Selected papers
Terrorism Experts Conference (TEC) 2016
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A message from TEC 2016’s Director:

Dear distinguished reader,
As stated in the 2016 NATO Warsaw summit communiqué, the Alliance is continuously confronted with a wide range of terrorist challenges that “pose a direct threat to the security of our populations, and to international stability and prosperity more broadly.” Recent terrorist attacks have shown that terrorism is a persistent global threat that knows no border, nationality or religion and is a challenge the international community must tackle together. Or as General İlker Başbuğ, the former commander of the Turkish Armed Forces, formulated: „In fighting against terrorism, unity of effort among various organizations and agencies operating in different fields must be ensured."

After the North Atlantic Council approved the revision of the “Military Committee Concept for Counter-Terrorism (MC 472)” in December 2015, NATO continues to work on counter-terrorism and focuses on improving awareness of the threat, developing capabilities to prepare and respond, and enhancing engagements with partner countries and other international actors. As the new concept acknowledged that military action alone “will not be enough to counter the terrorist threat and that military operations must be implemented in a manner coherent with diplomatic, economic, social, legal, and information initiatives,” examining these implications and intricacies is of utmost importance.

Therefore, “A Comprehensive Approach to Counter-Terrorism – Benefits and Pitfalls, Lessons Learned, and Best Practices” was chosen as the theme for COE-DAT’s Terrorism Experts Conference (TEC) 2016, to focus on that comprehensive approach, addressing the threat at all levels of power, including civilian and military, governmental and non-governmental, international, regional and local. Unfortunately, due to events beyond the control of COE-DAT and conditions preventing us from conducting TEC 2016 with the superior quality and significance such a conference deserves, the conference itself had to be cancelled.

However, to preserve the opportunity to present new advances and research results in the field of counter-terrorism within our community of interest, the decision was made to publish selected TEC 2016 conference papers. We hope to thereby fulfil some of the aims of the conference, such as:

- To analyse the latest developments in terrorism and counter-terrorism studies;
- To assess general trends and future projections in terrorism and CT;
- To advance the common understanding of the terrorist threat.

As a consequence, after a short introduction about COE-DAT - which might be skipped by those already part of our “COE-DAT family” - you will find selected conference papers
dealing with various aspects of the comprehensive approach towards counter-terrorism. From a societal focus on the Sahel region of Africa and the Balkans, to shortfalls of military action in Nigeria, the selected papers also include a consideration of critical infrastructure protection, specifically nuclear power plants and radioactive waste storage facilities, as well as the benefits and challenges of effective intra- and interagency cooperation and information sharing.

At this point, I would like to express my gratitude and sincere thanks to all the distinguished contributing authors, but especially to Dr Ronald Crelinsten. He not only did a tremendous job in the preparation of TEC 2016 as the academic advisor, but also spent his valuable time and efforts on reviewing and copy editing the papers included within this publication and, last but not least, contributed to it himself with an overview of the comprehensive approach.

All in all, we hope to have compiled an interesting and diverse collection and that you enjoy the content of this publication – not forgetting that we would also like to spark your interest in joining our next Terrorism Experts Conference (TEC) on 24th/25th October 2017.

With kind regards

Alexander Brand
TEC 2016 Director

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About the Centre of Excellence Defence against Terrorism

The Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism (COE-DAT) is a NATO accredited international military organisation. It assumes the mission of supporting Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) in his efforts of transforming NATO in the field of defence against terrorism. In this context, the COE-DAT in particular:

- Provides subject matter expertise on defence against terrorism / counter-terrorism,
- Provides defence against terrorism / counter-terrorism training and education at the strategic and operational level,
- Assists HQ SACT in testing and validating terrorism related NATO concepts and contributes to NATO doctrine development and standardization.
- Assists in doctrine development by contributing knowledge and lessons identified,

By providing a platform for expert academics and practitioners, and a conduit of observations, applications and recommendations to NATO, the Centre is best placed to positively influence the Alliance’s critical work in the domain of counter-terrorism.

To bring different views on terrorism together and to benefit from multinational experience, COE-DAT has developed relationships with more than 120 international organizations and institutions all over the world. These relationships include NATO education and training bodies, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as relevant institutions, academies and universities, working on defence against terrorism related topics. The Centre also collaborates with Partnership for Peace, Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative countries, amongst others.

Since inauguration, COE-DAT has conducted more than 180 activities consisting of courses, workshops, seminars, conferences and symposiums. To date, around 11,000 participants from 105 countries and around 2,150 lecturers from more than 60 countries have taken part in COE-DAT activities.

Furthermore, COE-DAT publishes a refereed journal on terrorism called “Defence Against Terrorism Review”. The articles in this journal are peer-reviewed by distinguished academics and published only after their academic approvals.

All updated information regarding the Centre as well as the activities may be found on our web page: http://www.coedat.nato.int/
A Comprehensive Approach to Counter-Terrorism: An Overview
Ronald Crelinsten¹

Abstract
This article begins by examining how the counter-terrorism policy environment has transformed over the past 40 years and how the concept of a comprehensive approach began to emerge in the face of increasingly complex and interconnected security threats. It then surveys the full gamut of approaches to counter-terrorism that goes beyond the traditional coercive models of criminal justice and war. It ends by introducing the remaining articles in this volume and how they relate to the broader theme of a comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism in a world where the distinctions between internal and external security, international and domestic jurisdictions, and state and non-state actors are increasingly blurred.

Keywords: Counter-Terrorism, Comprehensive Approach, Whole-of-Government, International Cooperation, Policy Coordination

Introduction
It has been a truism for at least 40 years that international cooperation is essential in the fight against all forms of terrorism. For example, at a conference held in 1977, Robert Kupperman, who at the time was Chief Scientist for the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, ended his paper with the following paragraph:

International Cooperation. The terrorists seem to cooperate quite well. By contrast, nations do poorly. Obviously, there is [sic] a host of issues to resolve, starting from the simpler extradition and no-safe-havens agreements, going on to agreements concerning technical assistance, the development of international paramilitary teams and the indemnification of nations taking risks on behalf of others. The United Nations is not the most promising forum to promote action-oriented conventions. Regional groups, such as the Organization of American States and the Council of Europe, seem to be more successful. Cooperative arrangements among nations must be pursued vigorously if we are to avoid having too many weak links in our efforts to counter terrorism.²

¹ Dr. Ronald Crelinsten, Academic Advisor, TEC 2016; Associate Fellow, Centre for Global Studies, University of Victoria; e-mail: rifo@shaw.ca. I would like to thank Lt. Col. Alex Brand for inviting me to be the Academic Advisor for TEC 2016. His vast knowledge, consummate professionalism, and keen attention to detail made it a pleasure to work with him.
25 years later, Alex Schmid described a three-pronged strategy of the United Nations, outlined in the September 2002 report of the High-Level Policy Working Group on the United Nations and terrorism, in which cooperation is the third prong. "UN Strategy 3 is to sustain broad-based international cooperation in the struggle against terrorism".\(^3\) Schmid further explained that this prong includes making cooperation between the UN and other international actors more systematic; ensuring an appropriate division of labour based on comparative advantage; developing an international action plan; ensuring a higher degree of internal coordination and coherence within the United Nations; and strengthening some UN offices, most notably the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention of the UN Secretariat.

In late March 2006, I attended an international symposium in Ankara, Turkey, organized by the Turkish General Staff and the NATO Center of Excellence-Defense against Terrorism (COE-DAT). The title of the symposium was “Global Terrorism and International Cooperation”. The plenary speakers included, among others, then President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan, Gen. Peter Pace, then Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Lt. Gen. Karl Eikenberry, Combined Forces Commander in Afghanistan at that time. There were sessions on globalization, urban counter-terrorism, and most importantly, cooperation opportunities in counter-terrorism. Yet the overall impression of the symposium was that there were very few concrete suggestions for achieving international cooperation and many obstacles to achieving it. One symposium organizer confided to me that regional cooperation was probably all that was possible. Some thirty years after Robert Kupperman’s assessment, things did not appear to have changed much.

Among the obstacles to international cooperation that kept cropping up at the Ankara symposium were the central problem of the continuing supremacy of sovereignty in international affairs and the failure to achieve a universal definition of terrorism. Both obstacles were identified and recognized in counter-terrorism discourse 40 years ago, when the term ‘international terrorism’ was in vogue rather than the term ‘global terrorism’. One speaker in Ankara posed the rhetorical question, how to counteract nonstate enemies while keeping cohesive and cooperative relations in the interest of international order. This is the crux of the matter. If individual states in the international system cannot agree on a universal definition of terrorism, and resist or undermine cooperation in the name of sovereignty and national interest, then effective international cooperation in the fight against terrorism will remain a dream.

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NATO counter-terrorism cooperation, both among Allies and with NATO partners, is one part of this larger picture. Many people feel, like the organizer at the 2006 Ankara symposium, that the obstacles to international cooperation are so great that the only possible cooperation that can occur is at the regional level or, even better, among allies. Given all the talk about the West vs. the Rest and a burgeoning clash of civilizations, one would expect that international cooperation would be most feasible within the community of nations who share a common history and presumably share common values and similar political and economic interests. Nations that share common values and interests are more likely to see eye to eye on difficult policy issues and to share common perceptions of global threats, dangers and vulnerabilities.

NATO represents an example of a more regional form of international cooperation among like-minded allies. Yet even NATO experiences challenges in developing consensus about the nature of the threat and what to do about it, particularly in reconciling concerns on its Eastern and Southern flanks:

Differing national positions and levels of involvement in the current threat picture mean that discussion of terrorism does not take place from a common baseline. For example, the Baltic states focus naturally on the neighboring Ukraine/Russia situation, whereas Turkey, as a major transit country for those fighting in Iraq and Syria, has its attention firmly fixed on the need for a comprehensive solution to the threats from the South. Each Ally has its own optic, be it humanitarian issues, Libyan arms, the dynamics of the Sunni/Shia/Kurd relationship, developments in Sub-Saharan Africa or the need to remove Bashar al Assad. Without a unifying driver such as a UN mandate or a direct threat to the Alliance (rather than to individual members) and clear added-value for NATO involvement, overcoming such differing approaches to take large scale action at the Alliance level will remain difficult.4

The global ‘war on terror’ that emerged in the wake of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, and later morphed into the war against the Islamic State group (DAESH/ISIL), has faced comparable challenges across a wide range of policy domains: international humanitarian law and the laws of war; criminal justice and the rule of law; international diplomacy; development programs in post-conflict societies and transitional states; harmonization of social and cultural policy among allies; free trade and open borders; banking, international finance, aviation and tourism; migration and refugee flows; resource development and environmental policy. The wide range of issues where threats to democratic freedoms and values have arisen, such as torture and extraordinary rendition, surveillance and the right to privacy, data mining, limits on freedom of expression and assembly, restriction of religious symbols, regulation of charitable

4 Juliette Bird, “NATO’s Role in Counter-Terrorism”, Perspectives on Terrorism 9(2) (2015), pp. 61-70, p. 66. See also Giray Sadik’s article in this volume.
organizations and giving, and border, visa, immigration, and refugee controls, starkly demonstrates the complexity of today’s global counter-terrorism effort.

Comparing this complexity with Kupperman’s list of issues from 1977 underscores how the counter-terrorism policy environment has transformed over the past 40 years. In 1977, the internet did not exist, nor did smart phones or social media. NATO had fewer members and the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union was still going strong. International relations were even different, with less international and non-governmental organizations and a far less globalized world economy, with its significant impact on national economies and international trade. Awareness or understanding of the security implications of climate change were not as developed as they are today.

The criminal justice model and the war model

Before 9/11, terrorism was primarily seen as a form of crime. Counter-terrorism prioritized the rule of law, respect for human rights, and the primacy of law enforcement over the military option. The latter was always included in the counter-terrorism toolbox, but usually as a last resort and, in the case of aid to civil power, under the control of civilian authority. The use of force was often a tool of last resort in prolonged hostage sieges, for example. International humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions, was not usually a part of the discourse since a war model of counter-terrorism was not the norm. When international humanitarian law was discussed, it was usually in the context of explicitly excluding it as irrelevant to counter-terrorism.

During the 1980s, and particularly the Reagan years, a war model of counter-terrorism did emerge and sometimes prevailed. An example was the 1986 U.S. bombing of Libya. However, its military character was limited in scope and usually was a part of an overall ‘hard-line’

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6 See, for example, Paul Wilkinson, Terrorism and the Liberal State (Macmillan, 1977); Grant Wardlaw, Political Terrorism: Theory, tactics and counter-measures, second edition (Cambridge University Press, 1989 [first published in 1982]).
A common characteristic of this early discourse, for example, was an insistence on no negotiations with terrorists under any circumstances.\(^{11}\)

After 9/11, terrorism was primarily viewed as a new form of warfare, necessitating a robust military response in Afghanistan and an overarching strategy of pre-emption that culminated in the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The immediate post-9/11 period was marked by profound disagreements over the kind of threats we are faced with, the kinds of responses required, the institutions which should be responsible for this response, and the timeframe within which an effective response can be accomplished. These disagreements have only been compounded since the rise of DAESH/ISIL and the breakout of civil war in Syria.

