference between ISIS military tactics and that of the older Marxist groups is the extent to which conventional military fighting is enacted from very early on, both in Syria and Iraq. Of course, the Maoist doctrine of irregular war posited conventional war as the final stage of the war. However, conventional war is the main type of combat that ISIS uses so far (and this differentiates it from other jihadi rebels, such as the Algerian GIA, for instance). This particularity is likely due to a combination of the flat terrain of Syria and Iraq and the military weakness of its opponents. In addition, the endogenous dynamics of conflict have played a key role through "positive resource shocks" in the form of sudden capture of massive quantities of heavy weaponry. For example, when ISIS took Mosul in June 2014, it captured 1,500 Humvees, 52 M198 Howitzers and much more. In other words, ISIS benefited from a rare constellation of very weak yet heavily endowed opponents.[12]

Unlike the conventional nature of fighting, the control of territory is an essential feature of all civil wars. That jihadi groups had in the past opted primarily for a type

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of fighting that was based on clandestine organization and spectacular attacks (a strategy known as "terrorism") was a reflection of their extreme weakness. Once they could set up larger organizations in states whose repressive apparatus had been depleted due to external shocks (e.g., Iraq after 2003 and Syria after 2011), they could step up their game. In other words, the conquest and control of territory was endogenous to the strategic situation rather than a first-order choice that requires a complicated explanation.[13]

This in turn, raises the question of why revolutionary organizations have an advantage over non-revolutionary ones when it comes to organization (note here that this is a different question from why some revolutionary groups are more successful than other revolutionary groups). The answer is probably that these groups have the ability to recruit and retain motivated cadres ("middle managers" in business parlance, "junior officers" in military parlance). Indeed, Marxist revolutionary groups were very effective, under some conditions, in recruiting highly motivated individuals who perform the risk tasks required of them. Note that this is a very different implication from the standard one in the mass mobilization/collective action literature, which assumes that the key actors are motivated individuals at the mass level.

Clearly, ISIS has the capacity to deploy an organization staffed by motivated cadres, and this goes a long way toward explaining its success and its ability to prevail over its more fragmented rivals. Exactly how ISIS recruits, trains, motivates, and retains its cadres is one of the most pressing research questions. On this point, the research carried out on Marxist revolutionary groups can be highly suggestive and includes their emphasis on ideological indoctrination and constant transnational cross-fertilization.

But why would revolutionaries have an advantage in the recruitment of cadres? Initially, one has to look at the structural conditions that give rise to a small number of people willing to undertake radical action, including external shocks such as the collapse of order following a foreign invasion and occupation. The following step is the coordination of these people by an existing organization. In turn, the two key factors that may explain the presence and ability of this organization to successfully recruit cadres are

already existing organizational legacies and the resonance of its ideological message.

The last part of the story has to do with the ability of the organization to replenish its ranks, which are naturally depleted in conditions of military struggle. Like other revolutionary groups in the past, ISIS has profited handsomely from the infusion of foreign fighters in its ranks, a feature of rebel groups that have had the capacity to rely on a diffuse transnational social movement. However, the strength of ISIS cannot be reduced to the contribution of foreign fighters, who remain primarily in the organization's lower ranks, but instead is derived in part from its ability to link up with the population, once it becomes its de facto ruler.

The emergence of a literature on rebel governance is one of the most interesting recent developments in the comparative study of civil wars, and provides evidence for the importance of rebel governance in the context of civil wars, while establishing why certain rebel organizations deviate from either the clandestine presence or the roving bandit type.[14] The impact of revolutionary groups on the type of rebel governance is double-edged. On the one hand, they are able to deploy their organization in a way that allows them to be consistent in governance, which is always appreciated. Additionally, they are keen to mobilize and indoctrinate the population, which is always a way to generate additional supporters and fighters. On the other hand, their governance is likely to be highly interventionist, to clash with established norms and practices, and thus likely to generate considerable opposition and resentment. One of the most interesting lessons one learns about successful revolutionary governance is the extent to which it was based on a realistic moderation of their most doctrinaire demands. The key implication for ISIS would be to see whether the way it rules will remain harsh and demanding, or follow a more moderate path (such as the Taliban's eventually became). If the former is the case, it is likely to generate an opposition that could be leveraged against it by its opponents, very much like the Americans did in Iraq in the mid-2000s.

The final point worth making is the experience of the so-called national liberation movements of the Cold War. If these movements were successful, it was because

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they were able to combine in the same organization radical, vanguard elements with local, parochial constituencies (they were "integrated" groups in Staniland's parlance). Although we know that this combination is a major achievement, we still do not know what factors make it more likely. There is an element of group-based nationalism in ISIS, via its representation of the disaffected Sunni populations of Syria and Iraq, but it is probably the case that it is more of a revolutionary group mobilization Sunni people than a Sunni peoples' organization with a revolutionary cover. Lastly, the exact function of religion for ISIS needs to be investigated more carefully. To be sure, religion acts as the sort of credibly utopian vision that motivates individuals to join the fight and put their lives on the line, very much like socialism or nationalism do for

secular movements. But is there a dimension beyond ideology where religion (and, in particular, this form of religion) really matters— and if yes, exactly how?

Conclusion
To summarize these brief reflections, I hope to have made a strong case that (a) it makes sense, if only for heuristic reasons, to think of ISIS as a revolutionary group; (b) such a characterization allows us to derive interesting implications from a comparison with the experience of past revolutionary groups, especially the Marxist groups of the Cold War; and (c) in turn, this comparison could act as a check against claims of ISIS exceptionalism and uniqueness and generate new questions about its practices and behavior that are worth pursuing.

▶ **References are available at source's URL.**

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Assessing the Islamic State's Commitment to Attacking the West

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By Thomas Hegghammer and Petter Nesser
Source: http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/440/html

How much of a terrorist threat does the Islamic State (IS) pose to Western countries? The group's spectacular growth and anti-Western rhetoric have raised fears that it might carry out major attacks in Europe, North America, or Australia. The question has implications for Western military strategy against IS, because the higher the transnational threat, the larger the incentive to dismantle the group – as opposed to containing it.

This article aims to bring the debate forward through quantification and specification. It makes two main contributions: The first is to take stock of IS-related operations in the West using a new dataset on jihadi plots from early 2011 to mid-2015. The second is to present a typology that disaggregates the notion of "IS-linked plot" and allows for more fine-grained measurement of regional group involvement in international operations.

Our data suggest that IS so far has had a decentralized attack strategy based on encouraging followers to attack while not mounting many leadership-directed plots. That strategy has produced a substantial number of "sympathiser plots" since September 2014, to the point where IS sympathisers now outnumber returning foreign fighters as plot instigators. We do not make predictions about future changes in IS strategy, but the typology can be used by analysts to measure small variations in the group's commitment to international operations and potentially allow for early detection of strategic shifts.

The purpose of the article is to assess, based on open-source evidence of past declarations and activities, the extent to which IS has invested itself in a strategy of targeting the West. Our motivation is twofold. For one, policymakers naturally worry that IS will "go global" – that is, embark on a campaign of major attacks in the West – and there has been a great deal of speculation about whether and when they might do so.[1] For another, there is confusion about exactly what, however little, IS has done so far in terms of international operations. While most recognized IS specialists agree that the group's strategic priorities are local and that

almost all of its resources go into operations in Syria and Iraq[2], many media reports have spoken of alleged "IS plots" or "IS-linked plots" in the West over the past year.[3] One recent headline, for example, blared "Islamic State planning sophisticated attacks on the West."[4] So what exactly has taken place? How many or how few plots are we talking about? What kinds? Is the rate of incidents increasing?

To answer these questions we did three things. First, we looked briefly at what IS has said about attacking in the West. We examined leader statements, Dabiq magazine, a collection of 200 audiovisual productions, and anecdotal statements by IS footsoldiers. Second, we tried to establish how many plots in the West had an IS connection of any kind. To do this we first built a dataset of attacks and attack plots in the West since January 2011 and then looked for reports of IS connections in each case. Third, we tried to assess the degree of involvement by IS as an organization in each alleged "IS-linked" plot. For this we developed a typology of six ideal types of links between regional organizations and international attackers, collected information about each alleged link, and coded each plot according to the link type observed. The many methodological challenges and limitations to each of the procedures are discussed at the beginning of each section below.

The scope of our inquiry is limited to specifying the degree of IS's past involvement in terrorist activity in the West. We are not seeking to predict whether IS will go more global in the future, much less whether IS could ever carry out a major attack in the West. We believe our data can help inform such debates, but the past can only tell us so much about the future. Empirically, we focus on the period from January 2011 through June 2015, and our main concern is the central Islamic State organization and its predecessors (but not its affiliates or "provinces" [wilayat] in places like Libya or Sinai).[5] By "West" we mean Western Europe, North America, and Australia/New Zealand.

The article has three parts. We look first at declared intentions, then at the number of IS-related plots, and then at the nature of IS's connection to those plots.

Declared intentions

It is not easy to summarize what IS has said about attacking the West, because the group does not speak with one voice, and the number of statements that can be attributed to IS in one way or other is enormous. We chose to compile and manually examine four document samples: 1) English translations of all the statements by IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and top spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani between 1 July 2014 and 30 June 2015 (nine statements, about 50 pages of transcribed text)[6]; 2) Issues 1-9 of the English-language Dabiq magazine (about 500 pages)[7], 3) all the approximately 210 videos and photo montages published on the (now defunct) blog https://addawlah.wordpress.com between 30 July 2014 and 30 January 2015[8], and 4) a collection of anecdotal statements by IS footsoldiers on Twitter and in media interviews.

We chose these particular document types because they were presumably produced by different strata of the organization, namely, the top leadership (sample 1), upper cadres (samples 2 and 3) and lower ranks (sample 4). We sampled primarily the period after the declaration of the caliphate on 30 June 2014, because that was when the organization took its current form. The samples cover slightly different time periods for reasons to do with availability, but all of them cover the autumn of 2014, which is when we should expect to see the most anti-Western rhetoric (this was when the international military campaign against IS escalated). Our methodology is obviously limited by the fact that we only deal with samples and conduct qualitative content analysis. The ideal way to approach this topic would be to combine qualitative analysis of key texts with quantitative or automated content analysis of IS's entire ideological corpus. We did not do it here, because this article's main concern is IS's plotting activity. Our approach should still reveal the broad features of IS's declared intentions vis-a-vis the West.

Footsoldiers

To start at the bottom: Several IS footsoldiers have issued very explicit threats to the West. For example, in early 2014 a group of IS-affiliated Britons in Syria posted a series of memes (pictures with captions) threatening attacks in the UK and US.[9] In April 2014, a Canadian IS member appeared in a video saying "This is a message to Canada and all the American tyrants: We are coming and we will destroy you."[10] In mid-June 2014, a video showed a British IS member saying the black flag would fly over Downing Street and another saying he would embark on a "killing spree" against non-Muslims if he ever returned home.[11] This was

before the escalation, in August 2014, of the US-led anti-IS air campaign in Iraq and Syria, and since then such statements have proliferated. This, of course, is anecdotal evidence and we don't know the proportion of IS fighters who harbor such views, but hundreds of individuals – probably more – demonstrably do. That said, most of these threats are chronologically and tactically unspecified and probably reflect a general intention to harm rather than immediate and concrete plans.

Videos
The video collection contains five productions whose main message is a threat to America.[12] In addition, one video praises the January 2015 Paris attacks, and three threaten Japan. Hostile statements almost certainly appear in other videos too, but these were the productions whose main purpose was to issue a threat. Three things are worth noting about the five videos addressed to the US. First, the threats are presented as a form of retaliation and made conditional on America's future involvement in the Iraqi-Syrian theatre. Second, most of the videos appeared in the autumn of 2014, shortly after the escalation of US-led airstrikes. Third, the videos make up a very small proportion – about one percent – of the collection as a whole. The vast majority of items are devoted to local affairs such as battle exploits and various aspects of rebel governance.

Dabiq magazine
Dabiq magazine contains several calls for attacks and promises of conquest in the West. The most explicit appears in issue 4 (published in mid-October 2014), where one article says, "at this point of the crusade against the Islamic State, it is very important that attacks take place in every country that has entered into the alliance against the Islamic State, especially the US, UK, France, Australia, and

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Germany."[13] That same issue also cites, in three different places, a passage from a statement by al-Adnani which includes the phrase "We will conquer your Rome, break your crosses, and enslave your women." Issues 7, 8 and 9 also include praise for recent attacks in the West and portraits of several of the perpetrators, who are described as IS-affiliated. Issue 9 also eulogizes "the shuhadā' of the Islamic State including Numan Haider and Man Haron Monis (Australia), Michael Zehaf-Bibeau and Martin Couture-Rouleau (Canada) Zale Thompson, Elton Simpson, and Nadir Soofi (America), Amedy Coulibaly (France), Omar Abdel Hamid el-Hussein (Denmark), and Sofiane Amghar and Khalid Ben Larbi (Belgium)."[14]

However, several mitigating points are worth noting here. First, the call for attacks is exactly that: a call, addressed to sympathisers out there, not a commitment of the organization's resources to future attacks. Second, in issue 9 the call is qualified as the second best course of action after leaving the West for the Caliphate: "Either one performs hijrah to the wilāyāt of the Khilāfah or, if he is unable to do so, he must attack the crusaders" [our emphasis].[15] Third, al-Adnani's promise to conquer Rome is qualified a few sentences down as a long-term strategic milestone: "If we do not reach that time, then our children and grandchildren will reach it."[16] Fourth, as with the video collection, threats to the West make up a very small proportion of the content of Dabiq magazine, and they receive less column space than the threats to IS's local enemies.

Al-Baghdadi and al-Adnani

It is in the statements by Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, IS's lead spokesman, that we find the most significant verbal threats to the West. On 22 September 2014 he issued a landmark call for attacks in the West:

"If you can kill a disbelieving American or European – especially the spiteful and filthy French – or an Australian, or a Canadian, or any other disbeliever from the disbelievers waging war, including the citizens of the countries that entered into a coalition against the Islamic State, then rely upon Allah, and kill him in any manner or way however it may be. Do not ask for anyone's advice and do not seek anyone's verdict. Kill the disbeliever whether he is civilian or military, for they have the same ruling."[17]

In January 2015 he repeated the call, adding an ominous phrase that hints at the possibility of centrally directed plots: "what lies ahead will be worse – with Allah's permission – and more bitter, for you haven't seen anything from us just yet" [our emphasis].[18] Then in March 2015, al-Adnani said, "know that we want Paris – by Allah's permission – before Rome and before Spain, after we blacken your lives and destroy the White House, the Big Ben, and the Eifel Tower."[19] These last two statements represent the strongest indication of the possibility of centrally directed IS attacks in the West that we have found in their ideological corpus so far. While we should take them extremely seriously, they are not unequivocal promises of impending terrorist attacks, for they might also be interpreted as a promise of a strategic conquest of the West that will materialize many years down the line.

What about the "caliph" himself? Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's five statements since July 2014 contain fewer explicit threats to the West than al-Adnani's. Al-Bagdhadi mentions the West relatively rarely, and when he does, it is mostly in general terms that declare it as an enemy or warn it of defeat. For example, on 1 July 2014, he said:

"the world today has been divided into two camps … the camp of the Muslims and the mujahidin everywhere, and the camp of the jews, the crusaders, their allies, and with them the rest of the nations and religions of kufr, all being led by America and Russia, and being mobilized by the jews."[20]

And in November 2014, he said:

"indeed the Crusaders will be defeated. By Allah's permission, they will be defeated. And indeed the Muslims will be victorious. By Allah's promise, they will be victorious. And the march of the mujahidin will continue until they reach Rome, by Allah's permission."[21]

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Al-Baghdadi's most explicit reference to attacks in the West is a brief repetition, in his May 2015 statement, of the call for sympathiser attacks: "we call upon every Muslim in every place to perform hijrah to the Islamic State or fight in his land wherever that may be."[22]

What is significant here are all the things the top IS leader is not saying. He is not saying anything that commits the organization to attacks in the West in the short term. He is not providing a carefully constructed set of arguments for why attacks in the West are warranted. And he has not devoted entire statements to addressing America.

All of this Usama bin Ladin did repeatedly before and after 9/11. In 1998, for example, Bin Ladin said,

"We have formed with a large number of our brothers the Global Islamic Front for Jihad against Jews and Crusaders … the work of many of those brothers is going well … we pray to God that He will open the way for them to wreak revenge on the Jews and the Americans. … Some countries… have ordered us to stop attacking America, but we believe these attacks are a duty incumbent upon us."[23]

In October 2001 Bin Ladin said "I swear by God … that neither America nor anyone who lives there will enjoy safety" (7 Oct 2001), and in a 2004 message addressed to the American people, he said "we have been fighting you … Just as you violate our security, so we violate yours" (29 Oct 2004).[24] These are but snippets from al-Qaida's long history of promises to attack America.

All of this suggests that, while IS leaders view the West as an eternal enemy and applaud mass-casualty attacks there, they do not seem quite as hell-bent on carrying out attacks on the West as their counterparts in al-Qaida Central. The content, tone, and quantity of IS's anti-Western rhetoric suggest, thus far, a certain reluctance to commit the organization fully to a terrorism campaign in the West.

At the same time, the group is calling loudly for sympathiser attacks, and there is conceivably a whole spectrum of low-commitment forms of assistance that IS could provide to interested attackers. Besides, an organization this size is bound to suffer from principal-agent problems, in the form of mid-level cadres or footsoldiers taking initiatives that stray from the strategy of the top leaders. There is, in other words, every reason to expect attacks in the West that are linked to IS in some way. As we shall see, there have been several.

The number and features of IS-connected plots

To identify the number of IS-related plots and gauge the relative scale of that phenomenon, we built a dataset of jihadi attacks and serious alleged attack plots in the West from January 2011 through June 2015 and searched for information about any IS connections to those plots. The dataset is an extension of Thomas Hegghammer's Jihadi Plots in the West dataset (which covered the period 1990-2010) and used the same basic data collection procedure.[25] We collected news reports and other open sources on attacks and plot investigations, generating first a long list of incidents. We included foiled and aborted plots because we wanted to capture the "gross plot production" and not just the net number of attacks that happen to avoid police detection. We then sifted the cases to include only what we call "serious plots", that is, alleged plots which 1) are cited in more than one media report, 2) involve intent to inflict serious physical harm on people, 3) involve one or more identifiable perpetrators with radical Islamist motivations, 4) were due to occur on Western soil, and 5) contain some evidence of weapons possession and a reasonably defined target. We excluded several plots whose features either conflicted with these criteria or could not be established from the available information.[26]

Next, we sought to identify the core plotters in each case and to compile information about their background, motivations, and connections to militant networks. We then coded the plots for a number of variables (see appended dataset linked at the end of this article), including presence of returnee foreign fighters and presence of an IS connection. An IS connection could be anything from the perpetrators having expressed sympathy with IS to them having received instructions from the top IS leadership.