Given the vastly increased complexity and interconnectedness of policy issues in today’s world, it is now widely recognized that counter-terrorism policy can no longer remain compartmentalized in one or two policy areas, such as criminal justice or the military, but must be coordinated across a wide array of policy domains.\(^{12}\) As pointed out by TEC 2016’s Director, Alex Brand, in his introductory message to this volume, NATO, too, has affirmed this in its revised Military Committee Concept for Counter-Terrorism, singling out diplomatic, economic, social, legal, and information initiatives as necessary complements to any military operations. Juliette Bird, NATO International Staff Branch Head for Counter-Terrorism, identifies “CBRN response and protection, denial of safe havens, sharing of information and best practices and protection of vulnerable targets” as key strengths of NATO that can contribute to the prevention and control of terrorism, as well as to capacity building initiatives with NATO Partners.\(^{13}\)

This broader awareness that counter-terrorism must go beyond the two traditional coercive models of criminal justice and war has come to be called the “comprehensive”, “whole-of-government”, or “whole-of-nation” approach.

**From stovepipes to a comprehensive approach**

A comprehensive approach involves multiple levels of government and society: subnational, national, international, transnational; state and non-state actors. A multiplicity of state and

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\(^{10}\) See, for example, Benjamin Netanyahu, ed, Terrorism: How the West Can Win (Farrar Straus Giroux, 1986). This book, based on a 1984 conference held by the Jonathan Institute (named after Netanyahu’s brother, who was killed while leading a spectacularly successful hostage rescue at the Entebbe airport in Uganda in 1976), was coincidentally published in the same month (April 1986) as the US bombing raid on Libya.


\(^{13}\) Bird, “NATO’s Role in Counter-Terrorism”, p. 63.
nonstate actors in a multiplicity of contexts, policy domains and jurisdictions makes for a much more complex policy environment. As such, it involves a whole new dimension of cooperation, information sharing and exchange. Post 9/11, many of the stovepipes or silos that separated different branches of state security apparatuses were dismantled and information-sharing was promoted or even mandated. Examples include Integrated National Security Enforcement Teams (INSETs), fusion centres, and cross-border teams, e.g., Integrated Border Enforcement Teams (IBETs).

In Europe, the Maastricht Treaty led to “pillarization”, with three policy pillars: European Community (EC); Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and Judicial and Home Affairs (JHA). This pillarization created a separation between external security (2nd pillar) and internal security (3rd pillar). The Treaty of Amsterdam transferred policy on asylum, migration and judicial cooperation in civil matters to the 1st pillar, and the 3rd pillar was renamed Police and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters (PJCCM). In 2009, the Lisbon Treaty finally abolished the pillar structure completely, creating an area of freedom, security and justice that combined internal security, immigration, and asylum issues and included Frontex, an integrated border security system.

There were concomitant changes in the military sphere. The traditional military mandate of protecting a state from external threats from other states (security and defence) transformed into the 3D’s (Defence, Diplomacy, Development), in recognition of the fact that military might alone cannot guarantee security since fragile or failed states constituted sources of insecurity for all. As the lines between external and internal security became increasingly blurred, and threats and vulnerabilities overlapped more and more, it was recognized that all sectors of government are important in assuring security. This was the comprehensive approach.

The new mantra was that a comprehensive security framework requires a whole-of-government approach: “Whole of government denotes public service agencies working across portfolio boundaries to achieve a shared goal and an integrated government response to particular issues. Approaches can be formal and informal. They can focus on policy development, program management and service delivery”. A new vocabulary emerged: ‘partnership’ (private/public; for-profit/non-profit; state/nonstate); ‘cooperation’ (international; sectoral;

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jurisdictional; interagency); ‘collaboration’; ‘coordination’; ‘integration’; ‘harmonization’; ‘horizontal’ (as opposed to ‘vertical’).

As a whole-of-government approach becomes the new normal, institutional cultures, bureaucratic organization, information flows, and coordination and interoperability present new challenges. The same can be said for a whole-of-nation approach that involves partnerships and cooperation among government, the private sector, civil society, NGOs, and international organizations. This is the main challenge faced by NATO as it reconfigures its counter-terrorism policies to deal with the growing complexity of today’s security environment.

**Varieties of counter-terrorism**

Counter-terrorism can take a variety of forms. Each approach conceives of terrorism differently, though there is some overlap. Some are more traditional; others are not. The tools that any counter-terrorism approach uses can often reflect a specific conception of terrorism and the threat it poses. Those responsible for countering terrorism must therefore broaden their toolboxes to avoid narrow, truncated conceptions of the terrorist threat or exaggerated depictions of the threat as existential or evil incarnate. Both can limit policy options and undermine effectiveness, legitimacy, and democratic acceptability.

There are several basic dimensions that can help to understand the variety of approaches that are available for countering terrorism in different contexts. These dimensions are time, space, type of power, and type of intervention (military, legal, diplomatic, economic, social, etc.). The approaches can be categorized as a series of opposites: short-term/long-term (tactical/strategic); coercive/persuasive (hard power/soft power); offensive/defensive; reactive/proactive or preventive; and local/global (domestic/international). Elsewhere, I singled out five different approaches to counter-terrorism: coercive, proactive, persuasive, defensive and long-term. While a degree of overlap exists among these approaches, a more comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy would take advantage of all of them.

*Coercive counter-terrorism* relies on the state’s monopoly on the use of violence, i.e., the exercise of hard power. Strict limits are placed on who can be subjected to state violence. These restrictions form the basis of the legitimacy bestowed upon the state by the rule of law, whether national or international. Without these legally mandated restrictions, the exercise of violence by state agents such as the police or the military would itself be criminal – violating

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15 Crelinsten, Counterterrorism, p. 45-47.
16 Ibid.
either domestic criminal law or international law. When state agents acting in the name of
counter-terrorism consistently contravene the rule of law or the laws of war with impunity, then
they have become state terrorists, mirroring the behaviour of the terrorists they are fighting.

The criminal justice model and the war model are the most traditional forms of coercive counter-
terrorism. While primarily reactive in nature, they both contain proactive elements (preventive
measures). ‘Reactive policing’ involves the arrest and detention of suspects, interrogation,
searches and seizures, and riot and crowd control in cases of mass demonstration and protest.
‘Proactive policing’ involves surveillance, criminal intelligence, and intrusive techniques such as
the use of informers, sting operations, or preventive detention. Reactive forms of military
intervention include military aid to civil power, troop deployment (e.g., guard duty/VIP protection,
snipers, or special weapons and tactics [SWAT] teams), hostage rescue, retaliatory strikes (e.g.,
the 1986 U.S. bombing of Libya), states of emergency or martial law, and military intervention
(e.g., the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan after 9/11). Proactive forms of military invention include
search and destroy missions, pre-emptive strikes, targeted killing and predator drones (e.g., the
2011 killing of AQAP’s Anwar al-Awlaki and Inspire Magazine’s editor, Samir Khan),
enforcement of no-fly zones (e.g., protection of refugees), denial of safe havens for terrorists,
military intervention (e.g., the French interventions in Mali in 2012 and 2014), and pre-emptive
war (e.g., the 2003 US invasion of Iraq).

Proactive counter-terrorism aims to prevent terrorism before it happens. Through the merging of
internal and external security, the mandates of domestic police, security intelligence agencies,
and border and customs officials have all coalesced around the problem of tracking the
movement of people, goods and money. Through intrusive techniques involving surveillance,
wiretapping, eavesdropping and other means of spycraft, agents of all stripes have devoted
their energies more and more to stopping terrorists before they act and thwarting terrorist plots
before they develop too far.

The increased focus on proactive counter-terrorism has important implications for a variety of
institutions and policies. In criminal justice, it means more proactive and intelligence-led policing,
increasing use of sting operations and informers, more reliance on preventive detention, and
early arrests to disrupt plots. In intelligence work, it means greater reliance on human and
electronic surveillance (HUMINT and data mining), widening of surveillance nets, increased use
of profiling, and a heightened focus on radicalization to violence and countering violent
extremism (CVE), as well as on terrorist financing and fund-raising. In criminal law, it means
more speech offences, criminalizing membership in organizations, and ‘material support for
terrorism' offences aimed at fundraising, recruitment, and training. In border and immigration control, it means ‘thickened borders’,\textsuperscript{17} increased controls on immigrants, refugees, asylum-seekers, and foreign students, and a spike in deportations. In the military realm, it means more reliance on drones for surveillance and targeted killings, and more intervention in failed and failing states to strike terrorist training camps and militant groups directly.

The intelligence model is a hybrid model of coercive counter-terrorism that combines elements of both the criminal justice model and the war model. The intelligence function is an important element in any counterterrorist effort. In a proactive approach, it becomes central. In proactive policing and security intelligence, information is not gathered for evidentiary purposes but for intelligence purposes. The goal is not necessarily criminal prosecution. Instead, the goal of intelligence operations is to learn more about what the targets are up to, to determine if there is a threat to national security and, if so, how serious or imminent it is, and to aid policymakers in deciding whether to intercede immediately or to let the plot unfold. The intelligence model is therefore a double-edged sword. It can nip a burgeoning threat in the bud or destabilize a terrorist network enough so that its operatives cannot move from the planning stage and go operational. On the other hand, it can permanently erase any chance of learning more about the enemy and his plans or to identify and apprehend those who have not yet appeared on the radar screen.

When linked to proactive policing, security intelligence, border and immigration control, and military intelligence, the intelligence model is primarily a coercive one. Intelligence can, however, serve the purposes of soft power initiatives. This is because a more proactive approach requires coordination and integration across a wide range of policy domains: criminal law, policing, intelligence, finance, border control, immigration and refugee policy, military strategy and tactics, diplomacy, development, and humanitarian intervention. As such, it places a greater demand on government to coordinate across previously distinct domains, jurisdictions and agencies, domestically, and across the increasingly blurry boundaries between domestic and foreign policy. This preventive imperative can create tensions between intrinsically conflicting goals.\textsuperscript{18} Some of the articles in this volume present case studies that highlight this complexity.

\textsuperscript{17} The Schengen regime is increasingly under pressure as terrorist attacks and plots multiply across Europe, and right-wing, populist politicians respond by calling for the restoration of national borders.


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and the way in which hard and soft power initiatives can complement or conflict with each other.\textsuperscript{19}

*Persuasive counter-terrorism* involves understanding and dealing with the ideas that underpin the use of terrorism in social and political life. This has ideological, political, social, cultural and religious aspects.\textsuperscript{20} Terrorists have constituencies which include followers, sympathizers, potential recruits, active or passive supporters, and state sponsors. Counter-terrorism has constituencies which include state actors within government ministries, agencies and bureaucracies, including those of allies, as well as non-state actors within civil society and the private sector, such as victims’ groups, citizens, mass publics and the media, both domestic and international, and employers and employees within industries, private companies and corporations. Persuasive counter-terrorism addresses all these wider audiences. The goal is to effect attitudinal and behavioural change within the opponent’s reference group and one’s own.

The *Communication Model* recognizes that counter-terrorism, like terrorism, is inherently communicative.\textsuperscript{21} Propaganda, psychological warfare, ‘hearts and minds’ campaigns, counter-radicalization, de-radicalization and the idea of providing incentives for extremists and terrorists to abandon violence and seek nonviolent paths instead, the creation of counternarratives to terrorist ideology and framing, even community policing, community outreach, and public education, all refer to this notion of counter-terrorism as a form of communication, where different messages are conveyed to different audiences.

While most of these initiatives fall into the category of ‘soft power’, even coercive models can contain persuasive elements. The criminal justice model uses the threat of punishment to deter potential terrorists from engaging in the violence that they threaten. The war model uses the threat of pre-emptive military strikes to deter state supporters of terrorism, and the threat of targeted assassinations or preventive detention to deter individuals from taking the terrorist path.

In addressing terrorists’ constituencies, the communication model tries to promote desired perceptions among individual members of terrorist organizations, their sympathizers, and their foreign supporters, such as the message that terrorism is counterproductive and that other means are more useful to achieve their goals. Counternarratives that foster cross-cultural and

\textsuperscript{19} See especially the articles by Medinat Abdulazeez, Troels Burchall Henningsen, and Nicole Alexander, April Moore, and Ashley Sogge.

\textsuperscript{20} For a case study that demonstrates this, see the article by Gerta Zaimi in this volume.

\textsuperscript{21} Ronald D. Crelinsten, “Terrorism as Political Communication: the Relationship between the Controller and the Controlled”, in Contemporary Research on Terrorism (Paul Wilkinson and A.M. Stewart, eds, University of Aberdeen Press, 1987) pp. 3-23. See also Alex P. Schmid and Janny de Graaf, Violence as Communication: Insurgent Terrorism and the Western News Media (Sage, 1982).
inter-ethnic understanding can undermine those aspects of terrorist propaganda and ideology that promulgate hatred and demonize particular ‘enemies’. Prevention of undesired perceptions is the complementary goal. Psychological, material, and economic concerns that make individuals vulnerable to recruitment can be addressed by creating alternative incentive structures for people to move away from embracing violence and terrorism. Talking to one’s enemies and their constituencies, though an anathema to many governments, can serve an important function in challenging and perhaps refuting undesired perceptions whose very existence can be missed in the absence of dialogue and exchange of views.\footnote{See, for example, Scott Atran, Talking to the Enemy: Faith, Brotherhood and the (Un)making of Terrorists (HarperCollins, 2010); Carolin Goerzig, Talking to Terrorists: Concessions and the Renunciation of Violence (Routledge, 2010); Mark Perry, Talking to Terrorists: Why America Must Engage with Its Enemies (Basic Books, 2010). See also the article by Troels Burchall Henningsen in this volume.}

In addressing counter-terrorists’ constituencies, a central element is the maintenance of public trust and confidence in government. Public education about the nature and extent of the terrorist threat, as well as the limits and feasibility of policy options, would help to promote public understanding both before and after a terrorist attack. Promoting public awareness without fuelling insecurity, apathy or intolerance and hate is an essential element of such an approach. An explicit policy to downplay the impact of terrorism, while condemning the terrorism itself, could help to promote the idea that terrorism is unacceptable in democratic society while minimizing the risk of public calls, fuelled by insecurity and terror, for repressive measures that undermine the rule of law and individual freedoms.