Limitations

There are several potential sources of inaccuracies in our data. One is that we work only with open-source information, so we may have missed some plots altogether, excluded some plots that were more serious than reported in the press, or included others that were less serious than reported. We believe the number of significant plots we missed altogether is small, because in Western democracies, terrorist plots should enter the legal system, because the media is hungry for information about terrorism, and because intelligence services have an incentive to reveal serious foiled plots (since it demonstrates effectiveness and/or helps justify increased funding or changes in legislation). We realize that many counterterrorism operations go unreported, but we suspect that this happens most often when suspected plans are foiled at such an early stage that there is insufficient evidence to prosecute, in which case nobody can really know whether the plot would have come to fruition. That said, it is important to realize that security services routinely carry out disruptive operations – often in the form of arrests on charges "lesser" than domestic terrorism, such as fundraising, recruiting, or foreign fighting – which may serve to prevent some potential plots from developing.

Another source of error is that we are dealing with recent incidents, several of which have not been tried in court or been completely investigated yet. We know from experience that the complete picture of a given case often does not emerge until several years after the attack or arrests occurred. The media's initial description of a given plot can sometimes differ from the final, corroborated version of events.[27] Our coding of IS connections and of the presence of foreign fighters is particularly vulnerable to this problem. To complicate matters, there are biases cutting both ways: on the one hand, the difficulty of establishing a plotter's communications or travel history can lead to underreporting of IS connections or foreign fighter involvement. On the other hand, the general fear of IS plots and foreign fighters can lead to overreporting as analysts and journalists lean to the more "interesting" interpretation of ambiguous data. We do not know the net effect of these biases; we can only report what the currently available open sources tell us.

A final point to bear in mind is the extensive use of so-called "sting operations" in terrorism investigations in the United States, which we suspect contribute to a certain overreporting of plots there. According to our count, between 11 and 14 of the 25 plots in the United States in this period involved undercover operatives, compared to zero in the European and Australian plots. In many of these cases, the undercover operatives provided the means (in the form of a fake weapon), though not necessarily the intention, for the suspects to reach the advanced stage of preparation that allowed for arrest and prosecution. Entrapment debates aside, it is reasonable to assume that a few of those plots would not have reached a similarly advanced preparation stage without the interference of an undercover operative. We therefore believe that certain types of "proto-

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plots" that would fizzle out and not get reported in Europe appear as plots in the US data. We do not, however, purport to know how large this effect is.

Overall findings

For this four and a half-year period, we identified a total of 69 plots; 37 in Europe, 25 in North America, and seven in Australia. Of these, 19 (28 %) came to execution; 12 in Europe, five in North America and two in Australia. The total number of plotters involved was about 120 (over 80 for Europe, over 30 in North America and nine in Australia).

We found reports of an IS connection in 30 of the 69 plots. Most of the IS-connected plots occurred in the last 12 months (from July 2014 through June 2015); of a total of 33 plots in this period, 26 (79 %) had an IS connection. As we shall see below, however, the connection in most cases consists of declared support for IS, not meetings or communications with IS cadres. In any case, these numbers suggest that Islamic State has surpassed al-Qaida as the main provider of inspiration for plots in the West.

It is worth noting here that the distinction between IS-linked plots and al-Qaida-linked plots is not always clear. Several plotters appear to have been influenced by both IS and al-Qaida, consuming propaganda from, and expressing support for, both groups. Some were long-standing al-Qaida supporters who only became infatuated with IS a short while before the plot. And in Paris in January 2015, the Kouachi brothers and Amedy Coulibaly even coordinated their respective operations, one in the name of al-Qaida on the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), the other in the name of IS.[28] The al-Qaida-affiliated Jabhat al-Nusra and IS may be fighting it out in Syria, but in the West many radicals do not seem to think they need to choose sides.

Of the 30 IS-connected plots, 11 (37%) came to execution, which is higher than the rate for non-IS-connected plots (21%). We suspect that this difference reflects the fact that many of the IS-connected plots were small (involving one or two individuals) and low-tech (using stabbings and handguns), making them more difficult to prevent. This is also reflected in the damage they caused: executed IS-connected attacks caused an average of 1.4 deaths compared to 2.9 deaths for executed non-IS-connected attacks (1.7 without the Kouachi brothers attack).

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Role of foreign fighters

We can also use the data to examine the role of foreign fighters in Western plots. There has been much concern about a possible terrorism "blowback" from the participation of around 4,000 Western (mostly European) Muslims in the Syria war.[29] We find that 16 of the 69 plots involved at least one foreign fighter.[30] All but one of them occurred in Europe. Of these 16 plots, nine involved foreign fighters (11 individuals) who had been to Syria (the remaining seven plots had links to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen).[31] Of these nine Syria-linked foreign fighter plots, six included people (eight individuals) who had trained with IS.[32] Of the other three plots, two were linked to Jabhat al-Nusra and one to an unspecified group. Our data thus suggest that the blowback rate – the proportion of outgoing fighters who return and plot attacks against their home country or region – from Syria is thus far very low indeed: 11 plotting returnees from an outgoing contingent of around 4,000 makes for a blowback rate in the order of 1 in 360. Even if our underreporting is very significant – let us say we have missed two thirds of the cases and the real number of plotting Syria returnees is around 30 – the blowback rate is still lower than one in a hundred. It is likely that this rate will increase over time, though not immediately, because the number of outgoing foreign fighters is currently also growing, mathematically offsetting the effect of new plots. Only after the flow of foreign fighters decreases significantly are we likely to see an increase in the blowback rate.

Our count of Syria-related foreign fighter plots is of course strikingly low compared with the blowback anticipated by some analysts and policymakers in recent years. A full discussion of the reasons for the low blowback (thus far) is beyond the scope of this article, but a good start is offered by Daniel Byman, who in a recent article listed six "off-ramps on the road to terrorism" for foreign fighters, namely, 1) death, 2) moving to another conflict, 3) disillusionment, 4) disinterest in attacking the West, 5) lack of attack instructions, and 6) incompetence.[33]

Let us add three additional observations to help make sense of the numbers. The first is that a blowback rate of one in hundreds is by no means uncommon. Several other foreign fighter destinations in the past, such as Somalia or Iraq in the 2000s, had blowback rates

in the same order of magnitude; it was Afghanistan and Pakistan in the 1990s and 2000s that pulled up the historical average.[34] As Hegghammer has argued elsewhere, it is primarily those destinations in which there is a group with a concerted strategy of targeting the West that have high blowback rates.[35]

Second, it has long been much easier to go to Syria than to most previous foreign fighter destinations.[36] This has not only led to very high numbers of people going, but also to less selection for ideological commitment than was the case for previous destinations. This has probably led to the foreign fighters in Syria being, as a group, more diverse and less radicalized at the point of departure than those who headed to, say, Waziristan in the 2000s.

Third, the very anticipation of a high foreign fighter blowback from Syria probably triggered more preemptive arrests of Syria returnees than for returnees from previous conflicts, which, in turn, may have decreased the number of foreign fighter plots. Since 2013, tens if not hundreds of returning foreign fighters have been arrested and charged with crimes related to their activities in Syria or with other offences "lesser" than domestic terrorism. It is reasonable to assume that a few of these detained returnees might one day have gone on to plot in their home countries had they not been arrested. Bear in mind that only some returnees were charged on their return (only France appears to have had an "arrest them all" policy), and that the selection of whom to arrest was probably informed in part by intelligence assessments of the returnees' degree of radicalization. In other words, several of the returnees considered most dangerous were "taken off the street" before they were in a position to plot attacks. It is impossible to say how many plots might have been preempted by such arrests, and it is even harder to say whether the plot reduction effect is permanent, given that many of the returnees convicted on foreign fighter crimes will receive relatively short sentences.

Of the nine Syria-linked foreign fighter plots, only one came to execution, namely, the May 2014 attack on the Jewish Museum in Brussels by Mehdi Nemmouche, who trained with IS. Of the seven non-Syria-related foreign fighter plots, two came to execution: the Merah attacks in March 2012 and the Kouachi brothers' attack on Charlie Hebdo in January 2015. The execution rate for foreign fighter plots generally is lower (19 %) than for plots without foreign fighters (31 %), which is interesting because it was the other way around in the 1990-2010 period.[37] This may be because intelligence services have tracked foreign fighters particularly closely in recent years and may therefore have become better at detecting their plots. However, the executed foreign fighter plots in our dataset were far more deadly on average (7.3 deaths per attack) than the executed plots without foreign fighters (1.2 deaths per attack).

However, other than indicating that IS has exerted a significant influence on jihadi plotters in the West, especially in the past year, these data do not tell us very much about the commitment of IS as an organization to attacking the West. For this we need to look more closely at what "IS-connected" really means.

The nature of the IS connection
The problem with terms such as "IS-connected", "–related" or "-linked" is that they can misrepresent the degree to which IS as an organization is implicated. Fifteen years of al-Qaida-influenced terrorism in Europe have taught us that the patterns of interaction between flagship terrorist organizations in the "East" and militants in the West can be very complex indeed. By the mid-2000s, it was clear to most observers that 9/11-style missions, in which the top al-Qaida leadership grooms an attack team and sends it to the West, were rare, and that many plots involved people with a more remote connection to al-Qaida cadres. This led analysts to introduce the distinction between "top-down"- and "bottom-up"-instigated al-Qaida plots, which has long been the dominant way of parsing jihadism in the West. However, as the bitter and inconclusive polemic between Bruce Hoffman and Marc Sageman indicates, this dichotomy is arguably not very fruitful.[38] Many plots were neither clearly top-down nor clearly bottom up, and the lack of a consensus on observable coding criteria led different analysts to interpret the same plot differently. We will have the same problem if we apply a dichotomous categorization framework to what is clearly a spectrum of link types between IS and those who plot in its name.

Link typology
We therefore propose a new link typology that better reflects the spectrum of link types and has more easily observable coding criteria. We developed it inductively by examining al-Qaida-related plots in Europe in the 2000s and identifying the most common distinct types of links between leaders and attackers. We ended up with six different link types

representing points on a spectrum ranging from very low to very high leadership involvement. Each type is associated with a specific kind of interaction that is in principle observable, such as electronic communication or training. The typology assumes a hierarchy of interactions, in which some reflect a stronger leader-attacker connection than others. For example, we assume that training camp attendance produces a closer connection than electronic communication, and that instruction from top leaders is more significant than instruction from mid-level cadres. This need not always be the case, but we think it is in most situations.

The six link types are as follows:

1. Training and top-level directives. The attacker[39] trains in the organization's heartland, is tasked by top leaders to attack in the West, and is supported materially by the organization in the planning and preparation process. The classic historical example is the 9/11 attack.

2. Training and mid-level directives. The attacker trains in the organization's heartland and is encouraged by mid-level cadres to carry out a more or less specified attack in the West, but has little or no interaction with the top leadership and receives little or no material support from the organization. Examples from al-Qaida's history include the various plots by the Abu Doha network in the early 2000s or the Mohammed Merah attack in 2012.

3. Training. The attacker trains in the organization's heartland, but is not specifically instructed by anyone to attack in the West. Instead, he develops the motivation to attack in the West himself, in the belief that he is doing what the organization wants. A historical example is Mohammed Geele, who trained with al-Shabaab in Somalia, returned to Denmark, and tried to assassinate the cartoonist Kurt Westergaard in 2010.

4. Remote contact with directives. The attacker communicates remotely (typically by telephone, email, or social media) and bilaterally with cadres of the organization and receives personal instructions to attack in the West. A good example from al-Qaida history is Rajib Karim, who in 2010 was instructed by Anwar al-Awlaki via encrypted email to attack airline targets in the UK.

5. Remote contact without directives. The attacker communicates remotely and bilaterally with members of the organization, but does not receive instructions to attack in the West. An example would be Fort Hood shooter Nidal Malik Hassan, who exchanged emails with Anwar al-Awlaki without discussing operations.

6. Sympathy, no contact. The attacker expresses ideological support for the group through his propaganda consumption, written or spoken statements, or some other aspect of his behavior, but does not communicate bilaterally with anyone in the organization. One example is Roshonara Choudhry, who stabbed a British MP in 2010, having been inspired by al-Awlaki's online lectures.

Plots should be classified according to the "highest" level of leader-attacker interaction observed in the data at hand, and they should only be assigned one value, for a high-level interaction usually also includes the lower ones.

The idea here is that by classifying plots according to link type, we can gain a more fine-grained understanding of a given organization's involvement in external operations, and we can track minor variations in that involvement over time. We use it here to study IS, but in principle it can be applied to any organization with an international footprint.

If a six-pronged typology offers too much resolution for one's analytical purposes, it is possible to group the types into larger categories. For example, one might refer to plot types 1-4 as "high-involvement plots" – because the organization is "involved" in the plot through training and/or directives – and plot types 5-6 "low-involvement" plots because there is no training or directive. We apply this simplified typology toward the end of the article.

Coding IS plots

To better understand IS's involvement in international operations, we coded all the 30 IS-related plots in our dataset according to this typology. For data we used open sources, mostly newspaper reports and legal documents, so all the reliability caveats mentioned earlier apply here too, with a vengeance. Coding for interaction type requires very detailed information, which is scarce – and probably often inaccurate – in open sources. We suspect that many of our coding decisions will have to be revised as more and better information about each case emerges. Still, we believe there is some value in trying our best with the available data, if only to illustrate how the typology can be operationalized.

We believe that the error margin is larger on the upside than on the downside—that is, we think it is more likely that our coding decisions will need to be changed to higher-level link type values than to lower-level ones. One reason is that more details are likely to emerge over time. The other reason is that we coded conservatively, assigning values only based on explicit references to particular interaction types in the sources, even when the circumstantial evidence pointed to another, higher interaction type. For example, in the Creteil plot, media reported that Mohamed Ouaharani, after returning from training with IS in Syria, contacted an IS member in Syria saying he was "ready to work". We coded this as type 3 (training only) because we do not know for sure whether the IS member responded with directives or whether Ouaharani simply signaled his availability.

Findings

The first basic finding is that the IS-connected plots do indeed represent a spectrum of different link types. We identified IS links of all types except type 1 (training and top-level directives). To illustrate what these link types look like in practice, we provide five brief sample descriptions below. Descriptions of all plots are included in appendix 1 (see link at the end of this article).

- Type 2: The Verviers Plot. On 15 January 2015 Belgian police conducted a series of raids in and around the town of Verviers, killing two in a shootout and arresting thirteen. In the apartment of the main suspects, police found bomb-making material, automatic rifles, and police uniforms, which authorities believe were to be used in attacks on police targets. Several of the suspects had recently returned from Syria, where they had trained with IS. After their return they had allegedly communicated, by cellphone and in code, with a Greece- or Syria-based IS member named Abelhamid Abaaoud (of Moroccan-Belgian origin), who investigators believe acted as a middleman between the plotters and IS cadres in Syria. Another suspected middleman between the Belgian cell and IS, an Algerian, was captured in Greece and extradited to Belgium.[40]

- Type 3: The Brussels Museum shooting. On 24 May 2014, the French-Algerian Mehdi Nemmouche shot and killed four people with a Kalashnikov at the entrance of the Jewish Museum in Brussels. Nemmouche, who was later captured in France carrying the assault weapon wrapped in a black ISIS flag, had recently returned from Syria, where he allegedly had been part of an ISIS hostage handling unit. Nemmouche was allegedly inspired by Mohammed Merah's attacks in Southern France and reportedly wanted to outdo him. No evidence has emerged suggesting Nemmouche was taking orders from anyone in Syria.[41]

- Type 4: The Vienna plot. In October 2014, Austrian authorities arrested a 14-year old Austrian-Turkish boy whom they accused – and later convicted – of planning to bomb Vienna's Westbahnhof train station. The boy, identified as "Mertkan G.", had reportedly interacted online with IS members in Syria who had promised him USD 25,000 and a special position within IS if he carried out an attack in Austria. According to Austrian police, he subsequently made "concrete enquiries about buying ingredients" for a bomb similar to the one used in the Boston Marathon attack.[42]

- Type 5: Ceuta plot. On 10 March 2015 Spanish authorities announced the arrest, in the North African Spanish enclave of Ceuta, of two individuals accused of plotting attacks in Spain or in neighboring countries. The suspects were Spaniards of Moroccan origin who had been arrested two months previously possessing guns, munitions, knives, and military uniforms. Authorities said the suspects had been in contact with IS online, but media reports included no indications that the suspects had received instructions.[43]

- Type 6: The Copenhagen attack. On 14 February 2015, Danish-Palestinian Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein went on a shooting spree, killing two and injuring five. He first attacked a speaking venue hosting the Swedish artist Lars Vilks (known for his caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad) and then attacked security guards outside a synagogue. El-Hussain appears to have been radicalized in prison less than a year before the attack, and he had been released just two weeks prior to the operation. In those two weeks he expressed support for IS on social media, and he declared allegiance to IS on his Facebook page hours before the attack. No evidence has emerged suggesting he had communicated with an IS member, but he reportedly did share a prison cell with another IS sympathiser at one point.[44]
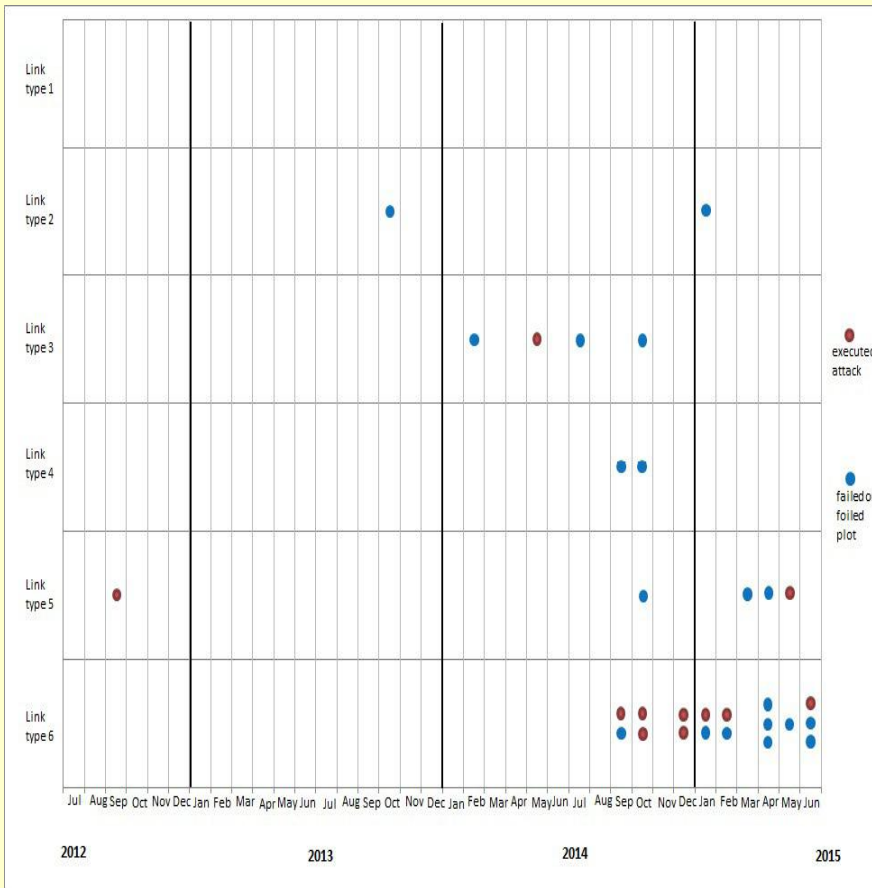
A second, more significant finding is that the majority of IS-related plots belong in the lower end of the spectrum of organizational involvement (see Table 1). We found no plots of type 1 (training and top-level directives), and only two cases of type 2 (training and mid-level

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directives). By contrast, we found 17 cases of type 6 (no contact whatsoever) and five of type 5 (remote contact without directives). If we group plot types into high and low-involvement plots as described earlier, then our data suggest low-involvement IS plots outnumber high-involvement ones by a factor or almost three to one (22 vs 8).