*Defensive counter-terrorism* assumes the inevitability of some terrorist attacks and prepares by affecting the variables that determine the nature of the attack and identity of its target. There are two basic approaches: preventing attacks and mitigating attacks. Prevention aims to minimize the risk of terrorist attack in certain places and at certain times. The second approach is to mitigate the impact of successful attacks.

*The Preventive Model* includes target hardening, critical infrastructure protection, and monitoring and regulating the flow of people, money, goods, and services. Target hardening has traditionally focused on important people (e.g., VIPs, government officials) and important places (e.g., government buildings, military bases) at specific times (e.g., major sporting events, international summits, special anniversaries). Making favoured targets less vulnerable to attack forces terrorists to innovate and to find alternatives, tying up resources and planning.
Terrorists need food, shelter, training, weapons, explosives, safe houses, communications, travel documents, financing. When these are not available or difficult to acquire, the risk of terrorist attack drops for a variety of reasons, including an increased risk of exposure leading to detection by security forces, an inability to launch a successful attack, or inadequate preparation of an attack that leads to outright failure. Border and passport control, customs and immigration, refugee determination, and the monitoring and regulation of the flow of people and goods in and out of a country, as well as within its borders, can help identify and track potential terrorists and the plots they devise. The regulation of banking and money transfers can impact on terrorist financing, which in turn can make the implementation of terrorist attacks more difficult. Terrorist groups often engage in auxiliary criminal activity to support their terrorist plots and the possibility that they could cooperate with transnational criminal organizations to procure weaponry or other materiel has long been a concern.\(^\text{23}\)

Because most critical infrastructure is in the hands of the private sector, government regulation is often weak or nonexistent, and industry resistance to any attempts to strengthen security can be intense, partnerships between government, industry and other stakeholders are essential for effective protection of critical infrastructure.

Mitigation (Response to a successful attack)

The Natural Disaster Model recognizes that “terrorist incidents more closely resemble natural disasters than acts of war”.\(^\text{24}\) Contingency planning, established chains of command and communication networks, stockpiles of emergency supplies, training of first responders, simulation exercises, and strategies for dealing with victims, their families, and the media can all be arranged in advance. Such an ‘all-hazards’ or ‘all-risks’ approach means that it can be more cost effective to prepare for a wide spectrum of risks.\(^\text{25}\)

The Public Health Model recognizes that terrorism, particularly mass-casualty terrorism, has an impact on public health and the psychological well-being of citizens.\(^\text{26}\) As a result, public health, environmental safety, and local emergency preparedness have all been incorporated into

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defensive counter-terrorism. Strengthening public health systems would create an infrastructure that can respond efficiently and effectively to a whole range of threats, whether a disease like MERS, SARS or swine flu, an industrial accident, an environmental disaster, or an intentional release of a pathogen or explosion of a radiological, chemical or biological device.

The Psychosocial Model focuses on social and psychological defences and the development of citizen resilience in the face of terrorist threats. Chronic anxiety and stress about the threat of terrorism can be a serious problem in societies geared to expect that an attack is imminent or inevitable. Promoting citizen resilience means preparing people ahead of time and strengthening their capacity to cope with the stress, anxiety and fear that a terrorist attack can provoke. This can help to take the terror out of terrorism.

Long-term counter-terrorism refers to initiatives that do not hold out promise for quick returns on the investment of time, money, resources, manpower or training, but develop over longer periods of time that often exceed the life of individual governments. Combating terrorism over an extended period requires thinking outside the box and keeping an eye out for the new development, the new point of friction, the new twist in the prevailing pattern. This includes the realm of ‘root causes’ and the more structural factors that can create a suitable climate for the promotion and use of terrorism. Because structural factors usually change and evolve very slowly, action taken now may not have a clear and discernible impact until much later. Such factors are often overlooked by governments trying to convince electorates and allies that they are on top of the problem. Traditional coercive models can serve to shore up feelings of national unity against a common enemy and are often preferred for that reason. Yet short-term successes can evolve into long-term failures, and short-term failures can end up becoming long-term successes.

The Development Model goes beyond the more territorially based issues of border control, customs and immigration, and refugee and migration flows to include issues such as land distribution and reform, environmental management, market regulation, and commodity markets. Such broader issues have become increasingly important ideological motors in areas such as WMD proliferation, anti-globalization movements, environmental activism and protest, and anti-Western, anti-capitalist and religious fundamentalist movements. Capacity building in weak and conflict-riven states, including police and military training, security sector reform (SSR), judicial

reform, and strengthening democratic governance, can also be part of the development model, where foreign aid and development are integrated into a long-term counter-terrorism strategy. It can also include demobilization, disarmament, reintegration (DDR) and stability operations in post-conflict states.

The Human Security or Human Rights Model reflects the view that international security cannot be achieved unless the peoples of the world are free from violent threats to their lives, their safety, or their rights. Efforts are directed towards improving the lives of individual citizens through poverty reduction, education, and professional training. Promoting social and economic rights can reduce the inequities that fuel radicalization and facilitate terrorist recruitment, while promoting political and civil rights can diminish the attractiveness of the terrorist option. In the field of education, teaching methods that foster an understanding of the interdependence of human beings and an appreciation of ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, and historical diversity can contribute to reducing the fear and cultivated ignorance that lie at the root of much hatred and violence. Support for extremist and terrorist groups would become harder to sustain and recruitment would become more difficult. Critical thinking, the ability to think for oneself and to research issues by collecting data from many sources, is a good antidote to ideological fads or exclusionary, racist theories.

The Gender Model recognizes that most terrorists are young men, though more and more women are getting involved, particularly as ‘jihadi brides’ in Syria. Overpopulation and failing economies mean lack of job opportunities for young men and therefore a reduced likelihood of finding a mate and raising a family, since husbands are expected to provide for their own and even their extended families. Idle, unemployed young men are ideal targets for radicalization and recruitment. Traditional women’s roles usually emphasize child-rearing at the expense of other contributions that a woman might make to society or the economy. Young women are confined to traditional roles and transgressions bring shame on the entire family or tribe. Women and girls in such situations can be convinced to become suicide bombers to redeem themselves and spare their families social exclusion. Empowering women and girls through education and training would allow half the population to contribute to social, political and economic life and to resist the pressure of family and tribal traditions that can sometimes drive ‘deviant’ girls and women along the terrorist path. Furthermore, it is now recognized that women

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play a positive role in countering violent extremism (CVE), as mothers, wives, and sisters of vulnerable young men. Incorporating families, and particularly women, into CVE efforts is a central aspect of the gender model of counter-terrorism.\(^{29}\)

*The Environmental Protection Model* recognizes that environmental issues increasingly pose potential threats to global security.\(^{30}\) Disturbances brought on by climate change, such as flooding, drought, wildfire, insects, and ocean acidification, and factors that drive global changes in climate, such as land use, pollution, and over-exploitation of resources, all have important implications for the broader sociopolitical climate in which terrorism develops. More than 60 nations, mostly developing countries, face a risk of exacerbating tensions and conflicts over resources due to climate change, including the threat of environmental refugees. Countries that are now at peace risk the emergence of conflict triggered by the impact of climate change.\(^{31}\) The impact of climate change could also bring unprecedented reversals in poverty reduction, nutrition, health and education.\(^{32}\) These warnings suggest that many long-term counter-terrorism strategies are vulnerable to being undermined over time by the impact of climate change unless environmental protection is incorporated into comprehensive counter-terrorism policy.

**Conclusion**

There is no quick or definitive fix to the problem of terrorism. Coercive strategies can take individual terrorists out of circulation or even lead to the demise of a terrorist group. But they can produce backlash and fuel resentment among target populations, creating new grievances and facilitating recruitment to new or reinvigorated causes. Much of the post-9/11 ‘war on terror’ has led to the erosion of the rule of law, the civil liberties of citizens and their trust in government. The reliance on proactive strategies such as pre-emption has played a major role in this trend. The unintended consequence has been to make it more difficult to pursue persuasive strategies that might reduce the necessity of coercive ones in the first place. Despite this, persuasive strategies hold out hope for changing hearts and minds, but they require persistence and a sensitivity to other perspectives that is difficult to promote or to sustain in the face of uncertainty.


and the seductive power of fear and loathing. As for defensive strategies, the problems of target displacement, cost, and jurisdictional conflict all make it very difficult to achieve optimum results in preventing terrorist attack. Reducing the impact of those attacks which do succeed can help in the short run, during a terrorist crisis, but achieving the goal of building resilience and taking the terror out of terrorism takes time and requires policy-makers and decision-makers to desist from exploiting the fear of terrorism for political or budgetary purposes. Building trust and assuring accountability can pay dividends, but these can always be washed away by the next election, when the slate is wiped clean and a new administration brings in its own priorities and practices. Institutional memory and bureaucratic procedures are designed to ensure continuity, but can often be ignored by incoming leadership.

Just as policy-makers tend to fight the last war, so they tend to focus on the past attack, the immediate threat, or the most feared doomsday prediction. This limits not only their policy options, but also their imagination. Counter-terrorism cannot be merely reactive or coercive, otherwise it risks creating a bunker mentality and missing the next new development. It must also be proactive, looking ahead and trying to out-think the terrorist. It must also be persuasive, convincing terrorists to abandon their destructive paths and supporters and sympathizers to seek other, non-violent ways to achieve their goals. Counter-terrorism must think in the long term, even as it acts in the short term to respond to attacks and outwit terrorist planning and targeting. And it must go beyond legal and military approaches, to include political, social, cultural, and economic initiatives aimed at undermining the viral spread of radicalizing and violence-glorifying ideas that fuel the use of terrorism in social and political life.

The best way to achieve all this is to operate on several levels at once: locally and globally; tactically and strategically; politically and economically; publicly and privately; institutionally and individually; offensively and defensively. The basic choice is really between a reductionist approach which focuses exclusively on one or two options, remaining blind to all others, and a comprehensive approach that recognizes the complete range of options and understands when to use which, in what combination or order, and for how long. As a contribution to this effort, the theme for TEC 2016 was “A Comprehensive Approach to Counter-Terrorism – Benefits and Pitfalls, Lessons Learned, and Best Practices”. A two-day program was developed to include presentations on a wide variety of topics and approaches, including terrorist organizations and foreign fighters, the crime-terror nexus, counter-terrorism operations, CVE and deradicalization, social media and social networks, technology and information sharing, and interagency cooperation. Because the conference had to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances,
presenters were unable to benefit from the feedback and interaction with colleagues that such a conference would provide. Many therefore decided not to submit written papers. The contributors to this volume are the exception, including a new paper on critical infrastructure protection that was not included in the original program.

The first two articles, by Medinat Abdulazeez and Troels Burchall Henningsen, were to be presented in the opening plenary session, "Benefits and pitfalls of a comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism - views from Africa". They provide case studies that highlight many of the broader issues that go beyond the more traditional approaches to counter-terrorism. The third article, by Gerta Zaimi, looks at religious radicalization in a region that receives less attention than other regions, the Balkans, and highlights the broader context within which radicalization to violence takes place. The fourth article, by Luan Qafmolla, looks at critical infrastructure protection, specifically the protection of nuclear reactors and radioactive waste disposal and storage. The last two articles, by Giray Sadik and Nicole Alexander, April Moore, and Ashley Sogge, look at the area of information sharing and international cooperation. Sadik underscores the challenges that NATO faces in coordinating a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy – especially when looking beyond the violence perpetrated in the name of religion to address other kinds of terrorism and political violence. This highlights once again the issues of definition and national interest that were raised in the introduction. Alexander et al. provide lessons from the Syria conflict and the importance of gathering information on civil and community organizations as an aid to counter-terrorism and conflict resolution efforts in the region. As such, they bring us back to the first three articles which demonstrate the importance of understanding the broader context in which conflict develops and the communities within which terrorists, their supporters, and their opponents operate.

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The Inadequacies of Exclusive Military Action: Countering Boko Haram’s Terrorism with Alternative Approaches

Medinat Adeola Abdulazeez¹

Abstract
This article examines the application of military action in countering the activities of the Nigerian terrorist group Boko Haram in Africa. The article focuses on bringing to the fore the successes and pitfalls of the Nigerian Military Joint Task Force (JTF), the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), and the African Union Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in combating Boko Haram, and posits that although hard power may have stemmed the tide of sophisticated attacks from Boko Haram, in the long term, it will not be enough to totally eradicate the scourge of the terrorist group. Using historical and ethnographic methodological approaches, the article considers an array of other options which would complement military action as a short-term option with specific long-term strategies. One such long-term strategy involves rupturing the will of Boko Haram foot soldiers through comprehensive economic and social reforms geared towards provision of employment and sustainable living in the underdeveloped and highly illiterate north-east of Nigeria, which is the epicenter of Boko Haram’s enterprise. Another long-term strategy to be considered is the proper management of the humanitarian displacement situation (refugees and Internally Displaced Persons) caused not only by the activities of Boko Haram but also by counter-terrorist measures against it.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism, Military, Alternatives.