Type	Frequency	Case names
1 – Training and top-level directives	0	
2 – Training and mid-level directives	2	"London Mumbai plot", Verviers plot
3 – Training	4	Riviera plot, Brussels museum shooting, Creteil plot, Surgeon plot
4 – Remote contact with directives	2	Baryalei-Azari plot, Vienna plot
5 – Remote contact, no directives	5	Cannes-Torcy attack, Remembrance Day plot, Ceuta plot, Catalonia plot, Garland attack
6 – Sympathy, no contact	17	Brisbane plot, Melbourne stabbing, Quebec car attack, NYC Axe attack, Sydney hostage taking, Tours knife attack, Coulibaly attack, Cornell Capitol plot, Copenhagen attack, Fairfield plot, Anzac Day plot, Velentzas/Siddiqui plot, Fort Riley plot, Greenvale plot; Lyon gas factory attack, Usaamah Rahim plot, NYC aeronautics student plot

Table 1: IS-linked plots, by link type

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Figure 1: Chronological distribution of IS-linked plots in the West, by link type

A third finding is that we see no clear upward or downward trend in the evolution of high-involvement plots (see Figure 1). In other words, our data do not suggest that IS has been investing itself more in external operations over the past year.

A fourth finding, clearly illustrated by Figure 1, is that the number of "low-involvement plots" (or sympathiser attacks) has increased significantly in recent months. After two years with zero such plots, we had 21 in the last ten months

of our timeframe (September 2014–June 2015). The cut-off date seems to be September 2014, which is exactly when IS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani issued the first call for sympathiser attacks in the West. The trend is so striking that we strongly suspect al-Adnani's call contributed to the increase.

A final observation is that some lower-level IS cadres in Syria have been trying to remotely recruit operatives for attacks in the West. In addition to the two "type 4" plots in our dataset, there have been several reports of Western foreign fighters in Syria trying to persuade followers back home to attack. A recent undercover investigation by the British tabloid the Sun documented one such attempt in considerable detail.[45] A journalist posing as a radical Islamist in Britain allegedly entered into contact online with a Syria-based British foreign fighter named Junaid Hussain, who reportedly proceeded to offer detailed operational instructions for a pressure-cooker bomb plot on an Armed Forces Day parade in London in June 2015. It is not clear whether this type of lower-rank plot generation is indicative of a deliberate strategy of plausible deniability by the IS leadership or a principal-agent problem caused by the overzealousness of lower cadres. In any event, it illustrates the highly complex relationship between IS as an organization and those who operate in its name.

Conclusion

This brief analysis suggests that Islamic State does not currently pose the same type of terrorist threat to the West as al-Qaida did in the 2000s. IS has not yet "gone global" in the sense of having committed a substantial proportion of its resources to out-of-area operations. Instead, it has assumed a profoundly ambiguous, hard-to-read posture toward terrorism in the West. In words, its leaders have promised to conquer Rome and called on supporters to carry out international terrorist attacks, but the same leaders have not explicitly promised to devote their organization to major operations in the near future. In deeds, the lower echelons of the organization have been implicated in several plots, but the top leadership appears not yet to have groomed attack teams for major operations in the US or Europe the way Usama Bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri did. Why they have not done so is a question for further research, but we suspect it has to do with the group's local state-building ambitions.

At the same time, however, IS appears to have succeeded more than al-Qaida in triggering so-called "individual jihad" operations by unaffiliated sympathisers in the West. Al-Qaida tried to do this in the early 2010s through Inspire magazine and other messages, but the call was only seriously heeded by a limited number of people. By contrast, IS has thus far inspired an average of two sympathiser attacks per month since al-Adnani's call for individual jihad was issued in September 2014. The difference in the reception of the two calls for individual jihad is illustrated by the case of Australia, where there were no al-Qaida linked sympathiser plots in the 2010-2013 period, but seven IS-linked ones between September 2014 and May 2015. There may of course also be a cumulative effect at play, by which IS is profiting from the ideological groundwork laid by Inspire magazine.

In any case, IS sympathiser plots represent a formidable challenge to Western security agencies. So far, there have been over twice as many IS sympathiser plots (22) as plots involving foreign fighters who returned from Syria (9). IS sympathiser plots admittedly tend to be small in scale, but they have an execution rate of almost 50% (10 of 22) compared to around 20% for other plots in the same period. The implication for counterterrorism professionals is clear: worry not only about the foreign fighters, but also about IS sympathisers who never made it to Syria.

The big question, of course, is whether the IS leadership might change strategy and start mounting major operations in addition to the smaller ones it is already inspiring. We hesitate to make predictions here, because the strategic decision to go global lies in the hands of a small number of individuals with strong ideological convictions. We will suggest, however, that the only thing Western governments can do to influence that decision is to appeal to the leadership's rational side and make it abundantly clear that going global will cost the organization dearly.

Still, deterrence may not be enough, so Western governments should make strategic plans for a scenario in which IS does go global. This means, among other things, keeping close track of IS support networks in the West and thinking carefully in advance about how to respond – politically, diplomatically, and militarily – to a major IS terrorist campaign. If it happens, it will be one of the most anticipated offensives in terrorist history, and we will have no excuse for being unprepared.

Appendix 1: Case Descriptions of Jihadi Plots in the West, January 2011-June 2015 (PDF)
Appendix 2: Coded Data on Jihadi Plots in the West, January 2011-June 2015 (Excel)

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▶ **References are available at source's URL.**

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A Long Way from Success: Assessing the War on the Islamic State

By Charles Lister
Source: http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/439/html

Since the Islamic State's (IS) declaration of a Caliphate (khilafa) in late-June 2014 and the initiation of U.S.-led coalition airstrikes against IS targets in northern Iraq in August 2014 and in Syria in September 2014, the terrorist organization has become an increasingly international phenomenon. In the weeks and months that followed, growing numbers of jihadist militants began swearing their loyalty (bay'a) to IS, answering IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's call for worldwide pledges of allegiance to his self-declared authority.

By early August 2015, IS and its "Leader of the Faithful" (amir al-mu'minin) Baghdadi – also referred to as Caliph Ibrahim – had accepted into the fold groups operating in Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Nigeria, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan-Afghanistan (Af-Pak) and Russia's North Caucasus, in addition to its already existing force in Syria and Iraq. While some of these new IS affiliates – designated as "provinces" (wilayat) within the Caliphate – are operationally smaller than others, all have carried out attacks following their inclusion within the IS umbrella. Nonetheless, it remains unclear to what extent each international faction and each of the existing 36 provinces has established and consolidated solid command and control (C2) links to the IS central leadership in Syria and Iraq.

The clear and present threat posed by IS justifies, and indeed demands a counter-reaction by international states and the local governments who directly face IS on the battlefield. After nine months of coalition operations, a series of tactical-level victories have been won against IS in parts of Iraq and northeastern Syria, but these do not yet appear to amount to anything close to strategic progress in genuinely degrading and destroying IS as an organization. In fact, some facets of the strategies adopted may even prove counterproductive in the long-term.

Considering the sheer scale of IS operations in Syria and Iraq and the questionable nature of its command and control (C2) links with groups in other countries, the strategic priority for the international community should remain countering IS in its Iraqi and Syrian heartlands. However, the existing strategy is neither sufficient in scale or design to effectively achieve this objective or to transform tactical gains into long-term strategic progress.

Progress Assessment
Iraq
Since the U.S. and its allied coalition began airborne operations against IS in northern Iraq on 8 August 2014, it has steadily lost a series of battles. Indeed, as Michael Knights and Alexandre Mello wrote in late April 2015, "the Islamic State has been on the defensive in Iraq for more than eight months and it has lost practically every battle it has fought."[1] In Iraq's largely Kurdish north, IS forces have faced defeat en route to Irbil, at the Mosul Dam and in Sinjar. Within the country's interior and around the capital Baghdad, IS forces were defeated at the Haditha Dam, outside the Ayn al-Asad base, in Tikrit, Amerli, Dhuluiya, and Jurf al-Sakhar, to name only a few locations.

However, the Iraqi Army itself remains a debilitated force incapable of leading its country's anti-IS operations. With approximately 48,000 active personnel, the army has been outnumbered and outperformed in Iraq's core territories by the irregular Popular Mobilization Units (PMU, or al-Hashd al-Sha'bi in Arabic),[2] which count as many as 100,000 men within their ranks.[3] Formed in June 2014 following a fatwa issued by Shia cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani that called upon his countrymen to mobilize and protect "their country and their people and their holy places,"[4] the PMUs are dominated by Shia Iraqi militias, including Asa'ib Ahl al-

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Haqq, Kata'ib Hizballah, Kata'ib al-Imam Ali, Kata'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada, Abu al-Fadl al-Abbas Forces and the Badr Organization.

With Iranian backing – including training, C2 coordination and supplies of both weapons and vehicles – the PMUs have emerged as effective counter-insurgent forces, leading the capture of Tikrit in mid-April 2015, for example. The increasingly visible presence of highly mobile Iranian Safir jeeps equipped with multiple rocket launchers (MRLs), launching platforms for improvised rocket-assisted munitions (IRAMs), and more recently modified versions of the American BGM-71 TOW anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) have become telltale signs of expanding Iranian military assistance to PMUs in Iraq. However, the close relationship with Iran and their largely sectarian makeup, sporadic allegations of anti-Sunni war crimes, looting,[5] and population displacement suggests the PMU's short-term tactical victories may be outweighed by long-term damage caused to the central government's reputation within Iraq's Sunni heartlands.

Since its first days of operational existence in Iraq in 2003 as Jama'at al-Tawhid wa'l-Jihad, IS has sought to engender and exploit chaos by rupturing foundational social fabrics, especially inter-sectarian trust and cooperation. The preeminent role of a largely Shia force – whose leaders include commanders designated as international terrorists by the U.S. government[6] – in combating a Sunni extremist organization on Sunni territory is unlikely to heal existing societal rifts or to defeat the sectarian dynamics that IS has encouraged and fed off in Iraq for so many years.

When IS captured its third provincial capital, the city of Ramadi, on 17 May 2015 after more than a year of battle, Iraq's Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi was forced to call upon the PMUs to launch a counter-offensive. While Abadi was clearly stuck between a rock and a hard place in making such a decision, broader fears over the implications of a Shia-dominated militia force leading an assault on the provincial capital of Iraq's most fervent Sunni heartland appeared reinforced when the operation was initially named Labayka ya Hussein (We are at your service, Hussein) – essentially a Shiite slogan.[7]

Syria

Meanwhile, in Syria, IS has faced a more limited coalition of countries targeting it from the air, with the U.S.-led effort seeking mainly to strike openly available targets largely in isolation from broader battlefield dynamics on the ground. The exception to this latter assessment thus far has been the coordination of strikes with Kurdish fighters combating IS in northern Syria, beginning most notoriously in Kobane (or Ayn al-Arab) in late 2014 and continuing elsewhere in the northeast in early 2015.

While Kobane attracted the world's attention and drew IS into expending hundreds-upon-hundreds of its fighters, the town was in fact of little strategic (let alone existential) value to IS, and its near total destruction and depopulation by March 2015 took away any sense of victory for the Kurds or the U.S.-led coalition. Despite this, the Kurdish militia Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (YPG) has been consistently effective, with its forces – often in coordination with coalition airstrikes – recapturing as many as 200 villages and towns in northeastern Syria in May 2015 alone. Moreover, its capture of the border town of Tel Abyad – a target of genuine strategic value to IS – in mid-June and of the nearby 93rd Brigade base on 22 June suggested Kurds had the military potential to threaten IS' de facto capital of Raqqa, provided coalition air support continued.

However, it remains unclear how committed the Kurdish YPG would be to expanding military operations and committing valuable resources beyond what is core Kurdish territory. Notwithstanding some statements suggesting that Raqqa city remains a YPG target, increasing tensions between the Kurdish militia group and the broader largely Sunni Arab opposition – which accused the YPG of ethnic cleansing in mid-June – may complicate their role when moving further into Syria's interior. Moreover, Turkey's recent airstrikes against IS in northern Aleppo and its resumption of conflict with the PKK threatens to undermine the YPG's role within anti-IS coalition operations. Although Turkey has at times made subtle distinctions between the YPG and PKK, the Syrian faction is nonetheless structurally part of the PKK's broader organisational umbrella and should Turkey-PKK hostilities continue to escalate, dynamics across northern Syria could fundamentally transform.
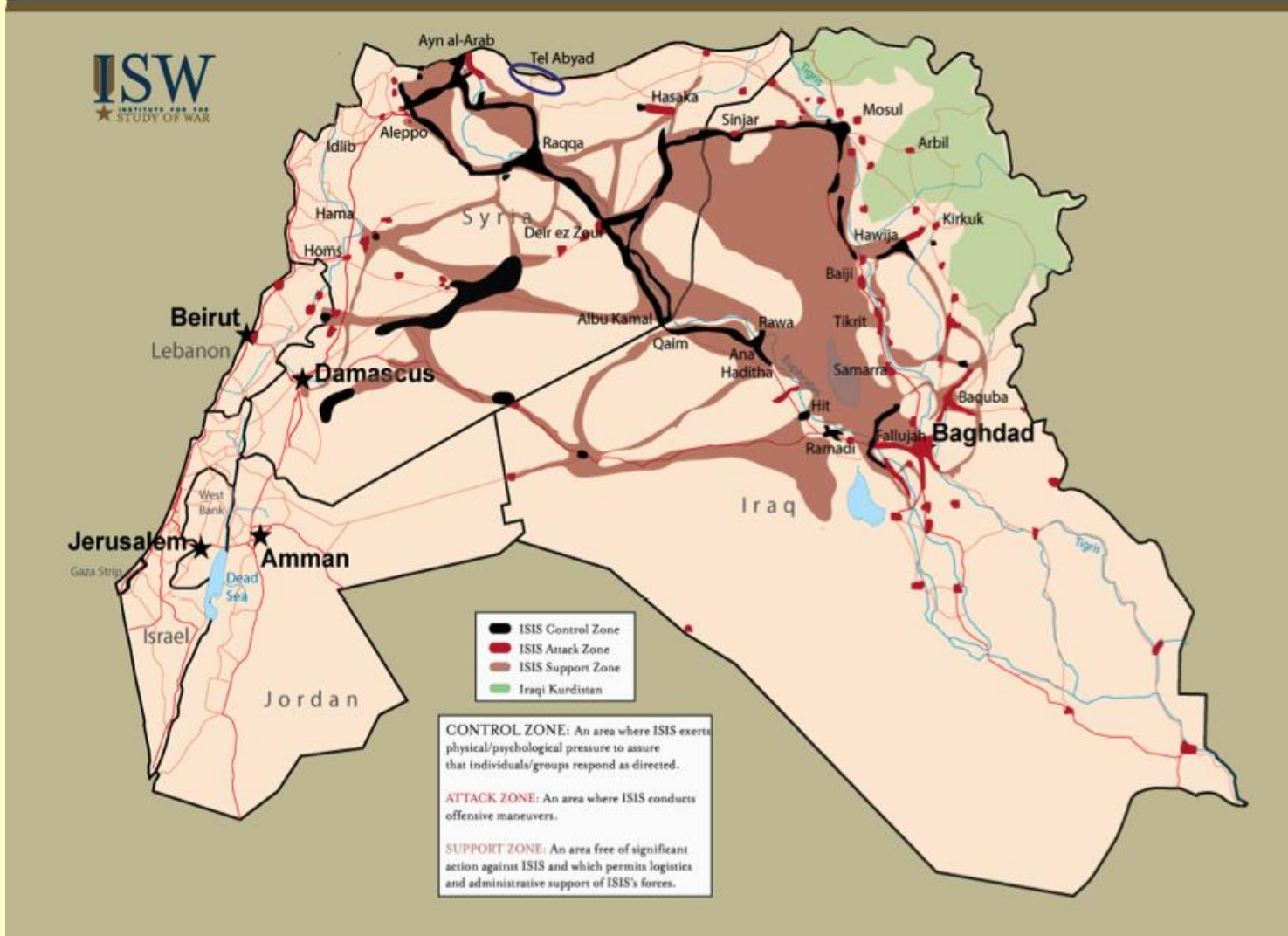
Moreover, reports that the Assad regime has begun using the predominantly Kurdish northeastern Hasakah governorate as a new base for Iranian military personnel and avowedly pro-regime Baathist Sunni militias[8] could serve to open new conflict fronts that may neutralize the potential for Kurdish progress against IS altogether.

Credit: Institute for the Study of War, June 2015.

IS' most strategically valuable territories – those that ensure the movement's long-term survival – in eastern Aleppo, Raqqa and throughout the governorate of Deir ez Zour have largely remained untouched, save for the daily targeted coalition strikes on vehicles, makeshift oil refineries, tactical weapons systems and groups of fighters. The key to IS's further degradation and sustainable long-term defeat in these regions lies with the predominantly Sunni insurgency, which proved its determined opposition to IS in early 2014 with a successful offensive that forced the group out of the governorates of Latakia, Idlib, and western Aleppo by March 2014. Insurgent forces have since prioritized the fight against the Assad regime, notwithstanding a few localized anti-IS offensives in western Qalamoun near the Lebanese border, around Damascus, in rural Homs, and in pockets of the southern governorates of Quneitra and Deraa.

Within today's current dynamics and the intensely complex nature of Syria's multi-front conflict, the moderate opposition Syrian insurgency – encompassing secular nationalist, 'moderate' and mainstream Islamist, as well as Salafist factions – remains either incapable or otherwise distracted from launching any all-out strategy to rid Syria of the acknowledged IS threat. The deployment of the first 54 members of the U.S. 'trained and equipped' New Syrian Forces (NSF) into northern Aleppo in mid-July has thus far been a catastrophic failure. In the days

before being 'turned on' by their American backers, NSF leader Colonel Nadim al-Hassan, one of his deputies and four other fighters were kidnapped by Jabhat al-Nusra in an ambush and swiftly accused of being American agents sent to undermine the jihad in Syria. A day later, Jabhat al-Nusra launched a night-time assault on the headquarters of Colonel Hassan's 30th Division, killing five, wounding 18 and taking 20 prisoner. Commenting after the attack, unnamed U.S. officials remarkably claimed that they had expected Jabhat al-Nusra to "welcome" the 30th Division "as an ally in its fight against the Islamic State."[9]

It therefore seems likely that IS will retain control of much of its most valuable territories and indeed continue its ongoing and gradual infiltration and acquisition of new territory from both regime and opposition forces. In fact, increasing reports of suspected IS suicide bombings and assassination attacks targeting Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham and Faylaq al-Sham in the northwestern governorate of Idlib suggest IS may be preparing the ground for a more overt expansion westwards.[10]

Re-assessing Strategy

Since the initiation of coalition anti-IS operations, progress has clearly been made against the group in parts of Iraq. The group's operational momentum there has been definitively slowed, but IS nonetheless remains a potent militant force capable of inflicting considerable death and destruction and indeed, capturing territory – Ramadi being the case in point. While Kurdish forces have also made progress across the border in northeastern Syria, IS is sitting far more comfortably elsewhere in the country and despite its loss of Tel Abyad, appears to face no immediate existential threat.

In addition to its international expansion and declared management of 36 "provinces" across 10 countries, IS has operationally adapted in order to sustain an internal sense of momentum on the battlefield. While control of population centers is undoubtedly of critical value in providing the group with its most important source of revenue (tax and extortion, worth an estimated $600 million in 2014 in Iraq alone[11]), the control and freedom of movement across a depopulated desert has proven crucial as strategic depth and a launching ground for varying levels of military and guerrilla activity.

IS has also set about fortifying its control of major urban centers – like Raqqa, Mosul and now Ramadi – through the use of trenches and constructed walls, the demolition of bridges, as well as the emplacement of huge numbers of booby traps and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) both inside towns and cities and on transport routes leading to them. For example, IS laid over 100 IEDs on one 8km stretch of road leading to Tikrit,[12] while Kurdish Peshmerga defused more than 6,000 IEDs on roads leading to IS-controlled territories in northern Iraq from August 2014 to March 2015.[13] Such defensive strategies aim to slow IS' adversaries, drain their resources and provide opportunities for IS militants elsewhere to launch diversionary operations. While IS has so notoriously proven itself capable of acting like a light infantry force, it remains at heart a determined and capable insurgency, which highly effectively exploits Robert Taber's famed image of a flea and a dog:

The guerrilla fights the war of the flea, and his military enemy suffers the dog's disadvantages: too much to defend; too small, ubiquitous, and agile an enemy to come to grips with.[14]

IS is clearly a determined enemy and poses a potent threat that the current coalition strategy is failing to effectively 'degrade and defeat.' In order to better counter IS and the broader terrorist threat emanating from Iraq and Syria, three key issues need to be addressed and acknowledged: IS's driving force(s), tactical gain vs strategic victory, and the importance of Syria.

IS's driving force(s)

That IS is driven by a particularly extreme apocalyptic Salafi-jihadi ideology appears to have become an established view. Indeed, a close monitoring of the group's public rhetoric and propaganda materials underlines this assessment clearly. At its ideological heart, IS seeks to overthrow the existing world order, which it deems to be corrupt and inherently un-Islamic; to convert all people to Islam; and to rule all Islamic lands and eventually the world according to its fundamentalist interpretation of Islam. The establishment of an Islamic State (first in Iraq in 2006, then again in Syria in 2013) and then its Caliphate (in June 2014) is seen as the foundation upon which this transnational and transformative Islamic order would be established.

Fatwas and other judicial writings by IS scholars on the treatment of Christians and Jews, as well as other ethnic minorities and sects, follow a similarly extremist vision of the world.

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The self-justification of the enslavement of Yazidis in Iraq and the taking of their women as concubines served as but one example of IS' driving Salafi-jihadi ideology.[15]

However, while this extremism feeds into IS' international propaganda, fuels its recruitment, and portrays the kind of fearsome image that can at times weaken the will of its adversaries on the battlefield, IS is similarly invested in another ideological driving force. On a more local and less internationally-visible level, IS' has consistently sought to portray itself as a movement devoted to defending the rights of disenfranchised, disaffected and repressed Sunni communities. In both Syria and Iraq, IS presents itself as a both an army and an alternative "state" to defend against and replace repressive or failed political systems perceived as oppressive to Sunni Muslims. In areas of both countries, it has been this socio-politically focused image that has been most effective at securing IS the kind of roots into sectors of society that provide the potential for long-term survival.

While this social driver, which could be said to be more akin to a "Sunni nationalism," has given IS opportunities to offer itself as a viable alternative, it has consistently followed this "carrot" up with a "stick" – in the form of overwhelming societal control through absolutist forms of law and order and behavioral codes. In times of chaos and instability – something IS actively seeks to cause and sustain – such a "carrot and stick" approach can potentially prove a highly effective method of territorial and population control, so long as the "carrot" is at least equal to if not superior to what else could be alternatively offered. By supplementing lost momentum in Syria and Iraq with the perception of growth more internationally through the acquisition of new affiliates, IS further enforces a sense of permanence within its controlled communities.

In isolation, it is thus right and justified that academics and practitioners seek to understand IS' extremist ideology and to design effective counter-narratives. However, a powerful counter-narrative requires a delivery mechanism sufficiently credible to convince those within IS and others potentially vulnerable to its message. This is an extraordinary challenge and one that no Western nor Middle Eastern government appears to have yet achieved.

Consequently, the most potent materially-focused policy one can use today against a group like IS is to ameliorate the socio-economic and political failures and divisions that are so evident within the countries IS is operating in – especially Syria and Iraq. Practically speaking, this would serve as a highly effective counter-narrative, of sorts.

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In Iraq, the government in Baghdad must accelerate and expand on attempts to recover a nationalist image of a strong, united, multiethnic and multi-confessional society. In this respect, the international community has an urgent duty to coerce divisive elements within parliament and the broader political system to bolster the voices of credible Sunnis and to guarantee that continued financial and military assistance to the Iraqi government is made strictly conditional on progress in this regard. Considering the still primary role being given to the military effort to counter IS in Iraq, the role of Sunnis must be expanded significantly. Plans to form, train, arm and support a Sunni National Guard force and re-established local police forces drawn largely from Sunni tribes in Anbar must be followed through and be given preeminent roles on the frontline in both capturing territory and then holding it.

In Syria, it must be acknowledged that the continuation of the Assad regime remains one of IS' most effective recruitment tools and the Syrian security apparatus has been clearly duplicitous in facilitating – both directly and indirectly – the growth and expansion of IS as a means of harming and dividing the opposition insurgency. Despite countless international diplomatic statements declaring the Assad regime's loss of legitimacy, the U.S. and its coalition allies have consistently failed to defiantly confront the regime's survival. Thus far, this has only provided further time and space for jihadists like IS to operate unchallenged.

Without solving the foundational political issues in these countries, societal divides, instability and power vacuums will always exist for violent extremists to exploit. Only by acknowledging IS' use of such social cleavages to grow roots and expand will the international community stand a chance of genuinely challenging the survivability of the IS phenomenon.

Tactical Gains vs. Strategic Victory

As a result of IS' well-known and preeminent slogan of 'lasting and expanding' (baqiya wa tatamaddad), it has been assumed that removing the group's operational momentum would catalyze its degradation and eventual destruction. When combined with the expectation that a Caliphate initially restricted to parts of Syria and Iraq should

subsequently continue to grow in order to maintain its legitimacy, this assessment of IS' strategic weakness or vulnerability would appear justified.

However, the fact that IS' self-proclaimed Caliphate came under attack by foreign powers – who IS labels "Crusaders" – less than six weeks after its establishment lent the group an insurance policy. Any major future losses to the Caliphate could then be blamed on these "Crusaders" and their perceived "War on Islam," thus – IS would hope – encouraging further support from Muslims around the world.

This above-mentioned scenario is based on IS suffering serious strategic losses of territory and assets, which as has been explained, has not yet occurred as a result of the existing strategy and dynamics on the ground. Consequently, the kinds of losses imposed on IS in areas of northern Iraq, in Diyala and Salah ad Din, around Baghdad and in northeastern Syria should be read as important initial progress in preparing the ground for a more determined attempt at "rolling back" the group from its most valuable areas of control. Thus far however, these aforementioned victories have amounted by and large to tactical gains rather than strategic defeats to the IS movement.

Throughout the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq in the 2000s and especially during the latter years of the surge – during which IS sustained debilitating losses to its senior leadership – IS demonstrated remarkable resilience. Since August 2014, IS has adapted its force structure and operational tactics in order to sustain offensive operations amid more challenging circumstances. In addition to its more orthodox military assaults that have at times displayed "textbook infantry tactics,"[16] IS has demonstrated an ability to operate as an organization capable of hybridized warfare. In other words, depending on the specific dynamics prevalent within a single area of operations, IS has demonstrated a "shape-shifting ability" that both allows it to remain a step ahead of its adversaries while improving its chances of evading defeat on the ground or by air.[17] By maintaining such asymmetric capabilities, IS heightens its inherent advantage over conventional military adversaries.

Consequently, the current strategies being employed in Iraq and Syria to counter IS are vastly insufficient. Air power alone in Syria – except for in the Kurdish northeast – has only a minimal chance of even slowing IS' capacity to expand, which it has in fact continued to do since strikes began in September 2014, into additional areas of Homs, Damascus, Deir ez Zour and the Qalamoun. Although coordination between local ground forces and international air assets has been more common in Iraq, IS has yet to face a local Sunni adversary that is capable of recapturing ground, countering the IS social and religious narrative, and supported by a central government perceived as sufficiently representative of Iraq's Sunni community. As effective as they have proven to be on the battlefield, neither Kurds nor Iranian-backed Shia militias possess such stabilizing capabilities.

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Importance of Syria

Since the beginning of anti-IS coalition operations in August 2014, Iraq has assumed priority status for the use of airstrikes, the provision of support to and coordination with armed actors on the ground, and other such activities. The partiality of coalition members to act in Iraq is entirely understandable considering the more favorable diplomatic circumstances and the perception that the central government in Baghdad and the Kurdish authority in the north are bodies potentially worthy of partnership. Moreover, it is incontrovertibly true that the vast majority of IS' history has been developed on Iraqi territory.

However, countering IS should not be so Iraq-focused. Since its emergence in Syria as an active militant entity in May 2013, IS has invested heavily in dominating strategically valuable territory in parts of the country, including placing its capital in the city of Raqqa. It is no coincidence that the attack on Mosul in early June 2014 included units of fighters who had crossed from northeastern Syria and that after Mosul's capture, vast quantities of weaponry and finance were transported across the border into Syria within 24 hours.

The intensity of the Syrian conflict; the proliferation of armed factions on all sides; the huge influx of weapons; the divisive involvement of multiple regional and international states; as well as the brutality of the fighting itself makes the war in Syria a ripe candidate for intractability. All jihadist groups in the country, including IS, have invested in Syria precisely for this reason. The longer the conflict continues, the more unmanageable it will become and the more jihadists will find themselves operating within an environment that secures their long-term future. Thus, by placing the fight against IS in Syria on the backburner, the international community is in fact gifting the group with more time to consolidate its presence.

Moreover, the contiguity of IS' territorial control along the Euphrates River from Raqqa, through Deir ez Zour and across the border into Iraq's Anbar province en route to Baghdad provides IS with a critically important C2 and supply link between different fronts. The fall of Ramadi to IS on 17 May 2015 underlined the extent of IS' potential in Iraq's Anbar province and as of early June 2015, the group was in an even stronger position in Syria's eastern Deir ez Zour governorate, where regime forces held only half the provincial capital and an airbase on its southern periphery.

Whatever happens in Iraq and so long as the international community fails to more definitively push for a political transition in Damascus, Syria will remain a critical area of IS operations and a region of invaluable opportunities for the group. To counter IS most effectively, Syria and Iraq must be treated with equal importance and as part of a single unified strategy.

Looking Ahead

President Obama confidently proclaimed on 11 February 2015 that "our coalition is on the offensive, ISIL is on the defensive, and ISIL is going to lose."[18] Two weeks later, the commander of U.S. Central Command,General Lloyd Austin III, told the U.S. Congress that coalition operations had killed an estimated 8,500 IS militants since August 2014,[19] and in late-July, that number stood at an estimated 15,000.[20] Considering the CIA had assessed IS' total manpower to have been no more than 31,500 in September 2014, these numbers appear quite remarkable. However, these figures could in fact potentially be considered realistic. After all, the UN estimated in April 2015 that at least 22,000 foreign fighters had travelled to fight jihad in Syria and Iraq since 2011,[21] a majority for IS. Considering local fighters are likely to count for considerably more, the CIA's estimate appears to have been conservative. In fact, it seems feasible that when incorporating locally based recruits and those placed on standby or in civil guard-type roles within IS territory that the group could number as many as perhaps 70,000. In August 2014, Iraqi expert Hisham al-Hashimi suggested IS may have contained as many as 100,000 members.[22] A great deal of those fighters however, could be deemed only marginally loyal to the core IS cause. Should local governments and the international community succeed in "rolling back" IS from its core power centers and ensure the provision of a credible socio-political alternative to IS, the group may dwindle to a smaller core akin to the 20,000-31,500 the CIA suggested.

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Numbers notwithstanding, U.S. Deputy Special Presidential Envoy to the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL Brett McGurk was absolutely right in April 2015 when he clearly stated that IS "remains an adaptive and formidable foe … so this is going to be a long-term campaign that is going to take years, not months."[23] However, while it is crucial that IS' proven ability to adapt and endure amid concerted attack be acknowledged, the lengthy duration of any fight against the group should not take away from the urgency of ensuring the strategy is right from the start. Recapturing villages and towns on IS' periphery is an important first step, but only if it comes as part of a broader strategic appreciation of the challenge ahead. Slowing IS momentum does not necessarily mean the group has been placed on the road to defeat, just as the destruction of makeshift oil refineries does not mean IS finances have been dealt an existential blow.

While some success has been secured since August 2014, the current counter-IS strategy does not appear sufficient to produce a sustainable and peaceful post-phase. There is today an urgent need for a bold and objective assessment of the thinking behind the coalition's current plan. An appreciation of the three points outlined in this paper is crucial, but more important perhaps than anything else is an acceptance that it will not be military action alone that stands a chance of degrading, let alone defeating an organization like IS. In fact, it could safely be said that IS will never be entirely defeated from the outside, but rather constrained to a minimal operational capability whereby its own internal dynamics under such pressure may lead to its self-destruction.

The key to defeating IS is solving the societal and political failures in Iraq and Syria. The Iraqi central government and its security forces must be strongly pressured to become more genuinely representative of Iraq's diversity. Meanwhile, Iran's increasingly preeminent role in shaping paramilitary forces in Iraq should be restrained, both by nationalist Iraqis and if necessary, by the international community. In Syria, the international community must finally acknowledge that Bashar al-Assad does not represent anything close to a unifying figure for his country and it will only be through a political solution in the shape of a managed transition that Syrians can begin to take back control of their territory from groups like IS. A Syrian rebel train and equip

program that envisages success in years and not months is miles from a recipe to success.

Finally and above all else, when considering both current and future regional and international security, today's IS-focused lens must be broadened. While IS' dramatic gains, brutal violence and declaration of a Caliphate may have temporarily out-performed al-Qaida in the global competition for jihadist pre-eminency, the latter organization is undergoing a process of renewed confidence, this time emanating from its affiliates in Syria and Yemen, rather than from its senior leadership in the Afghanistan-Pakistan (Af-Pak) region, where the recently reported death of Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar is likely to spark an at least temporary period of uncertainty and instability.

The consistent rise in power of al-Qaida's Syrian affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra has been complemented by its adoption of pragmatic attitudes on the ground, which has thus far ensured its place as a recognized integral component of the overall opposition insurgency against the Assad regime. Since late 2014, Jabhat al-Nusra has exploited this position – which contrasts sharply IS' brazen unilateralism – to build a formidable stronghold in the northwestern governorate of Idlib, bordering Turkey. Now home to the majority of the so-called 'Khorasan Group' and countless other senior veteran al-Qaida commanders dispatched from Af-Pak, Yemen, Iran and Saudi Arabia, Idlib will likely become a hub of transnationally minded jihadist militancy for years to come. In Yemen meanwhile, the outbreak of civil conflict between Houthi fighters and forces supportive of Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi in 2015 has revealed a gaping power vacuum into which al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has been able to step and re-expand. A significant escalation in AQAP-related violence and international plots can therefore be expected in the coming months and into 2016.

Combating terrorist organizations is an intricately complex task, requiring a credible and united multinational effort that incorporates multi-disciplinary action within politics, diplomacy, society, religion, economics, development, military affairs and many other such areas. While a group like IS, which represents a qualitative step beyond a mere 'terrorist organization,' is militant at its core, it is reliant above all else upon societal and political instability, which can generally only be solved through a constructive engagement with those root causes. Naturally, this requires a parallel military component that aims to strategically weaken the organization on the ground, but this must be directed and led by local Sunni actors, backed up if necessary by external powers.

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IS is arguably the most potently powerful and capable terrorist organization the world has faced in modern times, but its strategic thinking is comprehensible and its weaknesses are clear. Only by grasping the true nature of these fundamental issues can we begin to think about more practically implementing a blueprint to 'degrade and destroy.'

▶ **References are available at source's URL.**

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Boko Haram survives regional ffensives ans strikes back

James Brandon
Source:http://www.jamestown.org/programs/tm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=44260&tx_ttnews[backPid]=26&cHash=95d591fcd5d6c1e4a4b80f91acba42b2#.VcWZBPk41OC

Rumors of the demise of the Nigerian militant group Boko Haram appear to have been greatly exaggerated, as indicated by a series of fresh attacks by the organization in Nigeria and surrounding countries in recent weeks. On August 4, Boko Haram militants killed nine Nigerian fisherman on the shores of Lake Chad (*Vanguard* [Lagos], August 5). The Nigerian Army later claimed to have found and killed 13 of the attackers, as they sought to escape the area, and also captured an all-terrain vehicle used by the gunmen. On the same day, Boko Haram kidnapped an estimated 135 people around the village of Chakamari, in neighboring Cameroon (*Vanguard* [Lagos], August 5). In addition, earlier in July, a series of suicide attacks took place in Cameroon's Far North Region, close to the Nigerian border, killing around 50 people in total (*Cameroon Tribune*, July 15). These and other attacks in the region are believed to have killed around 800 people in the last two months (*Vanguard* [Lagos], August 5).