Introduction
Modern terrorist groups often have expansive aims like seeking to replace the existing sociopolitical order with one they consider more just, and although they usually lack the means to realize their objectives, their beliefs sanction the most destructive tactics.² Some of these tactics include suicide bombings, assassinations, plane hijacks, kidnappings, bank robberies and so on. Such destructive tactics influence to a large extent the counter-terrorism approaches adopted by state officials and security agencies, which are characterized by a high propensity towards the embrace of brutal force as a counter-terrorism tool. Admittedly, history has seen cases when brute force alone has suppressed

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insurgent or terrorist revolts, such as when the ancient Romans crushed several Jewish
uprisings, and Saddam Hussein mercilessly overcame guerrilla fighters in both southern and
northern Iraq despite having just decisively lost the 1991 Persian Gulf War.\(^3\) Nigerian
President Shehu Shagari dispelled the 1980 Matatsine uprisings in Bulumkutu, Yola, Kaduna, Gombe and Bauchi using exclusively the superior fire power of the armed forces.
This has however not always been the case. During the Algerian war of independence
(1954-1962), one of the reasons the French lost, despite defeating the urban terrorists and
the rural guerrillas, was their pervasive use of torture that undermined military morale and
aroused indignation among intellectuals and other influential social groups in Algeria and,
more importantly, in France.\(^4\) Between 2010-2013, the Nigerian government adopted varied
ranges of military response to terrorist activities of the Boko Haram group but achieved
minimal results, as the military’s high-handedness and ill-equipped status served to swing
public opinion and support away from it. This bolstered Boko Haram’s firm grip on some
local governments in Yobe and Borno states, reinforced terrorist attacks across the country
and further fueled Boko Haram’s objective of pushing the Nigerian state to the
disadvantaged end of a negotiating table. It is just as Max Sillion posits: ‘silver bullet’
solutions aimed at crushing terrorist attacks in one single blow will only result in painful
lessons such as the ones learnt by the British with the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in
Northern Ireland, and lessons which America is still learning with Al Qaeda and the Taliban.\(^5\)

The political, economic, social, cultural and religious dynamics surrounding the emergence
and continued existence of terrorist groups makes exclusive military actions inadequate to
counter them. Successful counter-terrorism programs for groups like Boko Haram have to
inculcate alternative approaches that balance hard power and smooth out rough edges
which induced terrorist activities in the first place. It is to the consideration of such alternative
approaches that this article focuses.

The article is divided into four sections. Section one introduces the Boko Haram group, it’s
ideology, evolution, and mode of operation. The second section examines militarized state
response to Boko Haram’s activities, chronicling counter-terrorist operations of the Nigerian
Military Joint Task Force (JTF), Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), and African Union’s
Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). The inadequacies of exclusive military action are
the focus of section three. Here, varied factors inhibiting the success of exclusively
militarized counter-terrorism are enumerated and analyzed. Section four provides an array of

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\(^3\) Ibid, p. 6.
\(^4\) Ibid.
\(^5\) Max Siollun, “Boko Haram can be defeated”, New African Magazine (19 January 2015), available at:
alternative counter-insurgency approaches which could be applied to suit the specific dynamics of Nigeria as a country, and the north east in particular. One major point the article intends to stress is that application of counter-terrorism models and approaches should recognize the cultural, religious, and societal sensitivities of the north of Nigeria. Another is to emphasize the inability of exclusive military action to tackle the root causes of Boko Haram’s terrorism, as it relates to addressing internal grievances and restoring the structural functions of the state.

The Birth of a Terrorist Group

Boko Haram holds the record for the longest existing terrorist group in Nigeria (from the year of its first known clash with security forces - 2009 - until the present). It is the single entity whose activities have produced the country’s highest level of humanitarian displacement, in terms of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The period of its existence also led to an increase in defense spending to the tune of 934 billion Naira\(^6\) (2.8 billion Euros) from the 2015 budget, the highest in the history of the country. At its peak in 2013-2014, the group which started with its base at Maiduguri (Borno State) controlled territorial areas in Borno state, such as Bama and Gwoza before being dislodged by the military. Boko Haram’s threat to regional stability in the Lake Chad Basin is enormous when it is considered that its operational bases lie within the sphere of influence of Jihadist groups in northern Mali, the Sahel and Libya, and it is also not too far away from conflicts in Darfur and Central Africa.\(^7\)

In a video released on January 23, 2015, Abu Musab Al Barnawi, the former spokesman of the movement,\(^8\) made submissions which codifies the ideological standpoints of the group. Arguing that the term ‘Boko Haram’ (Western Education is Forbidden), the popular alias of the group, is not representative of its actions,\(^9\) Barnawi instead highlighted the movement’s chosen name of Jama’at Ahl al-Sunnah li Dawah wa-l-jihad - people committed to the ways of the Prophet (Sunnah), Proselytization (Dawah) and Holy War (Jihad).\(^10\) In general terms, Boko Haram summarizes their manifesto in the statement below:

> We want to reiterate that we are warriors who are carrying out Jihad (religious war) in Nigeria and our struggle is based on the traditions of the holy Prophet. We will never accept any system of government apart from the one stipulated by Islam because that is the only way that the Muslims can be liberated. We do not believe in any system of government, be it traditional

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\(^10\) Ibid.
or orthodox, except the Islamic system which is why we will keep on fighting against democracy, capitalism, socialism and whatever. We will not allow the Nigerian Constitution to replace the laws that have been enshrined in the holy Qur’ān, we will not allow adulterated conventional education (Boko) to replace Islamic teachings. We will not respect the Nigerian government because it is illegal. We will continue to fight its military and the police because they are not protecting Islam. We do not believe in the Nigerian judicial system and we will fight anyone who assists the government in perpetrating illegalities.\footnote{“Boko Haram Gives Conditions for Ceasefire” (April 25 2011), available at: http://leadership.ng/nga/articles/5287/2011/09/17/boko_haram_gives_conditions_ceasefire.html (accessed on 24 August 2016).}

Aggregating these ideological standpoints, Moses Echonu believes that Boko Haram draws on deep Nigerian, African, and increasingly international Islamist theologies.\footnote{Moses Echonu, “Toward a Better Understanding of Boko Haram”, The Africa Collective (18 June 2014), available at: https://theafricacollective.com/author/meochonu/ (accessed on 23 August 2016).} These theologies are described as “an eclectic collage of beliefs cobbled together from controversial medieval Salafi sources, from Wahhabi doctrines, from expedient idiosyncrasies, and from ideologies modeled by the Afghan Taliban”.\footnote{Ibid.} Broadly speaking, these theologies reflect the Wahhabi/Salafi school of thought from which Boko Haram, from the days of erstwhile leader Mohammed Yusuf, has sought inspiration. Wahhabis seek the establishment of a pure Islamic State (Caliphate), a return to Tawhid (pure monotheism) as opposed to Shirk (polytheism), and a return to the Sunnah (Prophetic way) in practicing Islam, as opposed to Bid’ah (innovation) which they believe has become the dominant practice of most Muslims.\footnote{As-Salafi, Abu 'Iyad, “A Brief Introduction to the Salafi Dawah”, Healthy Muslims, available at: http://www.salafipublications.com/ spas/sp.cfm?subsecID=SLF02&articleID=SLF020001&articlePages=1 (accessed on 09 April 2016).} In short, they preach a pristine version of Islam as practiced in the age of the Salafs (Rightly Guided Caliphs).\footnote{Daniel Pesature, “Justifying Jihad: A Case Study of Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram”, Small Wars Journal (2015), p. 1.} Mark Amaliya and Michael Nwankpa view Boko Haram as a group fundamentally opposed to secular statehood and western political ideology, and engaging in a Jihad-inspired perpetuation of terror as its principal means to establish a Nigerian state rooted in Salafist proselytism.\footnote{Mark Amaliya and Michael Nwankpa, “Assessing Boko Haram: A Conversation”, Journal of Terrorism Research, 5 (1) (2014), p. 80.}

Sivan, connotes a combination of propaganda, education, medical and welfare action, and its practitioners.\(^{19}\) At this time, Boko Haram towed the path of violent extremist groups who attract members to their cause by investing their energies in alternative pursuits related to comfort, survival, or health.\(^{20}\) Just as Hamas’ and Hezbollah’s domestic legitimacy and appeal was attained through extensive social service networks which local governments proved incapable of matching,\(^{21}\) Boko Haram’s evangelism also began in the form of a Muslim social movement: catering for orphans, widows, and the vulnerable. Mohammed Yusuf, the founder of the group, gathered a considerable number of students on his property (the Ibn Taymiyyah Mosque) and regularly fed them,\(^{22}\) provided start-up capital for members, and distributed motorcycles, wheelbarrows and other means to members so they could become self-employed.

The group paid their recruits, offering them a livelihood and social status that had nothing to do, initially, with ideological indoctrination.\(^{23}\) Mohammed Yusuf ensured bachelors got married to brides without ostentatious bride price or lavish weddings, restoring the dignity and responsibility of the northern youths. This was important in the northeastern part of Nigeria because men in the region’s Kanuri communities “lower their social status by not being married due to their need to eat at the houses of neighbors, friends, relatives, or superiors who have wives.”\(^{24}\) Widows of members were taken care of, as were orphans. The excluded, especially the *almajirai* (itinerant students) and *yan cirani* (itinerant workers) who had flocked in large numbers to the urban areas owing to rural destitution, became a ready pool for mobilized membership especially in an area that contemporarily displays one of the worst cases of poverty and human development indicators in the world. With 71.5 per cent of its population living in absolute poverty and more than half malnourished,\(^{25}\) the north east is the poorest part of Nigeria. 40 percent of Nigerian children aged six to eleven do not attend any primary school, and it is northern Nigeria that has the worst school attendance rates, especially for its girls.\(^{26}\) The literacy rate in Lagos, Nigeria’s bustling commercial capital, is 92 per cent, while in Kano, the north’s commercial capital and Nigeria’s second biggest city, it is 49 per cent; in the north eastern state of Borno, the epicenter of Boko Haram’s terrorist

\(^{22}\) Sheikh Jaafar’s speech, 2007. Distributed by Darul Islam, audio recording in possession of the researcher.
\(^{23}\) Caroline Varin, Boko Haram and the War on Terror (Praeger Books, 2016), p. 43.
\(^{26}\) Ibid.
activities, it is under fifteen per cent. In 2010, nine of the nineteen northern states had the highest levels of formal unemployment in Nigeria – some as high as about 40 per cent. The northeast thus has the largest concentrations of people Frantz Fanon would call the ‘Wretched of the Earth’, many of whom are either unemployed or underemployed, and suffer from what Ted Gurr has termed ‘relative deprivation’. Hilary Matfess portrays Boko Haram as one of those groups serving as a kind of para-government filling the gap left by the absent state, and taking over the economic and infrastructural responsibility of the state, and for this, they held the loyalty of their beneficiaries. Employing the ‘state failure’ theory, the inability of the Nigerian state to answer and attend to the legitimate concerns and demands of its citizens, and provide political goods such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, employment opportunities, and a legal framework for law and order makes the government lose its legitimacy in the eyes of the citizens, many of whom would then transfer their allegiances to more responsive authorities, be they religious or clan groups, or even go the extreme and resort to terrorism. This, according to Moses Echonu, makes the north east a fertile ground for both the populist and nihilist messages of Boko Haram because educational deficit, the resulting poverty index, and extremism are intricately connected in a causal cycle, reinforcing one another. By the mid-2000s however, the group “had expanded its state-like activities into paramilitary incursions, violently attacking other Salafist and Muslim groups that critiqued its interpretation of the Quran.”

Marc-Antoine Pérouse De Montclos advanced that by November 2003, Boko Haram began to strike against political targets such as police officers, who represented government’s first attempt at repressing the group’s activities and were sometimes the only effective presence of the state in remote villages, mosques and Muslim scholars, who contested Boko Haram’s moral authority, or fraudulently elected politicians, who were accused of failing to implement Islamic law. Following a fall-out with politicians who hitherto supported the group, Boko

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29 Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (Grove Press, 2005).
31 Mattess, “Here’s why so many people join Boko Haram, despite its notorious violence”.
33 Echonu, “Toward a Better Understanding of Boko Haram”.
34 Mattess, “Here’s why so many people join Boko Haram, despite its notorious violence”.
36 Muhammad Yusuf is believed to have used his following to help Borno state gubernatorial candidate, Ali Modu Sheriff win the elections in 2003. For this feat, Sheriff presumably pledged to implement Shari’ah in Borno state, make Boko Haram’s Buji Foi a member of his cabinet and gift Boko Haram motorcycles and cash. While the other pledges were redeemed, Sheriff could not implement Shari’ah in the multi-religiously populated Borno state.
Haram assumed a campaign of civil disobedience, refusing to obey laws of the state whose authority the group doctrinally did not recognize. This culminated in the refusal of Boko Haram members to wear protective motorcycle helmets as stipulated by the Borno state government. Freedom Onuoha stated that the affected members were temporarily detained, an act interpreted as a provocation by the other members, given that they were in a funeral procession. The resultant altercation between the sect members and security forces led to the shooting of some of their members by men of Operation Flush, the Borno state security team charged with implementation of the helmet law.