In response, the Nigerian authorities have continue to seek regional and international support against Boko Haram, while also continuing to pursue a military solution in northeast Nigeria, where Boko Haram activity is concentrated. In particular, Nigeria is pushing ahead with Chad, Cameroon and

Niger with plans to create a 8,700-strong combined force to operate across the region's borders (The News Nigeria, July 30; BBC, July 29). Nigeria has also lobbied for the United States to lift its restrictions on military aid to Nigeria, imposed under the Leahy Law over concerns of human rights abuses, and has also sought foreign economic assistance to address chronic underinvestment in the country's northeast (News Agency of Nigeria, August 4; *Daily Post* [Lagos] August 5).

Accompanying this has been forceful public messaging by the Nigerian authorities, and particularly by the military, that the government has successfully put Boko Haram on the back foot. For instance, the authorities have recently claimed that a group within Boko Haram has reached out the government's Centre for Crisis Communication (CCC), requesting to open dialogue with a view to laying down their arms (*Daily Post* [Lagos], August 4). Claims of victory—or near victory—have also been widely touted by the military. "They [Boko Haram] are no longer looking for land to occupy. They are looking for soft targets," said the outgoing commander of the army's 2nd Division in one such recent statement

(*Vanguard* [Lagos], August 4). This message was echoed by the army's retiring Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-General Kenneth Minimah, who said in a recent valedictory speech that he believed that the army's performance against Boko Haram had been previously been hampered by political infighting, but that the army's increased emphasis on enforcing discipline and cracking down on lax behavior, including through the use of courts martial, would bolster its fight against militants (This Day Live [Lagos], August 5).

In Cameroon, meanwhile, official responses have included increased security throughout the country, including in the south, at public gatherings and bars, and checks on the curriculum in religious schools have also been instituted (*Cameroon Tribune*, August 5). Security has also been increased in the eastern region, which has been less affected by Boko Haram so far, while a citizen-led sticker and poster campaign in the north has also taken place, to "sensitize public opinion that the danger is within us," in the words of one of its organizers (*Cameroon Tribune*, August 5; *Cameroon Tribune*, August 6). Chadian forces have also clashed with Boko Haram militants in recent weeks in the Lake Chad area, although without notably decisive results (Reuters, August 5).

Despite the above range of initiatives, however, Boko Haram attacks still continue to cause significant civilian casualties, and the group remains both stubbornly resilient and active in northeast Nigeria and the broader Lake Chad region. Nigeria's president, Muhammadu Buhari, perhaps buoyed by the recent optimistic statements by his army and government, has himself recently repeated earlier promises to eradicate the Boko Haram threat, even saying at one event in early August that "I assure you that we will defeat Boko Haram by the end of this year" (*Vanguard* [Lagos], August 2). Given Boko Haram's continued survival against the regional forces massing against it, however, such confidence appears sadly misplaced for now.

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D.C. security gaps exposed by gyrocopter landing on Capitol grounds: Senate panel

Source: http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20150807-d-c-security-gaps-exposed-by-gyrocopter-landing-on-capitol-grounds-senate-panel

Aug 07 – **A Senate committee has concluded that the Florida postal worker who flew a one-man gyrocopter and landed it on the U.S. Capitol grounds, had exposed security gaps and inadequate coordination among the agencies charged with protecting the Capitol, the White House, and other Washington landmarks,.**

The conclusion by the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee is the first official finding regarding the 15

to draw attention to his campaign against what he regards as the growing role of money in American politics.
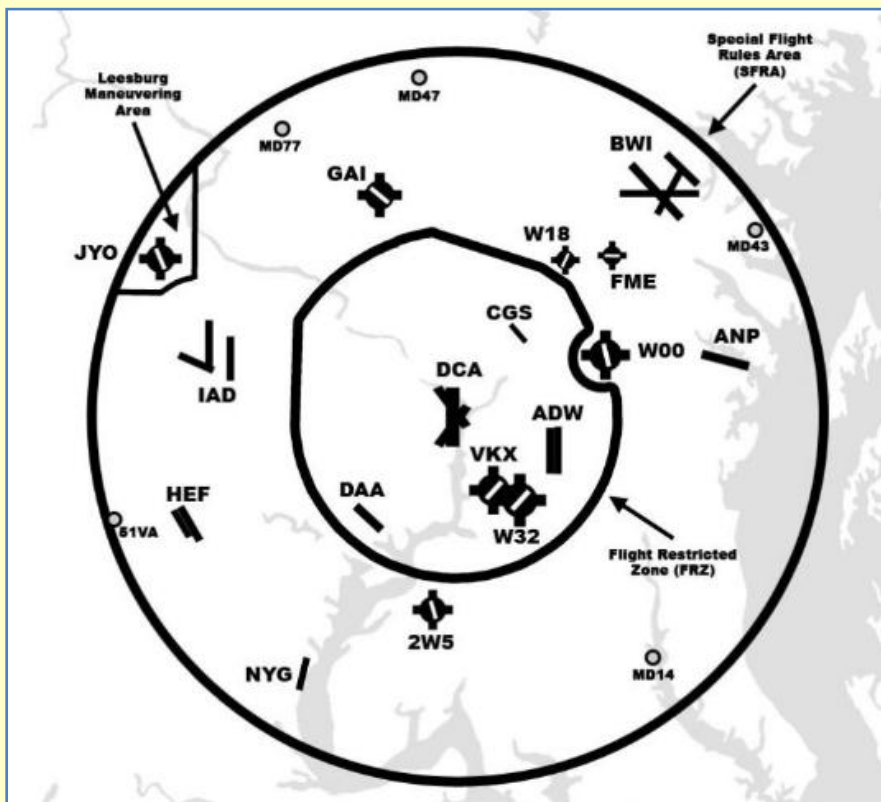
The committee's staff report concludes that the Secret Service should have done more to learn of Hughes's intentions before he launched his flight, rather than concluding he was not a threat – although his inconsistent statements should have been a concern. The Capitol Police, relying on the Secret Service's investigation, chose not to investigate Hughes independently.

The committee found that the state of protective measures also left a lot to be desired, as "technological limitations" with current radar technology allowed Hughes to fly unnoticed by authorities "due to the speed, size, and altitude of his gyrocopter."

Restricted airspace in the National Capital Region

The committee report recommends several steps to improve security and prevent another breach which, next time, may be carried out by an individual who wants to inflict real damage rather than merely engage in a political protest. The report calls on the Secret Service, the Capitol Police, U.S. Park Police, and other intelligence and law enforcement agencies to "improve communication, coordination, and information-sharing processes between and within agencies,"

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April incident.
Doug Hughes said he flew his gyrocopter from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to Washington, D.C.

including determining a "lead entity" for investigating possible restricted airspace breaches.

The committee strongly recommends seeking new "technological solutions" to spot similar flights, suggesting that Congress should consider increasing penalties for those who breach the restricted airspace.

"As we watched a gyrocopter land in front of the U.S. Capitol building, many of us asked whether current security measures are functioning properly, were the right protocols followed, and whether the agencies charged with protecting this airspace acted appropriately," said Senator Ron Johnson (R-Wisconsin), the committee's chairman, in a statement. "While a perfect security apparatus is impossible to achieve, law enforcement agencies need to do more to help ensure people such as Mr. Hughes are not able slip through the cracks and carry out unlawful and unsafe plans, especially within or near our nation's Capital."

Senator Tom Carper (D-Delaware), the committee's ranking Democrat, said that, "I hope the agencies involved will review this report, its findings, and its recommendations, especially when it comes to improving interagency coordination and communication."

The *Washington Post* reports that Hughes has been charged in federal court with six felony and misdemeanor counts and faces up to 9.5 years in prison. Hughes rejected a plea offer from the Justice Department last month and is awaiting trial.

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▶ **Read the full report at:** http://www.ronjohnson.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/9f06187f-c0b5-441b-b5c2-70231018b2f5/2015-08-05-capital-airspace-security-breach---staff-report.pdf

EDITOR'S COMMENT: WH security – what a joke! Thank's God WH is not close to sea shore – a jet ski attack might be included in the attack list!

Islamist Influence in Hollywood

Source: http://humanevents.com/2015/08/08/islamist-influence-in-hollywood/

Americans are clearly alarmed about Islamic terrorists who are encouraging and spreading violence across the globe, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as relentlessly threatening violence to the United States. So readers might be surprised to learn that organizations which sympathize and associate with jihadists are yielded a major say over what the film industry says about Islam and Muslims.

Hollywood, for instance, regularly capitulates to The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) on how to portray Muslims, even though many in CAIR's leadership are sympathetic to Islamic terrorists. As Steve Pomerantz, the FBI's former Chief of Counterterrorism, has bluntly stated: "CAIR, its leaders, and its activities effectively give aid to international terrorist groups."

CAIR's connection to the Holy Land Foundation is central to this assessment. On May 27, 2009, U.S. District Judge Jorge A. Solis sentenced the Holy Land Foundation (HLF) and five of its leaders on convictions of providing material support to Hamas, an Islamic terrorist group whose charter vows to obliterate the State of Israel through violence. CAIR was labeled an "unindicted co-conspirator" in the HLF trial,

the largest terrorist financing trial in the history of the United States.

Additionally, several of CAIR's former leaders are now in jail on terror-related convictions. Moreover, virtually all of CAIR's leadership supports Hamas and Hezbollah, both of which are United States – designated terrorist organizations. Nevertheless, CAIR is actively instructing Hollywood on how to depict Islam and Muslims.

Nihad Awad, Founding Member of CAIR and current Executive Director of CAIR National, boasts that he has successfully negotiated with Hollywood to combat "negative stereotypes of Muslims." In a 2010 speech, Awad made the inaccurate claim that one Hollywood company created in the prior three decades 800 films that presented Muslims from "an Israeli point of view." In fact, no Hollywood company can be found to have created that many films of any type.

==Here are some examples of CAIR's successes in Hollywood:==

Paramount Pictures' **"Sum of All Fears"** was based on a book by Tom Clancy and starred Ben Affleck. The original plot was about Muslim terrorists who shot down an Israeli jet flying over Syria, which was carrying nuclear weapons.

CAIR complained about "negative stereotyping of Muslims" and lobbied to get the script changed for two years prior to the film's release. Eventually, the villains were altered from Muslim terrorists to Australian neo-Nazis.

Twentieth Century Fox produced **"True Lies,"** starring Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jamie Lee Curtis, a movie about an Islamic terrorist and a spy with an unfaithful wife.

CAIR demanded a meeting with the producers. When it was declined, CAIR issued leaflets and held numerous activities protesting the film. Eventually, FOX made a disclaimer stating that the film is a work of fiction and doesn't represent the actions or beliefs of any particular religion.

"Kingdom of Heaven," also produced by Twentieth Century FOX, starred Liam Neeson and Orlando Bloom. It concerned the Crusades and the battle for Jerusalem.

To avoid problems, the producers gave CAIR a special pre-screening of the film and hired a Muslim consultant who is anti-Israel and believes America is a racist society. Accordingly, several scenes were cut prior to the film's release. In the end, the movie was a skewed account of the Crusades, not only depicting the Christians as murderers and hypocrites, but the Muslims as morally superior.

CAIR-NY has gone so far as to demand that CBS stop airing *all* films, TV and radio shows on the subject of Islamic terrorism, whether fact or fiction, claiming that these "defame" Muslims. CAIR-NY argued that the shows cause discrimination and subject Muslim children to harassment. **"Not Without My Daughter,"** starring Sally Field, and several Chuck Norris movies were among the films that CAIR wanted off the air. To boycott all CBS radio and TV shows from both the CBS News and entertainment divisions as well as their advertisers, CAIR-NY started an online petition. Consequently, CBS changed the title of a Chuck Norris film, telling the Los Angeles *Times* in 2003 that in an upcoming film on terrorism it would remove all portrayals of Muslims.

"24 Hours" was a hit syndicated TV series produced for the FOX Channel. It was about a counter-terrorism agent who tried to thwart cyber, biological and chemical terrorist attacks. It won numerous awards, including a Golden Globe and an Emmy. It showed villains from a range of backgrounds, including German, Russian, American and Muslim.

After one episode which portrayed a Muslim family as part of a sleeper cell, CAIR met with FOX to complain. FOX capitulated, cutting additional scenes that presented Muslims negatively. FOX also issued a statement explaining that the show is fiction and assumes people can distinguish fiction from reality. FOX also allowed CAIR to air public service announcements of Muslims from different ethnicities, stating "I am an American Muslim".

It's important to understand that none of these films alleged all Muslims are terrorists. But CAIR wants no Muslims to be viewed in this light. And it's obviously unconcerned with reciprocity, like discouraging the negative stereotyping of Jews that is rampant in the Arab media.

The Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC), founded by Muslim Brotherhood members, has condemned as a "crime" the Oslo accords in which the Palestine Liberation Organization agreed to recognize the State of Israel. Moreover, MPAC officially opposed the designation of both Hamas and

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Hezbollah as terrorist organizations, giving Palestinian violence a pass, and repeatedly condemning Israel's defense of itself against the onslaught of thousands of rockets launched from Gaza. According to MPAC, the greatest violence taking place in Gaza and the West Bank is Israeli "occupation" and its leadership has likened Israel to Nazi Germany.

Yet, MPAC has a Hollywood Bureau which indoctrinates film-makers on Islam and offers consultations for script approval. It also provides awards to those in Hollywood who depict Islam and Muslims in a positive light. Past winners have included Alec Baldwin and Michael Moore. The bureau also connects aspiring film makers, writers and actors with Hollywood professionals and provides Muslim youth with tips on how to succeed in business.

Both new media and traditional media, including Hollywood movies, influence young minds and help shape their worldviews. Instead of appeasing Islamist organizations, Hollywood should fight for classical liberal values, including free speech, artistic license and critical thinking. It should not be complicit with Islamist groups that aim to persuade America there is no such thing as Islamic terrorism.

Twin Terror Strikes: Putting Kashmir On Global Jihadi's Map? – Analysis

By Monish Gulati

Source: http://www.eurasiareview.com/08082015-twin-terror-strikes-putting-kashmir-on-global-jihadis-map-analysis/

Aug 08 – The terror attack on July 27 by a three-member cross-border fidayeen team on the Dinanagar police station in Gurdaspur district has again brought to the fore concerns about the revival of terrorism in the Punjab region. The terrorists, who were dressed in army uniforms, struck at Gurdaspur around 5.30 a.m., stormed the police station, before finally being killed after a 12-hour gun battle. It is suspected, that the same terrorists had planted five Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) on a railway track near Talwandi village between Dinanagar and Jhakoladi. Another terror attack took place at around 8 a.m. on August 5, when two terrorists also suspected to be originating from Pakistan, fired at a Border Security Force (BSF) convoy on the Jammu-Srinagar highway at Simroli. The attack left two BSF constables dead and, in a rarity, one of the two terrorists involved was captured alive.

These incidents have generated a fair share of political potshots, cries of intelligence failure and, as always, there are demands for modernisation of police forces of the states. As in the case of most such incidents, the twin terror strikes raise some fresh issues and have some lessons to offer.

Who Came Calling?

While there is reportedly "overwhelmingly conclusive" evidence that the terrorists involved in these strikes had infiltrated from Pakistan, there is no clarity on when, and how many had infiltrated. In the case of Dinanagar attack, as initial comments from Pakistan questioned more the nationality of the attackers rather than from where they had entered India, it led to speculation that these infiltrators might be of Indian origin, but trained in Pakistan. The timing of the Dinanagar attack also led to a rash of conspiracy theories as to its aim, even linking it to the hanging of Yakub Memon. The aim of the Udhampur attack appeared more simplistic- it was to kill 'Hindus' and there was little to speculate as to the nationality of the attackers.

Methodology

The attack at Dinanagar used the same general methodology of the attacks of the past few months in Kathua-Samba area. Ingress undetected across the International Border (IB) in a small group, then swiftly strike at one or two soft targets in police or army uniforms, cause as many causalities and confusion as possible, head for the highway, commandeer a vehicle to change the speed and direction of your attack on the next target, which is a hard target – a military or police establishment. This hard target once under control will provide protection against counter attacks, and even better, a source of additional weapons and ammunition. What is disturbing is the regularity with which the Pakistan-based militants have employed this methodology and none of our corrective actions have forced them to look for an alternative.

There was one strikingly peculiar commonality between the two attacks – the poor standard training of the terrorists. During the Dinanagar attack the battery connection to the IEDs placed on the railway tracks was faulty, and despite a 12-hour gunbattle the three terrorist never found an opportunity to use their light anti-tank rocket launcher. In the Udhampur attack, the ambush on the BSF bus was, fortunately, poorly executed. This led an analyst to conclude that terror groups in Pakistan were struggling to attract good recruits. What if this bumbling approach was a tactic in a larger plan?

Two other issues would worry India besides the ease with which these militants are crossing the IB. First is their undetected duration of stay and freedom of movement in sensitive border areas. Staying undetected for over ten days allows them to strike further away from the IB at hitherto militancy free areas within the state and in neighbouring areas. Second, is the availability and extent of local support. The fact that local support extends beyond food, shelter and guidance to include arms and ammunition, not only facilitates infiltration it also feeds into the narrative by indicating the presence of local resistance and validity of external assistance.

Assessment

While there is lot of back-slapping and congratulations going around after the capture of Mohammed Naved Usman, but do not be surprised if there is an identical celebratory mood in Pakistan amongst Naved's handlers. When his capture is viewed in the context of what might be the actual plan, Naved would have achieved much more by staying alive and getting captured than in his "Shahadat" or martyrdom would have.

A large part of the interested and connected world would have been treated to the images of this goofy barefoot smiling young man in his early 20s, very much our neighbourhood lad. He comes from a normal family with a decent background and has walked across miles through unfavourable terrain and hostile conditions to take revenge in the name of his faith for "several" Kashmiri killed by Indian security forces. Forsaking a normal comfortable life for what he perceived a higher and a more meaningful purpose. His statements would resonate amongst several young, albeit misguided, Muslims who are streaming across the various countries to Iraq, Syria, etc. It would also showcase to the world how 'emotive' issue Kashmir is for a simple, common devout Pakistani – he is willing to kill and die for it.