Reacting to this event, Mohammed Yusuf, though absent at the time, made an announcement through his well circulated Friday sermons in Maiduguri to “retaliate for the shooting of his men, boasting that his group would be prepared to confront all security agencies in the state as well as government which he described as the enemies of Islam.”

The 11 June - 30 July 2009 ensuing clash between members of the group and security forces in Bauchi, Kano and Maiduguri led to violent offensives, attacks on police stations and Boko Haram’s operational base, and finally culminated in the arrest and killings of Boko Haram members. Mohammed Yusuf was also captured and extra-judicially executed.

Members of the group who escaped capture and death went underground, regrouped and surfaced in 2010, with profound changes in tactics, targets and modi operandi, to include suicide bombings, prison breaks and bank robberies, and demands that the killers of their slain leader be brought to book. They were led by Mohammed Yusuf’s deputy, Abubakar Shekau.

Amaliya and Nwankpa categorized the structure and operation of the organization as amorphous (combining sophisticated combat techniques and technology with a variety of target victims), anonymous (lack of an organized group of interlocutors with whom policy agencies could engage), and internally fragmented without a centered leadership. The Ansaru group splintered from Boko Haram on the premise of non-concomitance with Boko Haram’s tactics, which sometimes inadvertently involved killing of Muslims. This group concentrated on kidnapings especially of foreign nationals in Nigeria and Cameroon, but it is not clear if they did this in collaboration with, or on behalf of Boko Haram. Further splits in...
Boko Haram were evident in April 2016 when DAESH/ISIL designated former Boko Haram spokesman and Ansaru leader, Abu Musab Al Barnawi, as the new leader of Boko Haram in an apparent snub of the more popular Abubakar Shekau. Kevin Uhrmacher and Mary Beth Sheridan’s report for the Washington Post reveals that as of April 2016, Boko Haram’s 814 attacks (suicide and explosive bomb attacks, assassinations, arson and so on) had resulted in 11,885 deaths across Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon and Niger.

**State Response to Boko Haram**

The 2009 uprisings were met with exclusive military repression on the part of the Nigerian government. Militarized counter-terrorism operations continued after Boko Haram’s resurgence in 2010. It was implemented by three groups of security actors and spanned the democratically elected governments of Musa Ya’adua, Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari. The three groups of security actors are: The Joint Task Force, The Civilian Joint Task Force and the Multinational Joint Task Force.

*The Joint Task Force (JTF)*

Internal security in Nigeria is conventionally the responsibility of the Nigerian Police Force. However, overwhelmed by pervasive security threats, including militancy and terrorist activities, the police force has not lived up to its expected functions. The police force is further weighed down by nepotism, corruption, lack of expertise, and inadequate remuneration, retirement benefits or disengagement programs. Due to all of these factors, the citizenry and the Nigerian state have found themselves more often than not looking instead to the military for security assistance. To ensure consolidated results and continuity, the police and the military are sometimes drafted together in collective security operations - Special Task Forces (STFs), Military Special Operations Forces (MISOFs), Joint Security Task Forces (JSTFs) and Joint Military Task Forces (JMTFs).

To counter Boko Haram, the Nigerian government employed militarized kinetic operations which brought together personnel from the Nigerian Armed Forces (NAF) made up of the Army, Navy and Airforce, Nigeria Police Force (NPF), the Department of State Security (DSS), Nigerian Customs Service (NCS), Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), and the Defence Intelligence Agency.

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This Joint Military Task Force, which had its headquarters in Maiduguri, the Borno state capital, was codenamed Operation Restore Order (ORO I) and became operational on 12 June 2011. The responsibility of the approximately 4,000 troops included restoring peace and maintaining order in the affected states of the north east. Troops used for ORO I were drafted from 1 Division, 81, 82 and 174 Battalions, and were commanded by Brigadier General Jack Okechukwu Nwagbo (July 2011-January 2012) and Major General Ewanisha (12 January 2012-May 2013). ORO III was drafted between 13 December 2011 and 15 May 2013, with its headquarters at Yobe state. Composed similarly of JTF troops numbering approximately 2,000, ORO III was expected to add precision to security operations in the north east and effectively contain the advances of Boko Haram terrorists who were proving to be much tougher opponents than was expected.

The JTF’s counter insurgency efforts have comprised killings of suspected terrorists, massive arrests, and detentions. Some of these have been termed unlawful, wanton and an unwarranted expression of high-handedness. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch published reports of what they construe to be random killings of civilians, physical abuse, arbitrary arrests, attacks on defenseless communities, secret detentions, extortions, extra-judicial killing of suspects, detention-related human rights abuses like torture, holding suspects without charge or trial, rape, arson and so on. Nothing perhaps demonstrates the JTF’s high-handedness more than the 16 April 2013 incident in Baga, a town located 196km from Maiduguri. In retaliation for the shooting of a military personnel by an unknown gunman presumed to be a Boko Haram member, the JTF responded by storming the town with reinforcements, shooting indiscriminately at anybody in sight and razing residences to the ground. About 200 deaths were reported while over 193 people were admitted to a local health clinic. Had Boko Haram’s incessant attacks been abated by JTF’s operations, their high-handed tactics might have been tolerated as a means to an end. Unfortunately, the JTF’s seeming overzealousness became a rallying cry for Boko Haram’s subsequent violent campaigns, with the group justifying new attacks as retaliation for killing, arrests and prosecution of their comrades, and insisting that reprisal attacks will continue until security forces behind the execution of their slain leader, Muhammad Yusuf, are made to face justice.


Ibid, p. 76.


Resented by local communities and beset with corruption, lack of sophisticated weapons to match terrorists' cache of rocket-propelled grenades and general purpose machine guns, the JTF could not stem Boko Haram's attacks on police stations, public buildings and even soft targets in Borno, Kano, Adamawa, Yobe and Plateau. The group made territorial gains in Bama, Gwoza and other parts of Borno state. Consequent upon this, then President Goodluck Jonathan declared a State of Emergency (SOE) in the three most affected states - Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. A new JTF operation, BOYONA, made up of about 3,000 troops, was constituted to join troops from ORO I and III. On 19 August 2013, operational command of Operation BOYONA was taken over by the newly established Army Division 7 with Operation Zaman Lafiya (peaceful coexistence) which had 10,000 troops. On 19 July 2015, Acting Chief of Army Staff, major General Tukur Buratai changed counter-terrorist operations against Boko Haram to Operation Lafiya Dole (peace by force). This was intended to signal the army's intention to fast track the war against terrorism and restore normalcy to affected states. Buratai's action mirrored the intent of newly elected President, Muhammadu Buhari, who had swiftly shifted the base of military operations from Abuja, the capital, to Maiduguri minutes after he was sworn in on May 29, 2015.

**Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF)**

The CJTF in Nigeria represents a veritable example of citizen-driven communal response to security challenges. They are composed of neighborhood vigilante groups made up of young and old civilians armed with mundane weapons such as bows and arrows, swords, clubs and daggers. Vigilante groups often emerge when there is a perception of increased criminality or social deviance which threatens social order. They utilize their knowledge of the communities to identify suspected Boko Haram members or other suspicious individuals. This group flourishes not only in places where the government lacks capacity to protect local people from Boko Haram's terrorism, but also where the government and its forces are

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believed to be untrustworthy.59 Their actions have proven useful in stopping many attacks through swift identification of strange faces in their communities and have also helped security agencies to arrest Boko Haram members.60 In June 2013, they agreed to officially join forces with the JTF in combating the terrorist menace in the north.

John Campbell acknowledged the efforts of the CJTF as enabling the formal mechanism (JTF) to function and operate.61 Crisis Group International reported CJTF as providing essential local knowledge and intelligence to the security forces, playing an important role in pushing Boko Haram out of Maiduguri and, more importantly, giving people a chance to reconnect with the state instead of looking to Boko Haram for protection.62 Apart from Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Gombe, Bauchi and other parts of northern Nigeria, the CJTF has also been established in Cameroon and Chad where they are known as comités de vigilance.63 Varied military correspondence shows the army engages with and endorses the activities of the CJTF. For instance, in its August 2013 report, the army’s Joint Investigation Team (JIT) mentioned the contribution of the CJTF to the success of military operations: “The involvement of these Youth Volunteers crowned the OP (operation) with success not envisaged in the past.... Their efforts complemented that of the JTF which brought about substantial sanity, restoration of social and economic activities to Maiduguri metropolis.”64 The military has currently begun the incorporation of the CJTF into its fold after they were trained in conventional combat. State governments in the north east also provided logistics and financial aid to the CJTF.

The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)

Nigeria borders Niger to the extreme north, Chad to the north east and Cameroon from the northeast right down the eastern Bakassi peninsula.65 The three states most affected by Boko Haram are situated at the thresholds of Nigeria’s borders with these countries. The proximity, and more importantly the porosity of these borders, mostly unmanned or poorly manned, coupled with the 1979 ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of People, Goods and Services, have drawn Niger, Chad, Cameroon and other countries into the complicated

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63 Ibid.
web of Boko Haram and its activities. Nigeria also shares historical, linguistic, social and
cultural affinities with these countries. For example, the Kanuris (of the Kanem Borno
empire) are spread all across the villages around the Nigeria-Niger border. Hausa Language
is also spoken around communities in Nigeria and Chad. What this implies is that with travel
time reduced and little or no restrictive natural barriers, Boko Haram can, and have launched
attacks in Nigeria from either of these countries, and melt back into them. Boko Haram also
(likely in coordination with its faction group, Ansaru) kidnapped the French Moulin-Fournier
family of seven in Waza (a town 16 miles east of Amchide, Cameroon) in February 2013.
The Cameroonien government reportedly paid a $3.14 million ransom and released Boko
Haram prisoners in April 2013 in exchange for the family.66 This shows that border countries
are not only serving as hiding places, but also constitute funding sources for terrorists.67
Aside from sharing borders with Nigeria, the close proximity of Libya and Algeria to these
countries (Niger and Chad); the presence of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in
Niger and Mali; and the spread of arms-bearing groups from the Libyan uprising and the fall
of Muammar Ghadafi in 2011, all suggest linkages between Boko Haram and Al Qaeda in
the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Al-Shabaab in Kenya and Somalia, Ansaru-Dine in Mali, and
the Islamic State (IS). Abubakar Shekau had intermittently embarked on ‘name dropping’ in
Boko Haram videos, suggesting affiliations to these groups either through pledge of loyalty
or training aids, but these claims were never substantiated with cogent proofs either on the
part of the mentioned affiliations or on Boko Haram’s part.

The JTF, with heightened operational and logistic problems, proved ineffectual in responding
to seeming regionalization and internationalization of Boko Haram’s terrorist activities.
Shortage of troops ended a mandatory six-month rotation in place for JTF troops, resulting in
cancelation of leave and training. Extended posting began a steady rise in ‘absence without
leave’ (AWOL) and soldiers left the military without permission. Under-resourcing, low
morale and impunity continued to lessen JTF’s ability to defeat Boko Haram until the African
Union (AU) agreed to the setting up of the Multinational Joint Task Force, made up of troops
from the affected countries, namely Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Cameroon. Prior to the
emergence of the Boko Haram threat, there was already in place a Multinational Joint Task
Force (MNJTF) between Nigeria, Chad and Niger, set up in 1998 to combat transnational
crime in the Lake Chad region, but it was mostly dormant.68 It was thus reactivated in 2012

66 Jacob Zenn, “Boko Haram: Recruitment, Financing, and Arms Trafficking in the Lake Chad Region”,
67 Medinat Abdulazeez “The Internationalization of Terrorism in Africa: The Case of Boko Haram”, Oxford
University Workshop on Terrorism in Africa (January 2016).
68 Lori-Anne Théroux-Bénoni, “A Regional Multinational Joint Task Force to Combat Boko Haram”, Institute for
haram#sthash.ak7RN6mv.dpuf (accessed 23 December 2015).
for the Boko Haram mission, with troops from Niger and Nigeria unofficially helping each other to counter the activities of the insurgents, especially when they involved border towns of the countries. MNJTF’s mandate was to create a secure environment, restore state authority and facilitate humanitarian assistance in the affected areas, conduct military operations, border patrols, find abducted persons, stop the flow of arms, reintegrate insurgents into society and bring those responsible for crimes to justice.69

For Nigeria’s neighbors, reviving the MNJTF was a welcome development urgently required to safeguard investments threatened by insecurity in the Lake-Chad basin. When Boko Haram began to attack towns in northern Cameroon and Chadian communities on the Lake’s basin, in retaliation for Cameroon’s and Chad’s help to Nigeria, both countries became impatient to act in order to protect oil supply routes crucial to their economies. The escalation of fighting in the north of Cameroon threatened to paralyze the Chadian economy as Ndjamen’s supplies coming from the port of Douala passed through this area. Boko Haram’s progression towards the south of Adamawa state in Nigeria was just as worrying, considering that the pipeline exporting Chadian oil comes into Cameroon from pipes running through Yola in Nigeria. The AU’s decision authorized the deployment of 8,700 troops comprising military and non-military staff, for an initial period of 12 months, which could be renewed. Nigeria and Chad provided most of the troops; 3,250 and 3,000 men respectively, including a Chadian special forces unit. Cameroon provided 950 men, 750 came from Niger and another 750 from Benin.70 These figures included not only infantry troops and artillery but also gendarmes and police squads, as well as engineering, logistical and civilian units. All were under the command of a Nigerian general,71 Major General Iliya Abbah, appointed on July 31, 2015. The 8,700-strong force has its headquarters in the Chadian capital, N'Djamena.