Pakistani Narrative

The Pakistani narrative being put forth by various analysts is simple – it makes no tactical sense or serves no strategic purpose for Pakistan to send across these semi-trained half-baked terrorists in groups of two-and threes; so where is the rationale and the motive. These are self-motivated,

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self-radicalised, like-minded lone wolves who have come together to take revenge for the atrocities being wreaked on their fellow Muslims. Here, the Pakistani narrative, which had shifted from state-sponsored terror to rogue non-state actors' post 26/11, is now devolving on self-radicalised individuals acting singly or collectively on their own accord. If such individuals could bomb the Boston Marathon in fortress USA, why not in India, J&K? Therefore India should stop them at the IB, if it can, and turn them over to the Pakistani state, which will take back these misguided youth.

Even better if India wants to put an end to the problem, solve the Kashmir issue, stop fomenting trouble in Baluchistan, and, the cherry-on-the- cake, stop ill-treating Indian Muslims. The larger aim of this narrative appears to be to strike a chord with the "global jihadist" sentiments over the Kashmir issue.

Therefore while in India post these attacks, analysts are discussing the innards of our Pakistan policy, the spirit of Ufa and whether the NSA-level talks will go through or not, Pakistan quite 'helplessly', by stealth, is putting Jammu and Kashmir on the global jihadi's map.

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Is Terrorism a Threat to Suburban Communities?

Source: http://www.thesnaponline.com/news/local_news/is-terrorism-a-threat-to-suburban-communities/article_b525fe20-3ab2-11e5-b4e5-c39a17e6a72e.html
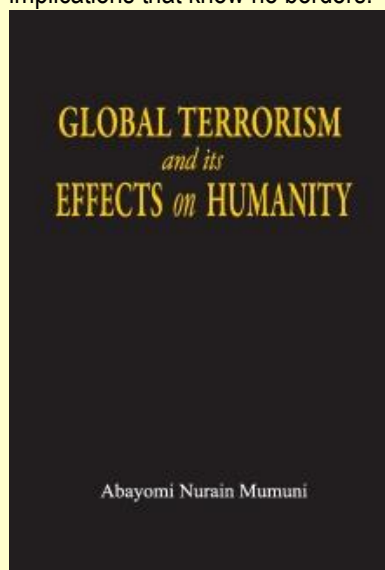

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For many living in suburban and rural communities, the threat of terror may seem very remote and limited to major metropolises. But is this complacency warranted?

"It is common for people to hear the word terrorism and immediately think of Islamic extremists operating abroad. But terrorism comes in many forms, each with its own characteristics," says Abayomi Nurain Mumuni, a fellow at the American Society of Criminology and author of the new book, "**Global Terrorism and its Effects on Humanity**," which addresses the causes, agendas and methods used by terrorists and offers a prescription for eradicating this worldwide threat.

"Unfortunately, no community is truly safe from terror threats," he points out.

From eco terrorism to pathological terrorism, the definitions, causes and manifestations of terror are varied. And modern technologies are creating the possibility for new forms of terror attack that can have global effects. For example, cyberterrorism -- attacks on

information technology -- and biological terrorism -- the release of toxic biological agents -- could have implications that know no borders.

While all this may sound scary, Mumuni offers a prescription for hope.

"Terrorist groups find it easiest to recruit among people with a narrow or distorted view of the world. We must therefore help states give all their citizens a modern education that encourages scientific inquiry and free thought," he says.

He also calls for strengthening public health initiatives to protect against bio-terror threats which could potentially spread infectious disease across the world in a matter of days. "While the World Health Organization's Global Outbreak and Response Network has done an impressive job in monitoring and responding to outbreaks of deadly infectious disease, in the case of an overwhelming man-made outbreak, it is the local health systems that will be in the front line," he says.

While terrorism is a complex issue that will primarily be handled at the state level, experts are encouraging residents of local communities to learn more about terror threats, stay informed of current events, and be active participants in civic matters.

Confronting the narcoterrorism nexus

Source: http://www.terrorismwatch.org/2015/08/confronting-narcoterrorism-nexus.html

On a recent morning, Gen. John Kelly sat in his spacious office at U.S. Southern Command headquarters, a sprawling complex on the outskirts of Miami with a staff of more than 1,200 people. A tall and lanky Marine with a pronounced accent from his native Boston, Kelly is one of the few officers ever to rise from the enlisted ranks all the way to four-star general. Looking out the windows, he interrupted a discussion with a journalist to point to a civilian airliner banking toward the headquarters.

"Look, he's not supposed to be on that flight path," Kelly said, watching the aircraft until it disappeared from view. He then cracked a joke. But as a veteran of multiple combat tours and the commander of an organization tasked with helping to counter some of the most powerful and violent criminal cartels and terrorist groups in the world, it never hurts to stay alert.

Southcom is one of the smaller and most under-resourced of the U.S. military's geographic commands, in large part because its area of responsibility is Latin America, a vast region of 31 countries and more than 475 million people that is nevertheless often an afterthought for U.S. officials preoccupied with higher-priority crises, like Syria or Ukraine. Nor does it help that Southcom's primary mission involves some of the most intractable problems the U.S. government has faced, including long and unsuccessful "wars" on drugs and terror and an inability to secure the southern U.S. border.

And yet, in the news of any given week, Southcom officials see a threat matrix that has a direct impact on the lives of millions of Americans. The public recently learned, for instance, that Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, the world's most notorious drug lord, had escaped from a maximum-security prison in Mexico for the second time. Governors and mayors across the country have recently begun warning of an unanticipated heroin epidemic that has seen the number of heroin-related deaths in the U.S. nearly quadruple. Time magazine recently reported that tiny El Salvador is now on track to replace little Honduras as the world's most murderous country outside a declared war zone. Peace talks between Colombia and the FARC narcoterrorist insurgent group are reportedly on the brink of collapse. Argentines remain transfixed by an ongoing investigation into the mysterious death earlier this year of that country's best-known prosecutor,

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who was found with a bullet in his head after building a case that Iran's terrorist proxy

Southcom officials know that the Sinaloa cartel leader "El Chapo" Guzmán's escape from a

U.S. Southern Command Posture Statements, 2001-2014
Principal Regional Threats and Concerns

	Commander	Criminal Activity					Terrorism		External Actors	Social and Political Issues		Humanitarian Issues		
		Drug Trafficking	Organized Crime	Narco-terrorism	Gangs	Arms Trafficking	Terrorism	Weapons of Mass Destruction		Poverty, Inequality, Corruption	Radical Populism	Illegal Migration	Natural Disasters	Environmental Degradation
2001	Pace	Drug trafficking organizations	Crime and corruption			Arms Trafficking						Colombia		
2002	Speer	Drug trafficking organizations	International organized crime			Arms Trafficking	Terrorism					Central America		
2003	Hill	Drug trafficking		Narco-terrorism		Arms Trafficking	International terrorism							
2004	Hill	Narcotics trafficking		Narco-terrorism	Gang violence		Islamic radicals				Radical populism			
2005	Craddock	Drug and Illicit trafficking	Forgery, money laundering, kidnapping	Narco-terrorism	Urban gangs		Transnational terrorism				Radical movements	Haiti	Hurricanes, mudslides, floods, and earthquakes	
2006	Craddock	Drug and Illicit trafficking	Criminals, kidnapping	Narco-terrorists	Urban gangs					Poverty, inequality, corruption				
2007	Stavridis	Drug and Illicit trafficking	Crime		Gangs							Cuba		
2008	Stavridis	Drug and Illicit trafficking	Violence and crime		Gangs					Poverty, inequality		Cuba		
2009	Stavridis	Drug and Illicit trafficking	Crime and violence	Narco-terrorism	Gangs		Islamic terrorism						Natural disasters	
2010	Fraser	Illicit trafficking	Crime		Gangs		Transnational terrorism	Spread of WMD	China, Russia, Iran	Poverty, inequality, corruption			Natural and man-made dsasters	Enivronmental issues
2011	Fraser	Drug and Illicit trafficking	Citizen safety				Islamic extremists		China, Russia, Iran	Social exclusion, poverty, corruption	Undemoratic tendencies		Hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanoes, floods	
2012	Fraser	Illicit trafficking	Transnational organized crime				Violent extremist orgs		Iran, Russia, China			Mass migration	Natural disasters	
2013	Kelly	Illicit trafficking	Transnational organized crime	Crime-terrorism nexus			Int'l terrorist organizations		Iran, China, Russia					
2014	Kelly	Illicit trafficking	Transnational organized crime	Crime-terror convergence	Citizen security and stability		Islamic extremist groups		Iran, Russia, China	Corruption		Cuba. Haiti		

Compiled by William M. LeoGrande

Hezbollah was behind the long-ago bombing of a Jewish center in Buenos Aires, and his government knew about it.

The linkages between those seemingly unrelated stories are easily missed in a frenetic news cycle, but Southcom officials are paid to connect the dots. Though a military command that is officially responsible for monitoring and detecting drug trafficking and supporting U.S. law enforcement operations in the region, Southcom is also an operational and analytic hub for U.S. counterdrug and counterterrorism activities in Latin America. Its headquarters includes more than 30 representatives from U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies, as well as liaisons from their law enforcement counterparts in numerous Latin American countries.

Mexican supermax prison speaks to the enduring strength and reach of major Mexican drug-trafficking organizations. The current heroin epidemic in the United States is an outgrowth of the American public's voracious appetite for illegal drugs, which sustains a $650-billion-a-year business. The Mexican cartels who fight over that lucrative market are largely responsible for the deaths of more than 120,000 Mexicans estimated to have been killed in drug violence over the past decade. The tactical alliances those transnational criminal organizations have with brutal street gangs like Mara Salvatrucha and Barrio 18 along the smuggling pipeline helps explain why eight of the 10 most violent countries in the world are in Latin America.

Perhaps most worrisome, Southcom officials know that the nexus of violent drug cartels, transnational smuggling organizations and terrorist groups in Latin America continues to sustain terrorist hybrids such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and Peru's Shining Path, and to attract extremist groups like Iran's shadowy terrorist proxy Lebanese Hezbollah, which has long had a presence in the region, due in part to a large Lebanese diaspora in Latin America. That nexus represents the dangerous and rapidly evolving threat of narcoterrorism.

"I'm paid to worry about worst-case scenarios, but to me if a known terrorist group is doing business with a known illicit smuggling network, that amounts to convergence, and we're seeing it in my area of operations," Kelly said in an interview. The organizations may not share the same motives or ideology, he noted, and if a terrorist group announced that it wanted to ship a load of anthrax or some other weapon of mass destruction to the United States, a smuggling cartel would probably consider it bad for business.

"But these illicit smuggling networks don't check passports or do baggage checks, and they involve thousands of unscrupulous subcontractors who are interested in money, not motive," said Kelly. "So if we don't care about a heroin epidemic or illicit drugs from Latin America that kill 40,000 Americans on average each year, or the fact that these cartels are corrupting and intimidating the governments of our neighbors with illicit money and violence, then we should at least care about these brutally efficient smuggling networks that reach deep inside the United States. ISIS [the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria] often talks about that vulnerability on their websites."

An evolving threat

The nexus of terrorism and powerful drug-smuggling cartels is not new, nor is it hypothetical. In the 1990s, the U.S. joined in Colombia's fight against Pablo Escobar's Medellín cartel, a hyper-violent drug cartel that turned to terror in its fight against Colombian authorities, routinely bombing police buildings, assassinating judges and politicians and even blowing up a civilian airliner in flight. Colombia's successful fracturing of the Medellín and Cali cartels in the 1990s had the unintended consequence of creating a vacuum

in the lucrative drug trade. That vacuum was eventually filled by Mexican cartels and Colombia's FARC, which morphed from a Marxist insurgency relying on terrorist tactics into primarily a drug production and trafficking organization. Now under pressure from the Mexican and Colombian governments, those groups are fracturing once again, forming new alliances and seeking sanctuary in weak or more permissive countries like Venezuela and Bolivia, where the government has expelled the U.S. ambassador and the Drug Enforcement Agency representative.

"The Mexican cartels are definitely fragmenting like the Colombian cartels before them, and in that reordering we are seeing more contact between transnational criminal organizations and terrorist groups, though the overlap remains relatively small," said John Donnelly, the Drug Enforcement Administration's special agent assigned to Southcom. "I asked an intelligence analyst recently about the connection between transnational criminal organizations in the region and terrorist groups like Hezbollah, which is certainly present in Latin America. His reply was, 'Define *connection*.' Both terrorist and smuggling groups swim in the same pool and use some of the same services, such as money laundering. That connection exists, but it's not an ideological connection."

In the post-9/11 era, the most resilient al-Qaida franchises and terrorist groups have survived the United States' "global war on terror" by constantly adapting to the pressure. In that Darwinian landscape, many groups responded to the Treasury Department's increased scrutiny of their funding sources by turning to the drug trade or other independent streams of money, such as kidnapping and extortion. According to DEA statistics, nearly 40 percent of the State Department's designated terrorist groups are now involved in drug trafficking.

Until recently Derek Maltz was in charge of the DEA's Special Operations Division. "The model that has long concerned us is the FARC in Colombia, which evolved from a terrorist insurgency into primarily a sophisticated drug-trafficking organization because at some point they realized the money was easy," he said. "Now we're seeing that same phenomenon repeated around the world, with terrorist groups getting involved in drug trafficking because the money is good.

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That's been the case with the Afghan Taliban, al-Shabab in Somalia, the Kurdish PKK terrorist group in Iraq and al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb. Because of this nexus of narcotics and terrorism, we can't just focus on an extremist group's terrorist activities anymore. We have to also go after its money-laundering and funding streams, its arms and drug smuggling, its logistics infrastructure. We have to go after the whole network."

A hybrid threat

The connective tissue between those terror, drug cartel and smuggling networks makes narcoterrorism a potent threat. For instance, in 2011 an Iranian operative named Mansour Arbabsiar with dual Iranian and American citizenship approached an extremely violent Mexican drug cartel with a murder-for-hire proposal. Arbabsiar was working for the Iranian military, and he proposed that a cartel hit man assassinate the Saudi ambassador to the United States by bombing a popular restaurant in Washington, D.C., that the ambassador frequented. The risk of being tied to a violent drug cartel and a mass-casualty terrorist attack in the heart of the nation's capital did not deter Iranian military officials. Luckily, and only by chance, the individual Arbabsiar approached was a DEA informant, and the plot was thwarted.

In another instance the same year, DEA agents in Guatemala intercepted a shipment of cocaine and $20 million tied to the hyperviolent Mexican cartel Los Zetas. In a wide-ranging conspiracy investigation, the DEA discovered that the drug shipment was part of a smuggling network that moved product from South America to Europe via West Africa. The profits were then laundered through the Lebanese Canadian Bank, which scrubbed the money in part by financing a string of used-car dealerships in the United States. The ultimate benefactor of the proceeds was Hezbollah. The U.S. Treasury Department ultimately shutdown the Lebanese Canadian Bank by exposing its links to Hezbollah and sanctioning it under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act.

"In that case you had cocaine being moved by Mexico's Los Zetas cartel generating profits passed through a Canadian-Lebanese money-laundering bank to the Hezbollah terrorist group, which has killed a lot of Americans," said Maltz. In that sense the case resembled the DEA's arrest of Afghan heroin kingpins

Khan Mohammed and Haji Juma Khan, both of whom shipped heroin to the United States and used the profits to arm the Afghan Taliban for their fight with U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan.

The investigation of the Lebanese Canadian Bank was just one of a number of cases suggesting that Africa is the next destination where drug trafficking and terrorism are converging. "If you're a South American businessman involved in drug trafficking, why wouldn't you ship your product through West Africa, where governments are weak and you are much less likely to encounter U.S. law enforcement, and on to Europe, where you can get a much higher price on the street?" said Maltz. "It's a no-brainer, which is why we think Africa is going to be the next Afghanistan in terms of a hub of narcoterrorism."

The ability of hybrid narcoterrorist groups in Latin America to corrupt and undermine governments as far away as Africa was revealed in a 2012 case involving Guinea-Bissau. One of the world's poorest nations, Guinea-Bissau had already been dubbed Africa's first "narco-state" because so many of its top military and civilian leaders were on the payrolls of drug cartels. As a hub for transshipment and a marketplace where drug proceeds could be traded for arms, the nation had attracted representatives of Hezbollah, FARC and al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb. In 2012, DEA sources posing as Latin American drug traffickers approached Guinea-Bissau Naval Admiral José Américo Na Tchuto, who agreed to help store and transship two tons of cocaine. Admiral Na Tchuto also agreed to supply advanced weapons to the FARC narcoterrorist group as part of the deal, including surface-to-air missiles.

"To close the deal, we took a beautiful big yacht and parked it in international waters just off the coast of Guinea-Bissau and sent a motor skiff into shore to bring Admiral Na Tchuto and his co-conspirators out to the yacht to 'celebrate' the deal," said Maltz. "And then we arrested them in international waters."

An existential threat

Despite the rapidly evolving threat of narcoterrorism in Latin America, Southcom has struggled with shrinking budgets and an acute lack of drug interdiction and surveillance assets. As a result, its counterdrug task force was able

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to respond only roughly 25 percent of the time last year even when suspected drug traffickers were detected. Meanwhile, the State Department has supported a Central American Regional Security Initiative to help weak Central American countries cope with the violence and instability engendered by predatory trafficking cartels and tens of thousands of gang members, many of them forcibly deported veterans of the L.A. gang wars. And yet the initiative failed to stop a wave of nearly 70,000 immigrant minors that swept up on the Southwest border last year trying to escape the violence.

At that time, Gen. John Kelly made headlines by calling the confluence of terrorism, violent drug cartels, collapsing societies and out-of-

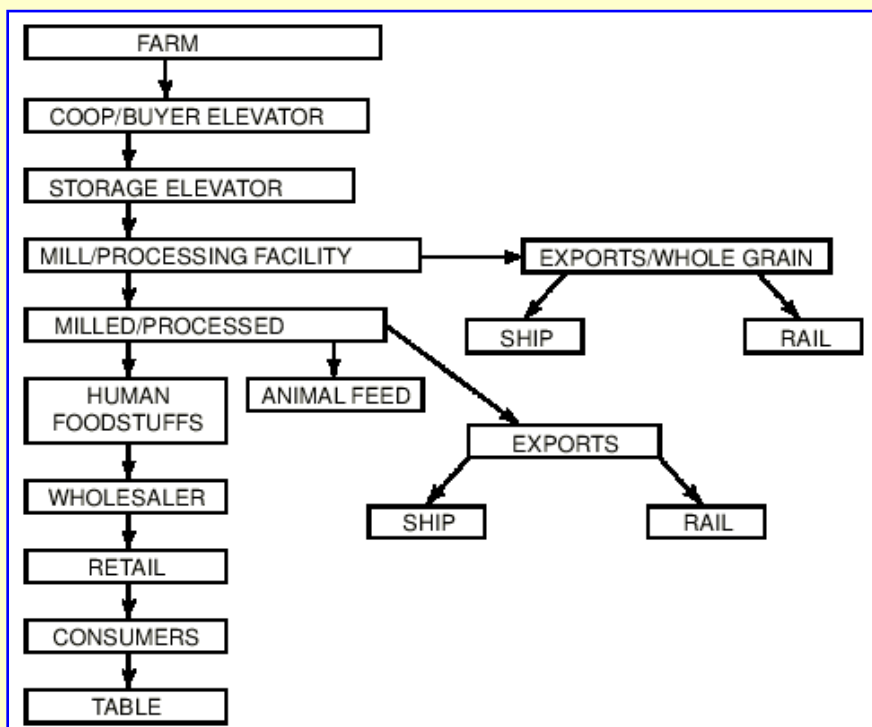control migration an "existential" threat. He stands by that assessment.