Muhammadu Buhari’s ascension to power helped the MNJTF overcome initial setbacks. Goodluck Jonathan’s government had been reluctant to allow ‘foreign boots’ on Nigeria’s soil to combat what was seen as a domestic insurgency, opting to rather continue Nigeria’s ‘African Giant’ portrayal as a leader of West African regional security operations. From the MNJTF’s inception therefore, Nigeria either diplomatically boycotted the initiative or maneuvered to ensure it would remain in the driver’s seat.72 Its troops, at Nigeria’s insistence, were confined to operate only at the outskirts of Niger’s refugee camp area, the Diffa region, the Cameroonian border towns of Baga and Ngala, and along Nigeria’s outside

70 Théroux-Bénoni, “A Regional Multinational Joint Task Force to Combat Boko Haram”.
72 Théroux-Bénoni, “A Regional Multinational Joint Task Force to Combat Boko Haram”.
borders within the neighboring countries. These areas represented only 13 per cent of Boko Haram’s operational zone, which meant that 87 per cent of Boko Haram’s operational area was still left unprotected, especially the hinterland villages where the group is known to wreak havoc whenever military offensives gained ground. Nigeria attempted to tackle the insurgency on its national territory while regional and international partners, within and outside the MNJTF framework, secured border areas to prevent Boko Haram from further spilling over into neighboring countries. Buhari, eager to show his support for regional cooperation against Boko Haram, turned the tide of diplomatic collaboration. Visiting his counterparts in Cameroon and Chad, he coordinated military efforts with other armed forces in the region, and sought better cooperation with the United States and the United Kingdom on intelligence and assistance. At home, Buhari’s administration went further to crack down on corruption in the security establishment.

The MNJTF proved to be a desired workable alternative. As Marc-Antoine De Perouse posited, the combination of political ill will and the depth of corruption in the Nigerian military institution did not leave much hope for military success because soldiers deployed to Borno lacked ammunition and were not always paid, a situation which disheartened the troops and led to mutiny. In addition, the Nigerian army’s high-handedness and attack on civilians limited the support of local communities, without which it proved difficult to win an asymmetrical war against an invisible enemy such as Boko Haram. Stunned by Boko Haram’s overrunning of Baga town (MNJTF’s first base in Maiduguri), regional forces forgot their quibbles and launched offensives with local forces in March 2015. Better coordinated from borders of participating countries and within Nigeria itself, the offensive degraded Boko Haram’s ability to conduct conventional attacks, catching off balance terrorists who were used to facing a demoralized army largely confined to fixed locations. Territories were retaken and militants were dislodged from their attack and regroup bases in Sambisa forest where weapons were stored and captives imprisoned. Security forces focused on disrupting Boko Haram’s logistics routes that sent in food and weapons into Borno State from neighboring countries. Multinational cooperation hence became the only real material

73 Ibid.
74 Matfess, Lewis, and Allen, “Unbroken Boko Haram: Buhari Prematurely Declares Victory”.
78 Matfess, Lewis and Allen, “Unbroken Boko Haram: Buhari Prematurely Declares Victory”.
advantage Nigeria had over Boko Haram. With the MNJTF, participating countries pooled their aerial combat resources together and this proved to be decisive in counter-terrorist operations. MNJTF also performs the function of recipient and coordination point for international technical and financial aid as several bilateral and multilateral partners provide funds and second officers directly to its intelligence cell (*Cellule de Coopération et de Liaison* - CCL). This support may not have been available purely bilaterally.\(^81\)

**The Inadequacies of Exclusive Military Actions**

On 24 December 2015, President Buhari declared Boko Haram ‘technically defeated’. This followed a chain of military successes which drastically reduced the spate of sophisticated attacks carried out by the terrorist group. Buhari had effected a thorough command change, moved tactical formations’ headquarters to Maiduguri, improved logistics, wage-payment, air support, rotation of troops and equipment procurement. All these boosted the morale and capacity of Nigeria’s armed forces, which had been compromised by years of mismanagement and wide-scale fraud.\(^82\) To improve capacity, the president also ordered investigations of more than 300 companies and prominent citizens, including senior serving and retired officers, believed involved in security budget fraud and misappropriation.\(^83\) Hillary Matfess and other scholars swiftly warned however that Buhari’s claims were immature and an exaggeration of military progress. To them, Boko Haram still maintained:

‘significant manpower—made up of a network of committed insurgents whom the state has had difficulty capturing or killing—and far-ranging operational capabilities. Using women and even children as bombers, Boko Haram had mounted dozens of coordinated attacks, striking as far afield as Chad’s capital of N’Djamena in June and July 2015, Nigeria’s capital of Abuja in early October, and northeastern villages and camps for the internally displaced in January and February 2016.

Thus, although Boko Haram had dramatically lost territory in Nigeria, its spread across the region showed few signs of being contained.\(^84\) Crisis Group International observed that “for several months, the group has carried out fewer attacks, and those attacks were smaller, on softer targets and with reduced success.”\(^85\) According to Jacob Zenn, the possibility of a “Mosul scenario” – akin to IS’s takeover of Mosul, Iraq in 2014 – in which Boko Haram could imminently threaten Nigeria’s territorial

\(^{83}\) Ibid.
\(^{84}\) Matfess, Lewis, and Allen, “Unbroken Boko Haram: Buhari Prematurely Declares Victory”.
integrity has significantly reduced. Today, the group seems to deploy fewer fighters, who mostly attack remote villages and refugee camps, and its four-wheel drive fleet is depleted, as many of the armored vehicles it seized from Nigerian forces are destroyed or recaptured. Likely, military assaults have weakened the center of the movement’s network, making it less capable of securing obedience and coordination, and fragmenting it into smaller, more local units, tied to specific areas and resource bases. As widely publicized, the Nigerian security forces have also killed several key Boko Haram members and Jacob Zenn is of the opinion that this has partially disrupted the media coordination between Boko Haram and the Islamic State (IS). In recent months, Boko Haram videos have been released at a slower rate than before, and an infographic of its attacks released in December 2015 appeared out of sync with the IS announcement on its daily Al-Bayan News Bulletin. Despite Boko Haram’s inability to occupy territory after it was pushed out of its holding caches in Sambisa and Gwoza, the group needs to be viewed as ‘down but not out’. The reliance on exclusive military action to counter the group in 2009 still holds as a factor for its resurgence. The emphasis on the military option in tackling the Boko Haram appears to suggest that the lesson of the return of the sect about a year after it was presumed extinct has not been learnt. With the group militarily crushed at the end of July 2010, state actors executed no alternative counter-terrorism capacity building mechanism. They were thus not prepared for Boko Haram’s refined and better coordinated comeback. Exclusive military action turned out to be deficient in 2009 and is proving inadequate contemporarily due to the following reasons:

The Complexity of Unfamiliar Terrains
The Nigerian Armed Forces are trained to defend the territorial integrity of the country. Its other functions include peace keeping and enforcement missions in Africa, and for this, Nigeria’s giant status as a security powerhouse on the African continent was cemented. Better acquainted with external threats, curbing home-grown terrorism proved to be herculean. It is trained for conventional warfare and peacekeeping operations but elaborate hostage rescues and fighting AK-47 wielding Islamist biker gangs in the middle of city centers are not its forte. Fighting in built up areas is tasking, cumbersome and hazardous as there is limited view of space and fire, limited visibility and maneuverability, leading to

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86 Zenn, “Boko Haram is not ‘defeated’ but Buhari’s strategy is working”.
88 Ibid, p. 5.
89 Ibid.
90 Zenn, “Boko Haram is not ‘defeated’ but Buhari’s strategy is working”.
92 Siollun, “Boko Haram can be defeated”.

high ambush attrition losses.93 Boko Haram’s array of passive, non-combatant supporters, and the group’s ability to cross international borders and melt into civilian populations necessitated ‘sifting’ skills not possessed by the military. The result was a lumping together of militants and innocent civilians in kill and capture operations generating popular resentment, creating martyrs that motivate new recruits, and producing cycles of revenge.94 The combined size of the three states in north-eastern Nigeria worst affected by Boko Haram – Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa States – is roughly equal to that of Tunisia, or five times that of Switzerland.95 Trying to hunt down militants dressed in civilian attire, blended in with millions of civilians in villages, towns, cities, markets, and forests in an area that size with only a few helicopters and airplanes is no easy feat.96 The federal composition of Nigeria’s force and the history of deploying soldiers from separate ethnic groups to quell crises in other ethnic regions make it difficult for the forces to operate, as they most times do not understand the terrain better than the local insurgents.97 Since Nigeria has never experienced an insurgency of this type or magnitude before, the army is in the odd situation of being tested on the battlefield first, and learning the lessons afterwards, and has had to adapt to a new type of war and learn on the job.98

No Civilian ‘Vote of Confidence’
At the outset, the counter-terrorism measures themselves failed in their principal objective of protecting the civil and fundamental human rights of the citizenry. Instead, there were lots of reports by human rights activists, civil society groups and Amnesty International of extra-judicial killings, intimidation, harassment and looting by security agencies, amongst others.99 In general, heavy-handed tactics and human rights violations are counter-productive because they alienate civilians and push them into the hands of Boko Haram – as sympathizers and recruits.100 Furthermore, Security officials are rarely held accountable for failures to follow due process or for perpetrating human rights violations such as torture, and the absence of acknowledgement and public condemnation of such violations by senior government officials assisted in creating a climate for impunity, raising serious concern

95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
98 Siollun, “Boko Haram can be defeated”.
about the political will to end such human rights violations.\textsuperscript{101} Counter-insurgency’s guiding documents, such as the government’s National Counter-terrorism Strategy, do not explicitly mention the fundamental responsibility of security personnel to protect civilians nor outline any plan to operationalize civilian protection and mitigate civilian harm in the conduct of hostilities.\textsuperscript{102} Instead, emphasis is overwhelmingly placed on protecting critical national infrastructure, transportation systems, and crowded places.\textsuperscript{103} The Centre for Civilians in Conflict noted in their report the absence of training on civilian protection from infantry and officer training, an omission that demonstrates the state’s neglect in prioritizing civilian protection in current military operations.\textsuperscript{104} Excerpts from the report reads:

Among civilians and security personnel interviewed in the Northeast, almost everyone viewed the primary role of the military as defeating Boko Haram, not protecting civilians. When asked about the military’s role in protecting civilians, one civilian in Borno state said: “the military needs to observe the rule of engagements while in operation because many civilians were victimized or even killed wrongly as a result of the military action.” …… “Many young people die in military custody. In 2013, our neighbor’s sons died in military custody in Damaturu (known as ‘Guantanamo’ detention facility). They were arrested just for being suspects. What is worse is that when there is a rumor that the Boko Haram militants will attack a police division, the police and the soldiers will run away leaving detained civilians to protect themselves.”…..Although the police and military have developed extensive complaint mechanisms, civilians are largely unaware of their existence, particularly those that deal with the abusive conduct of security forces operating in their communities. When incidents of abuse or misconduct do occur, civilians fail to report them because 1) they do not know the proper procedure, 2) they do not have access to superiors, and 3) they are afraid that they will be unfairly targeted by their abuser or falsely accused of supporting Boko Haram. Because of these challenges, communities often openly obstruct the work of security forces, believing they are not on their side. In several instances, communities have retaliated through mob justice. As a result, communities have grown to openly fear and distrust security personnel, believing that proactively providing information or collaborating with security forces will put them and their families at greater risk.\textsuperscript{105}

Alienation of civilian communities continuously decreases the chances of overriding Boko Haram’s asymmetrical warfare characterized by intense adoption of guerrilla tactics. Lack of trust and reliance for protection means that military forces continue to lose out on intelligence to be gotten from localized civil relationships. This gives Boko Haram the advantage of ‘forced silence’ into which the group is capable of intimidating the civilian

\textsuperscript{102} Center for Civilians in Conflict, “When We Can’t See the Enemy, Civilians Become the Enemy’ Living Through Nigeria’s Six-Year Insurgency” (2015), p.32.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid, pp 32-33.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{105} Center for Civilians in Conflict, “When We Can’t See the Enemy, Civilians Become the Enemy’ Living Through Nigeria’s Six-Year Insurgency”, pp 35-36.
population. The military has admittedly been largely reactive due to its inability to gather actionable intelligence in the northeast.\textsuperscript{106} This reactionary stance has failed, admits Andrew Mcgregor, and will continue to do so as long as there is mistrust of, and lack of confidence in, the protective capacities of military forces.

\textit{High Cost and Long-Term Demands of Hard Power}

The most significant inadequacy necessitated by the application of hard power is inevitably cost. From 2010-2013, budgetary allocations to the Nigeria’s defense ministry steadily increased. In 2010, defense spending accrued from the budget amounted to 745.4 million euros; for 2011, it was 982.5 million euros; 2.6 billion euros for 2012 and 2.83 billion euros for 2013. For the year 2014, a slightly lower amount of 2.7 billion euros was budgeted for the ministry of defense. 2015 was an election year and most ministerial budgetary allocations reduced drastically. Yet, the defense ministry still gulped 2.3 billion euros. Facing an economic recession presumed to be substantially based on the fall of oil prices in the international market, only 830 million euros was allocated to the ministry of defense in 2016. With such large amounts of yearly budgetary allocations, Nigeria now ranks 57 in the global rating on military expenditure, occupies the seventh position in African, and has become the largest military spender in the West African sub-region and seventh largest spender on the African continent.\textsuperscript{107} Much as it is difficult to determine exactly how much of defense allocations goes directly into fighting terrorism in the northeast, counter-terrorism operations were consistently presented as the reasons for increased bulk allocations to the defense ministry. Budgetary allocations also proved incapable of solving the defense military’s financial expenditure and the Nigerian National assembly in October 2014 approved an additional 895.1 million euros borrowing request to purchase military equipment.

Sustained interventions speak to the long-term demands of hard power. After being weakened by military offensives, current attacks of Boko Haram seem to be less about military strategy than extracting resources and sending a violent message that it is surviving. This they do by attacking targets that offer easy plunder, including young captives, many of whom are turned into ‘wives’ and child soldiers.\textsuperscript{108} As the government reclaims more territory from the militants, dispersed security forces and civilian communities are also becoming vulnerable to attack.\textsuperscript{109} It has proven extremely difficult for Nigeria to defend itself against

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\textsuperscript{109}Matfess, Lewis, and Allen, “Unbroken Boko Haram: Buhari Prematurely Declares Victory”.
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such sporadic assaults on smaller settlements and military outposts and to do so will require improved intelligence and sustained efforts to degrade the technical skills and specialized supplies of the militants. Furthermore, even if the Islamist militants appear to be on the back foot, it may go into hiding like it did after the State of Emergency offensive in 2013, in anticipation that the security forces will let down their guard over time. Hard power, once it ends, more often than not makes the affected state revert to its original behavior, unless military interventions are sustained and continuously assessed. The country cannot afford such sustained military intervention on its soil. The size of Nigeria’s own army is not large enough to professionally endure a long-term counter-terrorist campaign. About 200,000 soldiers and police will have to replace the 30-40,000 troops presently on ground. A large number of joint troops is needed because the country cannot rely on the deeply troubled federal police to help secure urban and, more importantly, rural areas. The Nigerian Police Force is “still in an antiquated stone age in Policing”, ravaged by non-existent professionalism and lacking in progressive approaches to crime prevention.

Regional Alliance Fraught with Problematic Skepticism

In lieu of the MNJTF, security analysts contend preferably for a rather robust force such as the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which has been combatting al-Shabaab Islamists since 2007, or troops in the configuration of the African-led international support mission to Mali (AFISMA), in which the national army was intended to spearhead operations, with support from the African force. What was achieved in reality was a multinational task force without integration, where national contingents were re-hatted as MNJTF, operating primarily in their own country and reporting to their own capital. The nations rely on their own armies to deal with Boko Haram threats, and troops from Chad, which has the region's strongest military, reinforce when needed and then head back home. Vincent Foucher

110 Ibid.
111 Zenn, “Boko Haram is not ‘defeated’ but Buhari’s strategy is working”.
115 Théroux-Bénoni, “A Regional Multinational Joint Task Force to Combat Boko Haram”.
reported that: “Each force is based in its country of origin and there’s no integrated force with battalions moving in perfect coordination”. Individual armies bear the cost of most of their operations as a result of the AU’s inability to fund MNJTF’s 626.6 million euros budget. Donors led by Nigeria and France, who pledged 223.7 million euros, have only paid just over a third of the amount.

Logistical difficulties and funding are not the only problems plaguing the regional military alliance. Attitudes of participating countries have tended to focus more on each country’s interests than on a successful regional approach to countering terrorism. Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos insists that in fighting Boko Haram, each country’s objective is different. Chad and Cameroon are trying to protect the supply line to Ndjamenah, which is vital for their economy. Nigeria wants to involve its neighbors to prevent Boko Haram from having reserve bases on the border, get support from the international community, and to give the impression of a wider Jihadist insurrection. Niger is desperate to avoid Nigeria’s problems spreading into its own territory, to avoid escalation of banditry and the deterioration of the situation in Mali and Libya. Niger is less directly affected by the ‘global’ war against terrorism and does not want to find itself involved in an international war.

Differences in objectives affect the coordination of MNJTF activities. For example, civilians alleged that some towns which Chadian troops had cleared of militants were not secured because Nigerian troops failed to hold the town and prevent the return of Boko Haram. Chadian forces ultimately left, since their mandate is not to hold territory or provide services. This has made many civilians wary of returning to towns previously held by Boko Haram.

There have also been reported incidences of unwillingness to cooperate in the field with regional allies, who are generally regarded by the Nigerian military as junior partners regardless of the reality on the ground. Some Chadian special forces are US-trained and experienced in fighting jihadist organizations in the Sahel. About 1,000 currently operate mainly around the Baga and Lake Chad area, and 2,500 have been deployed to Cameroon.

The ability of regional troops to capitalize on Boko Haram’s current weakness and completely eradicate the terrorism in the Lake Chad area is thus far-fetched and on thin ice.

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119 “Boko Haram: Regional armies struggle in last push against terror group”.
120 Ibid.
123 Center for Civilians in Conflict, “When We Can’t See the Enemy, Civilians Become the Enemy: Living Through Nigeria’s Six-Year Insurgency”, p. 41.
126 Ibid.
Battling with low oil prices and daily weakening of the naira, Nigeria’s military strength is bound to wane. Her neighbors are themselves facing individual difficulties that make each of them fragile and unable to continue regional military cooperation. Cameroon confronts a delicate presidential succession in 2018, a security apparatus with internal tensions, and a north with a large (not exclusively) Muslim population that feels marginalized. Niger is tense, fresh from controversial presidential elections, with budget problems, a partial criminalization of the state due to illicit trafficking, and a military used to meddling in politics.\(^\text{127}\) Chad is fragile, with a long history of armed rebellions, essentially controlled by a tribal army awash with aspiring men-at-arms, reeling from the oil-price collapse, and just past the controversial election in which President Idriss Déby, in power since 1990, won a fifth term.\(^\text{128}\) Such frailties could, in various ways, offer ground for an expansion or more indigenous mutation of Boko Haram, as well as the emergence of other violent actors, jihadist or not.\(^\text{129}\)

**Countering Boko Haram’s Terrorism with Alternative Approaches**

Donald H. Rumsfeld asked, “are we capturing, killing, or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the religious schools and the radical clerics are recruiting, training, and deploying against us?” In other words, have the terrorists’ losses exceeded their replacement capacity?\(^\text{130}\) As John Kerry said: “eliminating the terrorists of today with force will not guarantee protection from the terrorists of tomorrow and no matter how many terrorists we bring to justice, those groups will replenish their ranks.”\(^\text{131}\) Along these lines, how well does it serve society when you take away guns from a people, but still leave their yearnings for violence unchanged?\(^\text{132}\) The need to adopt and apply non-militarized counter-terrorist approaches is thus desired by governments and forces who have realized that exclusive military actions are not yielding the desired results.

The variation in dynamics, history, composition and organization of different terrorist groups makes it unwise to apply uniform counter-terrorist models to solving them. For example, direct engagement appears to be the only option to resolving the conflict with Hamas and Hezbollah as America’s attempts to isolate and weaken both groups has only made them emerge stronger than ever.\(^\text{133}\) However, Al Qaeda or even the Islamic State (IS) cannot be approached with direct engagements. Boko Haram has shown over time to be amenable and open to engagement, mediation and negotiations. The group has gone as far as


\(^{128}\) Ibid.

\(^{129}\) Ibid.

\(^{130}\) Ibid.


\(^{132}\) Salkida, “How non Military Intervention can mitigate the Crisis in the North-East of Nigeria”.

\(^{133}\) Rineheart, “Enhancing Security Through Collaborative Research Perspectives".
presenting intermediaries to deliberate with the Nigerian government in 2013. The mediation process was unfortunately foiled by government’s inability to keep details of the proceeding away from the media. In August 2016, Boko Haram released a video in which the group overtly opened itself for a prisoner swap of the abducted Chibok girls for detained Boko Haram members. Twenty-one girls were released on 13 October 2016 in what a government spokesperson insists was an unconditional release and not a swap. This process had of course involved tactical negotiations and some form of mediation, and could allow the Nigerian government the needed inroad to explore alternative counter-terrorism approaches. While hard power might stem the spate of Boko Haram attacks for a period of time, as explained above, its inadequacies do not make it sustainable. In the context of counter-terrorism in Nigeria, the kind of power required is one which has the ability to influence people to no longer actively or passively support radical groups - ‘soft power’. Joseph Nye, who coined the phrase ‘soft power’, explains that it is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments, the ability to move people which arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies.”

In applying soft power, or non-militarized alternatives to counter terrorism, the requirement is a shift in strategy and focus, from kill-capture to win-the-population, where kill-capture might still exist but is no longer the primary focus. What becomes quintessential are political, economic, social, religious and cultural reconstruction geared towards gaining the population’s goodwill and cooperation with the government, and developing a stable society in which the population itself prevents the emergence or success of any terrorist group. There exists justifications for the application of non-militarized alternatives and soft power in Boko Haram’s case. According to informants and former captives, forceful recruitment is currently the primary mode of recruitment for the group, showing that the group’s popularity is clearly limited in the area. The root causes of Boko Haram’s terrorism - local grievances, northeastern Nigeria’s abysmal poverty and marginality, poor governance, and insecurity are sociopolitical, and addressing the root causes removes the population’s reasons for actively or passively supporting the group.

Suitable alternatives that could be applied synchronously with military operations would model the Philippines Basilan model. To gain the populace’s support, the Philippines anti-terrorism task force adopted a strategy that emphasized exercising what David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla call “noöpolitik” rather than conventional military action. Noöpolitik is an

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134 Smith, Stroh and Williams, "Counterinsurgency Meets Soft Power: An Alternative Approach to Deterring Terrorist Recruitment in Mindanao", p. 16.
135 Content Analysis from Sitaraman ”Counterinsurgency, The War on Terror and the Laws of War”, p. 19.
approach to statecraft, to be undertaken as much by non–state as by state actors, and emphasizes the role of soft power in expressing ideas, values, norms and ethics. It is distinct from realpolitik, which stresses the hard, material dimensions of power and treats states as the determinants of world order.\textsuperscript{139}

In the case of Boko Haram, suitable soft-power alternatives include:

**Nurturing an Effective Counter-Ideology**

Saudi Arabia’s grand mufti, Sheikh Abdulaziz Al-Sheikh, declared Boko Haram was “set up to smear the image of Islam” and violent extremists like Boko Haram “not only disavow their Islam, but their humanity.”\textsuperscript{140} The Salafist, Ja’far Adam and the Sultan of Sokoto publicly attacked Yusuf’s ideology and Islamic pedigree, labelling Boko Haram members as common criminals. The prominent Nigerian cleric, Dr. Muhammad Abdul Islam Ibrahim, issued the most damning *fatwa* (ruling) in 2012: “Terrorism, in its very essence, is an act that symbolizes infidelity and rejection of what Islam stands for…… only the victims of ignorance, jealousy, and malice go for militancy. Islam declares them rebels. They will abide in hell.”\textsuperscript{141} These statements echo attempts by ‘nominal’ Muslims to disassociate themselves from Boko Haram and its activities on claims that the militant group are not ‘authentic’ Muslims.

While consistent in their condemnation of Boko Haram’s ideology, the Ulama’s (body of Islamic scholars), and more importantly, the Nigerian state failed to uphold a credible alternative to it. The existence of different doctrinal and sectional factions within Islam as it is practiced in Nigeria injected a contrariety into the Ulama’s cohesion and prevented them from acting unanimously. The 1830s fragmentation of Muslim identities resulted in the individualization of religious affiliation and heightened competition for followership in a ‘prayer economy’ led by the ‘Ulama’.\textsuperscript{142} Abdul Raufu and Bunza explain this fragmentation as a reoccurring decimal of splits and factions emerging from Sunni Islam.

Boko Haram itself emerged as a doctrinal schism, splitting from the Salafiyya Izala group of Mohammed Yusuf’s teacher, Sheikh Jafar Adam, and emerging into the crowded ‘religious marketplace’ characterized by the struggle for followership and influence which Islam in Nigeria had grown into.\textsuperscript{143} When Sheikh Adam and other Muslims (including mainstream


\textsuperscript{141} Pesasure, “Justifying Jihad”, p. 6.


\textsuperscript{143} Ibid, p. 87.
Salafis) spoke out against Boko Haram, they were targeted in violent attacks. This placed mainstream Salafis, according to Alex Thurston, in “a complicated position vis-à-vis both Salafi-leaning audiences in the state”.\(^\text{144}\) The emergence of Boko Haram’s terrorist brand was thus built on the ability to make the group’s brand of Salafism seem superior to the world, and a major way to counter Boko Haram’s terrorism would involve discrediting the group’s ideological motivation and its power to motivate thousands of supporters to kill and maim in the name of jihad.