"There have been notable successes in this region, such as Colombia's fight against FARC, which has really lost strength and influence, but I continue to be concerned about this convergence between known terrorist organizations and illicit smuggling and money-laundering networks," said Kelly. "There are those in the intelligence community who take the view that it is not a major threat and argue that those groups will never find common cause. I think those who take that view are simply trying to rationalize away the problem because no one wants to raise another major threat at a time when we face so many around the world."

Agroterrorism a serious risk to Americans, U.S. economy

Source: http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20150814-agroterrorism-a-serious-risk-to-americans-u-s-economy-experts

Aug 14 – The word "terrorism" is typically associated with bomb and bullets, but security experts say that there are other types of

Food supply chain (crop)

Outbreak News Today notes that the term "agroterrorism" may be relatively new, but the practice is not. During the First World War, Germany used microbes to poison the feed given to the horses, mules, and donkeys of the Allied armies, in many cases disrupting the logistical efforts of the Allies, efforts which still depended on these animals for hauling supplies.

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In 1984, the Rajneeshee cult poisoned hundreds of people in Oregon by infecting salad bars in ten restaurants with salmonella. The Rajneeshee were hoping to get their candidate elected to the city council, and their plan was to lower the number of non-Rajneeshee voters by poisoning them.

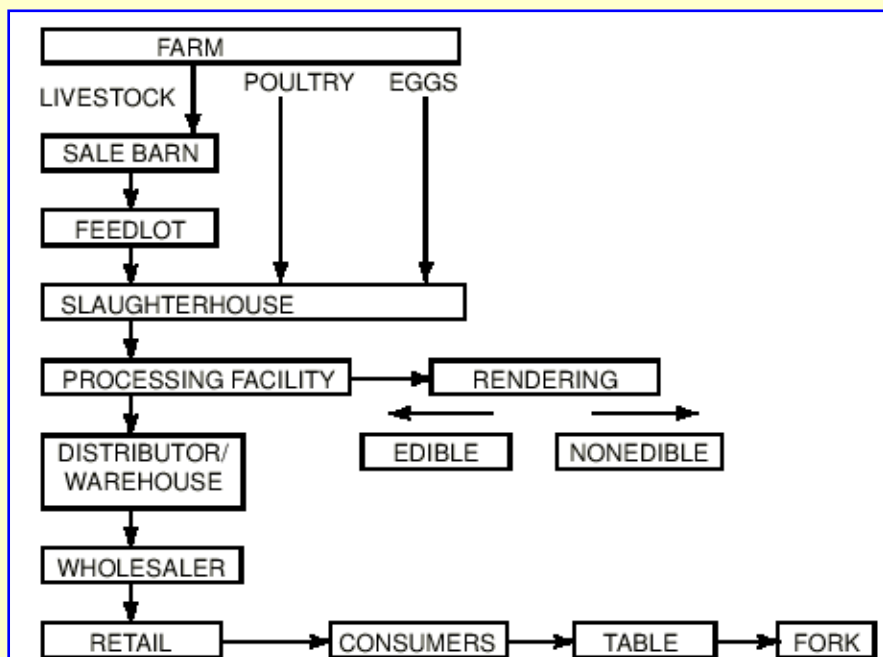Agroterrorism poses a serious risk to the people and the economy of the target country, yet the agriculture and food sectors of most countries are unprotected. This is the case in the United States, leading Tommy Thompson, then secretary of Health and Human Services, to say in 2004 that, "For the life of me, I cannot understand why the terrorists

terrorism which may bring death and disruption, chief among them is agroterrorism. **Agroterrorism is the use of animal or plant pathogens to disrupt a nation's food supply, or use the food supply to spread deadly disease.**

have not attacked our food supply, because it is so easy to do."

A recent study by Stanford University researchers concluded that terrorists could

poison hundreds of thousands of school children by putting botulism into a tanker of milk for schools. Some deadly plant germs could be sprayed over crops.

In 2001 the U.K. health authorities ordered the killing of 3.9 million heads of cattle in a desperate effort to contain the spread of a foot-and-mouth disease and save the country's beef industry. The 2001 outbreak in the United Kingdom occurred naturally, but terrorists, too, can infect a few heads of cattle with the foot-and-mouth pathogen and start an epidemic.

The prevention of agroterrorism would not be easy, because food production takes place over vast, sprawling areas which are impossible to protect effectively. The problem becomes even more complicated in a globalized world economy, in which food and food ingredients are imported from countries in which health and safety standards are low or non-existent.

Food supply chain (animal)

But some do something about the problem. In 2011 the European Union has launched PLANTFOODSEC program, which employs epidemiological and food and crop biosecurity measures to analyze the risks to the European food system from the intentional application of pathogens and disease agents into the European food system.

In the United States after the 9/11 attacks, project BioShield was introduced to detect biological attacks on major urban centers. The USDA helped fund the Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium to increase awareness of the threat of agroterrorism and help in preparing for it. The program aims to educate first responders about what to do in the event of a terrorist attack on the domestic food supply, and also to try to prevent it by educating farmers in areas such as California's Salina Valley, the "Salad Bowl of the World," to be watchful and alert.

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▶ **Charts' source:** http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/482308_2

Egypt: Three generations of terrorism

By Rabha Allam
Source: http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentP/4/137798/Opinion/Egypt-Three-generations-of-terrorism-.aspx

Aug 17 – Terrorism has survived in Egypt for almost two decades. In the past, it seemed to be defeated, then it reemerged in a new form. Thus, it is important to study its transformation process in order to better design an effective policy to face it.

One of the most flagrant manifestations of terrorism in Egypt was in 1981, when Islamist militants managed to assassinate President

Sadat. The incident was just the beginning of an ambitious plan to take over the country after eliminating the head of state and triggering public disorder, especially in Upper Egypt.

By then the most prominent terrorist groups, Al-Gamaa Al-Islamiya and Al-Jihad, were aiming at forcibly imposing Islamic rule.

However, the president's assassination alerted all the state institutions and they put into operation a wide crackdown on Islamist militants, especially in Upper Egypt and around the capital.

The security operations resulted in thousands of detentions and trials for the leadership and militants of Al-Gamaa Al-Islamiya and Al-Jihad. The campaign practically paralysed the two organisations and thus, halted the terrorist attacks for a while.

Nevertheless, the attacks resumed shortly after on different occasions during the eighties and the nineties. They have even extended to target intellectual figures, state officials, Coptic economic interests and tourist sites.

The perpetrators of these attacks were inspired by the Islamic revolution in Iran and wanted to produce their own model of an Islamic government.

They had a certain vision to rule the country, to Islamise society and to apply Islamic sharia by force, but the security crackdown on their leadership and operatives resulted in different repercussions.

Such effective measures, though entailing wide human rights violations, were perceived as a military defeat for the Islamic project in its violent version.

Therefore, terrorist leaders, especially from Al-Gamaa Al-Islamiya, reconsidered the feasibility of violence and started to conduct ideological revisions.

From this point, the state, namely the Ministry of Interior, has successfully triggered ideological dialogue between Al-Azhar scholars and the jailed leaders of Al-Gamaa Al-Islamiya. The dialogue questioned the legality of using violence against Muslim societies and the dilemma of takfir, which was behind the wide use of arms against the state officials as well as ordinary citizens.

The revision initiative was quite successful in producing an authentic stance by a wide circle of terrorist leaders in prisons. A ceasefire, in terms of violence against the Egyptian state, was declared in 1997.

Yet, shortly after this stance, the Luxor massacre took place, costing the lives of dozens and producing more doubts about the stability of the end of violence.

However, despite the negative impact this massacre had on Egypt's economy and public image around the world, it helped to emphasise the initiative of ending violence, and to disseminate it among more militants.

The leaders of Al-Gamaa Al-Islamiya have publicly renounced the use of violence, while those of Al-Jihad thought to change the violent strategy by targeting the far enemy (Western governments) rather than the close enemy (the local government).

Thus, they were motivated to join other jihadists especially in Sudan, Yemen and Afghanistan where they cooperated with the Al-Qaeda of Osama Bin Laden and conducted several major attacks against Western interests in Africa and Yemen between 1998 and 2000.

Meanwhile, between 1997 and 2004, Egypt knew an exceptional period of zero terrorism after a successful policy of dialogue with militant leaders. Therefore, when Western countries were taking serious measures against jihadists after 9/11, the Egyptian government was releasing Al-Gamaa militants who had renounced violence and served their sentences.

Al-Qaeda, which has been quite vocal since 1998 in calling radicals to target Western interests all over the world, produced a new model of terrorism. It was more like dispersed cells which used the internet to communicate, recruit and coordinate.

It was highly decentralised, it did not entail a hierarchal organisation, and its militants were less educated on Islamic thought and less linked to their leaders.

It was more like a multinational franchise than a traditional terrorist organisation. Al-Qaeda-linked groups started to operate in Egypt for the first time in 2004 in the attacks in Taba, then in 2005 and in 2006 in Sharm El-Sheikh and in Dahab, respectively.

These attacks were quite different from the older, traditional terrorism that Egypt had managed to defeat. They were conducted in Sinai, not in the Nile valley. They were a protest against Egypt's foreign policy, not domestic policy.

The subsequent security crackdown on Sinai after the first attack in Taba played an important role in generating the following attacks in 2005 and 2006.

The militants involved in these attacks did not have a general vision to impose on the Egyptian government. They were merely seeking to damage its image in front of its

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international allies, especially the US and Israel.

Yet, after the harsh security respond entailing wide violations of human rights in Sinai, the militants started to recruit among those who were furious about the state's security policy and wanted revenge.

The same logic applies to the minor terrorist attacks which were conducted in old Cairo in the following years. The revenge motive was even obvious in these attacks, because some of the militants involved were close relatives.

Right after the 2011 revolution, the jihadists of Sinai resumed their attacks, benefiting from the security vacuum following the withdrawal of substantial numbers of police from Sinai to face political protests in Cairo and other governorates.

The ouster of Mubarak and the rule of the SCAF gave little room for jihadists to recruit. The country was hoping for democratic transition and the youth were less interested in violent means of change since peaceful means had finally had a positive impact.

However, the jihadists focused on targeting the gas pipeline supplying Israel more than 15 times between 2011 and mid-2012 until the gas agreement was revoked.

Terrorism in Egypt was operating for regional reasons, to attack over the Israeli borders or to cut off gas supplies to Israel. Later on, Egyptian jihadists were motivated to fight in Syria, especially after receiving the green light from former president Morsi.

The international inaction on the massacres committed in Syria motivated the jihadist networks in Arab countries to activate their recruitment.

Young Arab fighters joined Jabhat Al-Nusra, before the schism with the Islamic State (or Daesh) took place and caused the dispersion of the jihadists between the two radical groups.

The establishment of the so-called caliphate by Daesh has interestingly increased the rate of radical recruitment from all over the world.

Despite its flagrant dissension with Al-Qaeda, Daesh has generated a new wave of terrorism with its particular brand. It is a hybrid version of Al-Qaeda, a decentralised terrorist group and a state with a hierarchal bureaucracy. Benefiting from the experience of hundreds of former Iraqi military and intelligence officers, Daesh was ambitious enough to actually rule a piece of land, after expelling the state's forces and recruiting among the marginalised population.

Therefore, it was not a surprise that Ansar Bait Al-Maqdis, the main terrorist group operating in Sinai, would opt for affiliation to Daesh under the title of Sinai Province in November 2014.

Sinai Province was investing in the bad relationships between the locals and the government, but also benefited from the professional expertise of a few former military officers who have recently joined its ranks. Those former officers gave professional training to radicals from Egypt and neighbouring countries, which came to Sinai for this purpose.

They also planned and committed several accurate attacks on the security forces, being familiar with the official deployment plans, tactics and weaponry. Among others, the most important point of strength of this generation of terrorism is that Daesh in Egypt has actually enrolled some expelled officers from the military, which gave it an inside view of how the Egyptian state would respond to its attacks. Thus, frequently changing the state's forces' deployment and tactics would deprive terrorists of taking advantage of this point.

Yet another asset is the abundance of weapons in the regional market, especially in Libya, and the good connections with the criminal networks operating along the borders. Adding to that, the ousting of Morsi and the wide anger among his supporters had reoriented some of them towards violence. Unlike the accurate attacks carried out in Sinai against security forces, the bombs in Cairo and the Delta seemed to be less sophisticated.

The youth, newly oriented towards violence, spread in almost all governorates, aim to jeopardise the regime's legitimacy by targeting Coptic churches, infrastructure facilities and tourist sites, as well as police forces. However, they obviously lack the expertise that the Sinai groups have accumulated in the past years.

Therefore, it is crucial to contain the angry youth that might use violence to protest the regime's heavy-handed policy on the political scene before they actually connect with the Daesh group in Sinai. Moreover, contesting the franchise of the terrorist groups in Sinai may actually complicate their operations and give a chance for the state to restructure its counter-terrorism policy.

In addition, an intelligence-based policy should be put forward to better infiltrate the terrorist groups

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without undermining the lives of civilians in   North Sinai.

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Bangkok bombing: Here is a basic primer on terrorism in Thailand

Source: http://www.vox.com/2015/8/17/9164963/bangkok-bombing-what-we-know

1. Early on Monday (Aug 17, 2015), a bomb exploded outside the Erawan shrine in downtown Bangkok. A number of people were killed — current counts range from 16 to 27 — and about 80 were wounded.
2. The Erawan shrine is technically Hindu, but is also popular with Thailand's Buddhist majority, as well as with tourists. That makes figuring out the motivation behind the attack tricky.
3. So far, no group has taken responsibility for the bombing. There have been some bombings in Bangkok linked to tensions surrounding a 2014 military coup, but there's no evidence as of yet that this attack is related.
4. Thailand also has an active, violent Malay-Muslim insurgency in the country's south — but it's hard to say whether they'd be willing to launch this kind of attack.

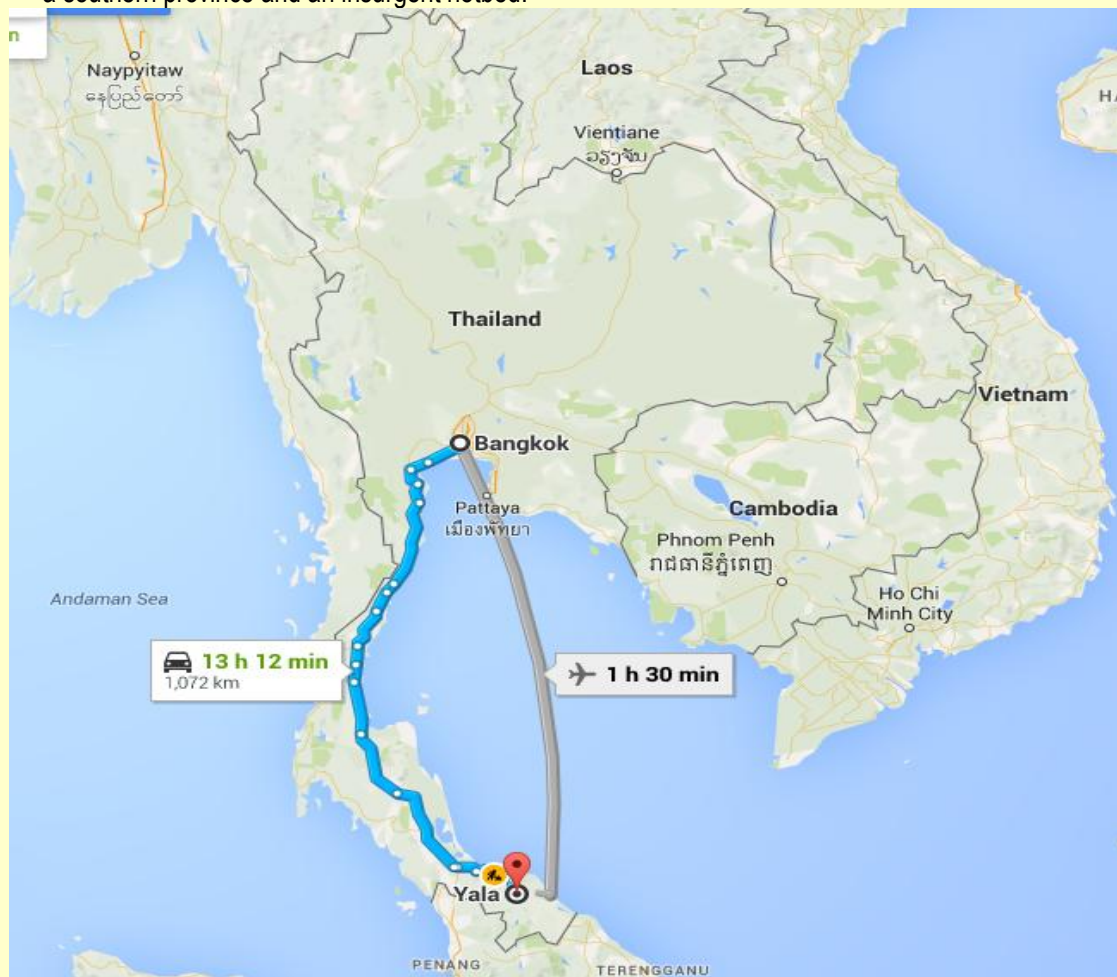**What we know about the bombing and terrorism in Thailand**

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A police officer stands at the site of the Bangkok bombing. (Pornchai Kittiwongsakul/AFP/Getty Images)

- According to Thai police, the device was a **pipe bomb.**
- **Possibly two or more other bombs were found nearby.**
- Thai authorities currently believe the goal of the attack was to target Thailand's tourism industry. "The perpetrators intended to destroy the economy and tourism, because the incident occurred in the heart of the tourism district," Prawit Wongsuwan, Thailand's defense minister, told Reuters.
- Though the Erawan shrine is dedicated to the Hindu god Brahma, in practice it's not quite a shrine for Hindus. Thailand often builds shrines outside commercial buildings as a means of connecting commerce with sacred values; these shrines are meant to have social rather than sectarian value.

- Erawan, built in 1956, is the "best known" of these commercial shrines, Duke University's Ara Wilson has written. Anthropologist Charles Keyes calls it "the shrine of Bangkok" for its local importance.
- Thailand is currently ruled by a military coup government, a source of political tension that has at times included small-scale bombings. Last May, the Thai military overthrew Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra in a coup, outraging Shinawatra's supporters. Tensions over control of the Thai government have resulted in terrorist attacks in Bangkok before.
- In March 2015, two men supporting Shinawatra threw a grenade at the Criminal Court in Bangkok; according to the police, Shinawatra supporters were planning to target "100 targets" in Bangkok. But it's tough to know how seriously to take this — the coup government has an incentive to portray opponents as terrorists.
- There is also a separatist conflict in Thailand's south. That movement has been active since 2004, led by ethnic Malays who are predominantly Muslim. About 6,400 people have been killed over the course of the conflict, and the past several months have seen an uptick in insurgent activity.
- We should be skeptical about seeing the separatists as religious extremist violence, though. Despite fears about the "Islamization" of the war, the insurgency so far has not appeared motivated by religion. "The conflict remains dominated by conservative Sha'afi clerics, who see themselves as the guardians of traditional Malay culture, and a bulwark against Thai colonialism and cultural influence," Zachary Abuza, an expert on security in Southeast Asia, has written.
- Moreover, the insurgents tend to operate in southern Thailand — attacks in places like Bangkok are pretty rare. To give you a sense of scale, here's how long it would take to get from Bangkok to Yala, a southern province and an insurgent hotbed:

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- However, there are some concerns that younger insurgents could be attracted to ISIS propaganda, and that some commanders might want to escalate attacks against civilians. "More hard-line commanders may be insisting that [terrorist attacks] are necessary to take the insurgency to the next level or force the Thai side to talks," Abuza writes.

- Bottom line: While people are naturally reacting to this attack by wondering if the Malay insurgency based in Thailand's south could be involved, we just don't yet know that this is the case. Nor do we know if there are any links between the attack and persistent anger at Thailand's coup.

What Ever Became of the Global War on Terror?

By Dr. Dave Sloggett
Source: http://www.hstoday.us/single-article/analysis-what-ever-became-of-the-global-war-on-terror/6c4fff77e2f41cc675c94190bc5ef6ac.html

Aug 17 – It is understandable that in the cauldron of international politics that followed the immediate aftermath of September 11, 2001 that some kind of phrase would be invented to try and describe how the United States and its NATO partners would seek out

CASUALITIES OF WAR ON TERRORISM SINCE 2001 IN IRAQ & AFGHANISTAN
116 657 CIVILIANS
76778 – ISLAMISTS
OCOLOGUY FOR OWNLFR
2996 VICTIMS OF 911
8975 US & CIE SOLDIERS
25 297 LOCAL SOLDIERS

and destroy those who perpetrated the most heinous act of jihadi terrorism.

The phrase the "Global War on Terror" (GWOT) was the solution. But the term was disliked by the purists whose semantic arguments focused on what they saw as the difficulty of going to war with terrorism. The
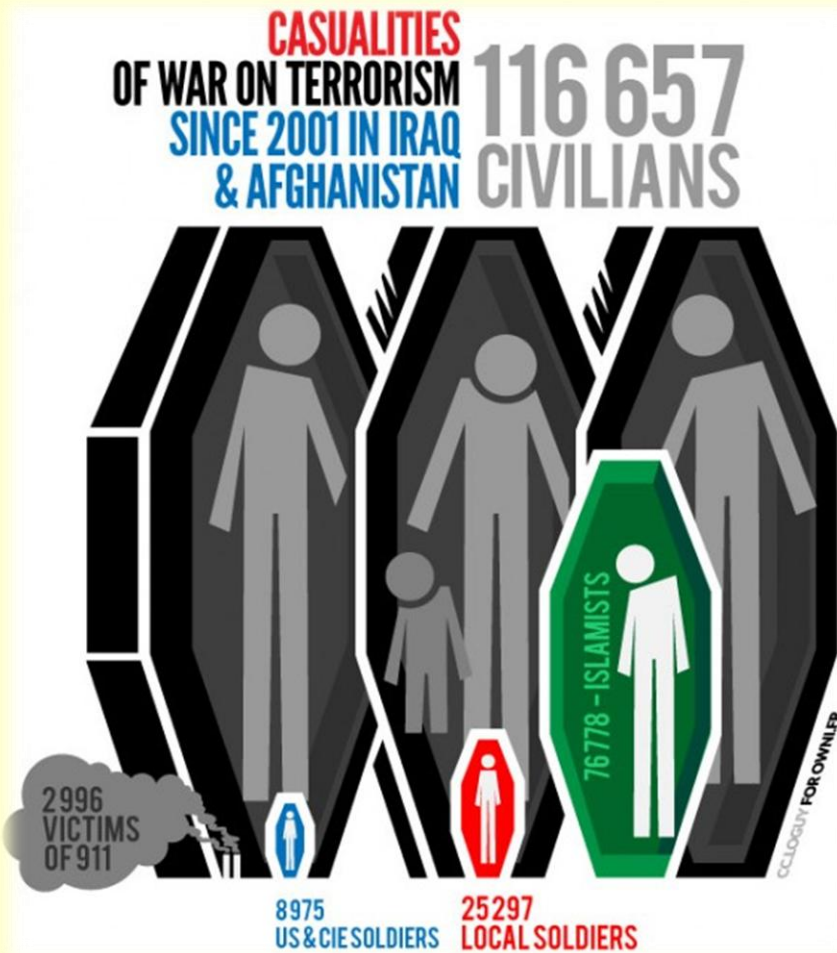
phrase soon became an albatross on the back of those trying to dismantle Al Qaeda.

As things started to go awry in Iraq and the situation in Afghanistan looked almost impossible to resolve using military power alone, the phrase very clearly began to be phased out of use. It quickly was removed from the routine narrative being used in political circles in Washington, which was a situation that was further consolidated when Barrack Obama was elected President.

It was natural for him to want to create some distance between the language of his predecessor and his own administration. But, despite the phrase falling out of use, Obama did continue to develop the strategy of attacking terrorist groups wherever they were hiding, giving them no respite or sanctuary.

While the phrase itself may have been consigned to the dustbin of history, pragmatists who knew what they meant when they declared a Global War on Terror continued to pursue their aim. Where the limitations of "boots on the ground" had been demonstrated in Iraq and Afghanistan, a more reflective approach started to be developed; one that saw intelligence replace infantry soldiers at the spearhead of the operations.

As a result of this quiet and pragmatic approach Al Qaeda's leadership across the world has been decimated. Strikes by armed Predator drones have taken a significant toll. One of the latest strikes resulted in the death of the leader of Al Qaeda's most loyal franchise in Yemen – Nasir Al Wuhayshi. Consistent success

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stories like this one against the leadership of Al Qaeda has further been strengthened with the death of a number of the leaders of the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) in Pakistan.

While no political leader with any sense is about to declare a victory in the global war on terror, senior political and military leaders in Washington for some time have indicated Al Qaeda's core leadership is under severe pressure. Despite the new leader of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's statement of loyalty to the current leader of Al Qaeda – Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri – and the success its franchise in Syria (Jabat Al Nusra) is having the position of the terrorist group has never looked so bleak.

Dā'ish (the Islamic State, or ISIS), on the other hand, is enjoying a purple patch in their development. Aside from rumours surrounding the health of its leader, Abu Bakr al Baghdadi -- who apparently just survived a Predator attack at the cost of being paralysed -- the group continues to make progress in establishing its Caliphate. The statement of loyalty from Boko Haram is perhaps the most significant of its recent success stories.

Unlike Al Qaeda, which was never able to incite the kind of lone wolf violence so publically advocated by Al Baghdadi's call to "erupt volcanoes of jihad everywhere," ISIS' call to lone jihadism has achieved notable resonance across Western Europe and in the United States, where a series of attacks have been conducted by people loosely affiliated to Dā'ish.

It is therefore entirely realistic for the key military and political leaders in Washington to take the view that the current threat is significantly different from that posed by Al Qaeda. Details contained in the FBI's criminal complaint against Harlem Suarez indicated he intended to bomb a beach in Miami on July 4 provided a clear case study that the virus at the heart of the ideology of Dā'ish has spread to America.

According to the complaint, Suarez, is a self-professed ISIL adherent who knowingly attempted to use a weapon of mass destruction -- a backpack bomb -- in the United States.

Clearly, however, to deal with the threat posed by Dā'ish, a modified version of the Global War on Terror has to emerge. We can call this the third iteration of the concept. It essentially show the West is able to adapt to the way in which the threat from Dā'ish is emerging, albeit somewhat slowly. It also shows that, despite the lack of use of the phrase, the pragmatic approach to addressing the threat from international terrorists is still alive and well. It has just gone dark.

Perhaps in this race of the tortoise and the hare, the slower but more deliberate approach led by intelligence is a better solution, albeit it requires a huge amount of patience. It also requires a local partner who can assist in the development of a secure environment on the ground – avoiding the need for the West to once again deploy ground troops and be labelled as "occupiers."

British Prime Minister David Cameron has admitted that the fight against Dā'ish is one that will not be solved anytime soon. His language is of the "full spectrum response." By this, he refers to conducting a range of operations at home and aboard that not only directly target Dā'ish, but also indirectly target its source of revenues. This also requires an integrated approach both intra-government and well as inter-government.

The Somali example

One example of where this more deliberate approach is delivering benefits can be seen in Somalia. Here, the Al Qaeda franchise Al Shabaab is under increasing pressure, having lost much of its footprint in the country. While the total number of attacks mounted by Al Shabaab over the last six years have not significantly varied between 2009 and 2014 (its peak was 490 in 2012), in the last six months there has been a consistent downturn in their rate of attacks.

Until the end of June 2015, Al Shabaab had only managed to conduct 132 attacks. This is nearly half of its peak rate. Their rate of use of improvised explosive devices (IED), which peaked at 93 in 2012, has also been significantly reduced with only 20 having been used in the current year until the end of June.

That does not imply that Al Shabaab cannot still conduct the kind of horrific attacks they mounted in Kenya in the Westgate Shopping Mall, or at Garissa where they killed over one-150 students at the university. The threat they pose is still significant. But their room for manoeuvre has been severely hampered.

The joint work of the African Union troops on the ground and the feeds of intelligence from United States agencies, are clearly having an effect. So dire is

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Al Shabaab's position that they have recently been rumoured to have been thinking of leaving Al Qaeda and declaring their allegiance to Dā'ish. This could be thought of as a move designed to re-invigorate their current perilous situation.

Other fronts in the Global War on Terror
While Somalia is a success story for the quieter and more long-range approach to the global war on terror, the situation in other countries is less clear. In Libya, the situation is still highly complex. The natural partner of the Western world in trying to approach the defeat of a significant Dā'ish presence on the ground has little ability to manoeuvre outside Tripoli. And in Syria, the situation on the ground remains stuck in a war reminiscent of the trench warfare of the First World War. The evolving security landscape in Syria makes the choice of a local partner even more difficult.

These are not the only places where the global war on terror continues. The situation in Yemen where Al Qaeda's most loyal and operational capable franchise still operates cannot by any means be said to be stable. Currently, international groups in the area are being dislocated by a Saudi air campaign. This is likely to result in a temporary respite in their activities. The difficult point comes if the Saudi's and their coalition partners decide they have done enough and stop the air assault.

However, it is to Iraq that we must look for any indications of the kind of progress that will see Dā'ish reach a tipping point and implode. While rumours exist of factures appearing in the leadership of Dā'ish, they still appear to retain an ability to manoeuvre and mass their forces at a time and place of their choosing. Most worryingly, the increasing reports of the use of chemical weapons by Dā'ish point to a longer term threat not dissimilar to that which created the basis for the global war on terror in the first place.

The fear in the Bush administration of a nuclear attack against the United States was palpable. The intelligence on Al Qaeda's intent was also clear. History may yet show that the interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan did prevent such an attack from taking place in America. When the stakes are that high, it is perfectly understandable why the original global war on terror was launched. What is clear is that despite the lack of use of the phrase the pragmatists are still making progress. Nearly 14 years into the GWOT, the idea is still alive and well. It is just being carried out another way.

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*Contributing Writer **Dr. Dave Sloggett** has spent over 40 years working with the United Kingdom military forces as a scientific advisor and analyst analyzing international security issues. He is a recognized authority on counter insurgency operations and is used as an advisor by NATO to lecture on this subject in support of training missions seeking to help countries establish their own military forces. His most recent books are,* Focus on the Taliban*, and,* Drone Warfare.

3 wounded as off-duty US servicemen subdue gunman on Paris-bound train

Off-duty members of the U.S. military subdued a gunman "known to intelligence services" after he opened fire, injuring three aboard on a high-speed train en route to Paris from Amsterdam Friday.

Three U.S. servicemen were on board the train and overpowered the man when the train stopped in the northern French city of Arras, 115 m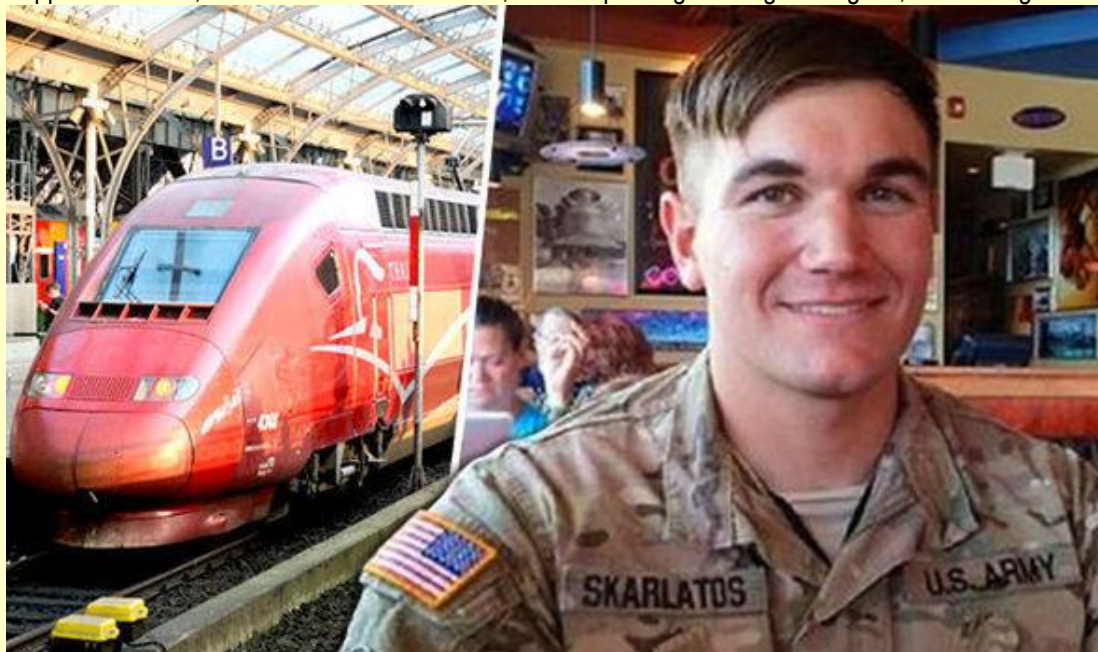iles north of Paris, French media reported. Some reports said the men were U.S. Marines but that could not be confirmed.

Passengers on the train subdued the gunman and prevented further carnage, said Christophe Piednoel, spokesman for national railway operator SNCF. The train was then diverted to Arras, where police arrested the suspect, Piednoel said on French television i-Tele.

The suspect was arrested after the train stopped in Arras, 115 miles north of Paris,

The attack took place while the train was passing through Belgium, according to a

Interior Ministry spokesman Pierre-Henri Brandet said on French television BFM. Passengers were evacuated and police have secured the area.

The man was armed with an automatic rifle and

statement from Hollande's office. The statement said he spoke with Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel, and the two leaders pledged to cooperate closely on the investigation.

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Two of the victims were considered to be seriously injured, the French state rail company SNCF said, according to French wire service AFP. Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve is on his way to the scene. Passengers were evacuated and police have secured the area.

The motivation for the attack is unknown, officials said. AFP cited French officials saying the suspect is "known to intelligence services."

a knife, Piednoel said.

The suspect is a 26-year-old Moroccan, Alliance police union official Sliman Hamzi said on French television i-Tele.

The victims were identified as an American, a Briton and a Frenchman. Earlier reports said two American service members were among the injured. Two of the victims were in critical condition, according to a statement from the office of President Francois Hollande.

"The situation is under control, the travelers are safe. The train stopped and the emergency services are on site," Thalys, the train operator, tweeted.

Investigators from France's special anti-terror police are leading the investigation, a spokeswoman for the Paris prosecutor's office said.

"As always where an act that could be terrorist in nature is involved, the greatest care and the greatest precision will be used," Cazeneuve said.

Cazeneuve said the two Americans "were particularly courageous and showed great bravery in very difficult circumstances" and that "without their sangfroid we could have been confronted with a terrible drama."

A third person, French actor Jean-Hugues Anglade, suffered a minor injury while activating the train's emergency alarm, Lorthiois said.

Passenger Christina Cathleen Coons of New York described the drama in car 12 of the train in an interview with Ouest France newspaper.

"I heard shots, most likely two, and a guy collapsed," she is quoted as saying.

Coons, identified as a 28-year-old vacationing in Europe, said a window broke above one woman's head. "A guy fell to the floor and had blood everywhere," she is quoted as saying.

She described lying on the floor herself and taking photos with her phone.

"I thought there would be a shootout in the train," the newspaper quotes her as saying. Then, "people came to take care of him."

A White House official told Fox News that President Obama was briefed on the incident Friday evening:

"The President's thoughts and prayers are with all of the victims of this attack, and he wishes them speedy and full recoveries," the official said.

"Echoing the statements of French authorities, the President expressed his profound gratitude for the courage and quick thinking of several passengers, including U.S. service members, who selflessly subdued the attacker. While the investigation into the attack is in its early stages, it is clear that their heroic actions may have prevented a far worse tragedy. We will remain in close contact with French authorities as the investigation proceeds."

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EDITOR'S COMMENTS: (1) Madrid's train bombing incident reveals a problem. TGV train incident (11 years after) shows that lessons were not learned… Can you imagine how easy is to highjack train or shoot passengers or bomb the whole thing? Winter is coming and many commuters will travel with their (long) skiing equipment so… (2) Again the shooter was "known" to security authorities of Spain (notified French), France (marked his file as "S"), Belgium (?) and the incident happened… (3) **We are proud of the Greek-American US National Guard soldier Alek Skarlatos, 22. Well done soldier!!!**