While constructing an alternative ideology might seem like the exclusive preserve of the Ulama, relying on them to do this might not yield the required result. The Nigerian state should, as a matter of state importance, concern themselves with identifying moderate Islamic clerics, and carrying out community-based religious orientations with such clerics. Just as Social Democrats represented one of the strongest bulwarks against Soviet-allied Communist Parties in Western Europe during the Cold War, so Islamic moderates can drain support and legitimacy from jihadi extremists.\(^\text{145}\) Such clerics should be influential, with the ability to affect larger public opinion, and the goals would be to counter extremist agendas, radical interpretations of Islamic religion, and other elements in the ideology of violence.\(^\text{146}\) The process of countering radicalization should reach the intended recipients by convenient mass media means, of which the radio is the most efficient in northern Nigeria. Inter-faith and inter-doctrinal messages could be passed on relentlessly to the populace, and the youths could be reached via social media channels which are gradually seeping into societal moorings.

A lot of interlocutors confess that they came into contact with Boko Haram’s radicalization agents in universities, including Bayero University in Kano\(^\text{147}\) and the University of Maiduguri in Borno state. The universities and other institutions should consequently not be neglected, and identified moderate scholars in the shades of Mufti Ismail Menks, Yusuf Estes, Nouman Ali Khan, Muhammed Salah and Sheikh Abdulhakim, should be involved in religious reorientation of students. It is the appeal of a particular reading of religion that can catalyze confrontation, which the jihadists in turn seize as political capital. Unless there is a sufficiently powerful theologically grounded counter-attack that is non-violent, there will be something of a constant flow to the ranks of the jihadists perceiving violence not only as a means of reward in the hereafter, but also as a politically successful method of resistance.\(^\text{148}\)

\(^{144}\) Mia Bloom and Hillary Matfess, “Women as Symbols and Swords in Boko Haram’s Terror”, Prism (March 2016), 1, p.16.


\(^{146}\) Ibid. p. 28.

\(^{147}\) Personal Interview with Yushau, (Former BUK Student, Kaduna, 12 June 2014).

Increasing the Opportunity Cost of Terrorism in the North

Boko Haram’s emergence and sustained existence in the north of Nigeria was achieved by putting rural civilians before what Crisis Group International termed a ‘false choice’:

“On one side was a state that has often made itself felt through unfulfilled promises of development and the taxations, seizures and predations of its agents... - the chiefs and government officials. On the other was the presence of armed militants with sticks, but also some carrots – access to a gun, money, a motorbike, protection for trade (or the loss thereof), promises of plunder or a bride, chance for revenge against state abuse, and moral justification couched in an understandable religious discourse”.

Many joined to escape economic and social adversities, and in return were subsumed in a gratification parody, without any hope of circumvention. Prisoners who regained freedom during Boko Haram masterminded jail breaks simply joined the rescued militants because they had no expectation of being reintegrated back into the society. The Commission of Inquiry set up after the Maitatsine revolts had warned that “the wide gap between the rich and the poor in the north was a major cause of the revolts, and the social situation ought to be remedied else it will continue to provide the required recruitment potential for disenchanted men to rebel.” This warning still seems relevant in countering a terrorist insurgency that emerged 20 years after Maitatsine was crushed.

As Robert McNamara asserted: “Any society that seeks to achieve adequate military security against the background of acute food shortage, population explosion, low level of production and per capital income, low technological development, inadequate and inefficient public utilities, and chronic problems of unemployment, has a false sense of security”. Many have argued that the north of Nigeria is not the only impoverished part of the country, a true fact. But no part of Nigeria struggles with endemic underdevelopment, a large proportion of functionally illiterate people, and a religiously conservative society, in sync with poverty. From this analytical viewpoint, efforts at responding to terrorism in the north should be accompanied by restructuring of the failed functions of the state. Employment creation makes it impossible to recruit perpetrators of violence. It will take an amazing brain-washing dexterity to convince a gainfully employed young man or somebody with a thriving career to abandon the frills of his endeavor and be a slavish stooge for terrorism. Basic literacy, for its part, dissuades the understanding of actors from seeking violence as a tool to express

150 Siollun, “Boko Haram can be defeated”.
152 Okereke, “How Nigeria Can Overcome Terrorism, Insurgency and Instability, Vigilance Magazine”. 

frustration. Eradication of poverty eliminates the situation whereby the populace is lured into violent situations by the ‘charitable largesse’ of politicians, religious or clan groups.

Social conditions in the north favor a secular educational system made attractive by the incorporation of religious studies. Vocational education can then be woven into this system to ensure that students fulfill the actual requirements of the labor market, rather than educating them for ‘white collar’ jobs that are virtually unavailable in the region. Productive skills that should be focused on include agriculture, animal husbandry, artisan and crafts skills. Schemes of the Nigerian Stability and Reconstruction Program (NSRP) should be conflict sensitive and recognize the cultural, religious and societal peculiarities of the north. For example, the traditional place of men as breadwinners should not prevent women from being educated. However, education for women can include formal education and skill acquisition, in a school setting where the ‘morality fear’ of having boys and girls in the same classroom is not compromised. Improvement in the political, economic, social and cultural lives of northern Nigeria should be in the form of generational developments - inclusively developed in ways that allows new constituents to be built who would effect and continue with counter-terrorist programs. Some examples of generational engagement can be as simple as ensuring that schools are open and available to students and ensuring adequate access to medical attention as part of the effort to provide essential services. This can address younger portions of the population who, over the long term, will have a positive view of counter terrorists and the efforts of their own government to care and protect them. Inclusion and community participation in the north of Nigeria should be undertaken as a matter of urgency. The advocates of community participation believe that besides serving as a means of getting things done, involving the people in solving their own problems also brings many lasting solutions to said problems or challenges. First, it allows for the redistribution of power that in turn enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included. It also brings people together in creating and making decisions about their environment. Participation brings about individual empowerment, as people gain skills in assessing needs, setting priorities, and gaining control over their environment. Inclusion of younger influential leaders in the electoral process, for instance, encourages youths to be active in government and political activities and reduces the availability of dispirited youth for terrorist recruitment.

Pledges of modernization, which have remained unfulfilled, need to be revamped, and young people in particular, who see no prospects for the future, need to be given a leeway to survive. Widespread anger and powerlessness in the northeast, and above all, mistrust of

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155 Ibid.
the south, which boosts the jihadist mobilization, should be assuaged with political and economic inclusion. As Odo Linus stated, “the challenge before the Nigerian nation in the fight against Boko Haram is about removing the north’s infrastructural deficits and ending its peoples’ abject and dehumanizing poverty”. Accordingly, government, at all levels, should aim to embark on programs and projects, which have direct bearings on the people’s welfare.  

Proponents of militarized counter-terrorism might argue that no simple correlation exists between terrorism and poverty, undemocratic political systems, or other undesirable socioeconomic conditions, and that terrorists are actors who adopt the tactic of terrorism as a strategic choice to pursue political objectives, not passive observers who are susceptible to what the supposed underlying causes forces them to do. They may even go further to define acts of terrorism that have been carried out in literate, well-developed societies in Europe and the United States. However, studies have proven that together with religious interests, unmet socio-economic and political grievances drive most terror organizations, Boko Haram included, and the impact of political and economic reforms on rebellious societies cannot be over-estimated. The continued existence of unmet needs even after the outbreak of Boko Haram raises the question of political will to tackle these issues, and lends credence to accusations that segments of the state apparatus might be benefitting from maintaining the status quo.

**Addressing State Legitimacy and Restarting State-Building Processes**

Legitimizing the state structure also plays a key role in increasing the opportunity cost of terrorism. When Boko Haram took root and grew, northeastern Nigeria and the broader area of the Lake Chad basin were not home to an open, large armed conflict. As reported by Crisis Group International, Boko Haram gained support from certain quarters because the group was assumed to represent a change from existing governance norms. Consequently, “untying the nexus of wealth and violence is the region’s key structural challenge”. Relying on violent fringe groups as a transposition for an illegitimate state reeks of malfunctioning structures and lack of confidence in the functions and structure of the state.

For the north of Nigeria, a society with battered confidence in the governance and legitimate capacity of the government, a major counter-terrorism model would be to regain state confidence through legitimization and reestablishment of governance structures. Developing governance includes standardizing local, regional, and national departments and agencies.

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158 Rineheart, “Enhancing Security Through Collaborative Research Perspectives”.
160 Ibid.
creating a justice system with law enforcement, courts, and prisons, and working to secure fundamental human rights.\textsuperscript{161} This would also entail ensuring fair and transparent political processes, guaranteeing a fair system of justice, and establishing legal procedures and systems to deal with captured terrorists.\textsuperscript{162} Mediation experts who understand the societal sensitivities of Nigeria should be involved in the constitutional processes of bringing convicted militants to justice. The judicial system itself should be open to alternative but transparent means of persecution especially with the peculiarities involved in the Boko Haram menace. This is because all Boko Haram recruits are not violent extremists. Some are passive supporters or believers in the group’s ideology, who do not necessarily condone its hardline ways of achieving its desired Islamic State. If captured militants are handled appropriately, “it should be possible to obtain crucial information systematically on the insurgency, its recruitment process, including profiles and reasons for joining, and the patterns and intensity of radicalization”.\textsuperscript{163} The office of Nigeria’s National Security Adviser has appointed a psychologist, Fatima Akilu, to design and head a program called “Countering Violent Extremism” which maps out a blueprint for de-radicalizing and rehabilitating militants, preventing others from being radicalized, and a communication strategy to counter Boko Haram’s narrative.\textsuperscript{164} Such programs should cover necessities prescribed above.

\textit{Managing the Humanitarian Displacement Crisis}

The essential elements in managing a humanitarian crisis are: Caring for the refugees and IDPs both in displaced people’s camps and in host communities; Ensuring safe return to their home communities; Helping with viable resettlement opportunities after return and providing reintegration and rehabilitation programs for all involved in the humanitarian situation. In caring for over 2.3 million displaced persons from Boko Haram’s activities and counter-terrorism efforts, the Nigerian government should consider going beyond its present deficiencies which are characterized by mismanagement and corruption in IDP camps. Access to basic needs are continuously denied displaced persons, and relief materials are diverted by corrupt personnel of emergency agencies. International organizations such as \textit{Médecins Sans Frontières} report bleak medical and nutritional situations, warning of acute food shortages and rising malnutrition rates. Displaced persons scattered in IDP camps are protesting non-access to food and non-food aids, and daily deaths are reported by hospitals and cemeteries in the Borno state. Cameroon is not keen on retaining Nigerian refugees and have repatriated thousands back to Nigeria. Niger and Chad have pushed refugees away

\textsuperscript{161} Sitaraman “Counterinsurgency, The War on Terror and the Laws of War”, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{164} Siollun, “Boko Haram can be defeated”.

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from the insurgent-infested Lake Chad islands, sometimes forcibly, and are trying to prevent returns.\textsuperscript{165} The Nigerian government gave no coherent response to Cameroon, Chad and Niger’s violation of the United Nations 1951 \textit{non-refoulement} act relating to the status of refugees.

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is the national body charged with responding to emergency situations in the country. Critics have opined that NEMA’s modus operandi is a ‘vulture concept’ whereby NEMA waits for disasters to happen in order to supply relief materials thereafter, rather than being proactive (the ‘eagle concept’) through appropriate forecasting and early warning to mitigate large-scale displacement with corresponding humanitarian challenges.\textsuperscript{166} While NEMA has been most active in providing care to IDPs, as an “emergency response” agency, the organization lacks the financial means and institutional know-how necessary to provide extended support to displaced people. Overcoming these hurdles will require the government to invest considerable effort and money into building up government agencies to catalogue, assist, and eventually rehabilitate displaced persons.\textsuperscript{167}

NEMA and other agencies have also ascribed a ‘non-permanence’ toga to displacement, and this is reflective of mechanisms adopted to the displacement situation, a dominant part of which is sheltering displaced persons in make-shift shelters and camps such as secondary school buildings and places of worship. Prolonged displacement is thus presenting a critical challenge, and insecurities in daily social, economic and political lives is gradually creeping into IDP and refugee camps. A major factor that should motivate the Nigerian government towards better management of the displacement situation should be that displaced persons consist of populations who have seen and heard it all as regards the dangerous militancy of Boko Haram. There are children who have known the sounds of guns, grenades and bombs for the greater part of their infancy. Adult populations have lost dear ones to Boko Haram and a significant category of displaced persons have seen so much grief in their lifetime, and are at the point of having ‘nothing to lose’. The despair and hopelessness in camps is already a time-bomb which could fuel rebellion against the government and drive displaced persons to adopt violence as a means of expressing grievances and pent-up frustrations.

In contrast to the ‘non-permanent’ or ‘temporary’ nature of displacement situations around the world, Nigeria has been an exception, experiencing prolonged displacement situations. For this reason, the shift should be towards developmental and rehabilitative aid, aimed at


empowering displaced persons to be self-sufficient and self-sustaining, rather than just emergency assistance. As Fabos says, “if people are able to keep themselves engaged, that provides a healthy outlook, helps establish local integration and keeps alive their skill sets if they repatriate.”

Rehabilitative aid also prepares displaced persons for eventual resettlement and reintegration. Skill acquisition and promoted small- and medium-scale enterprises should be integral parts of rehabilitative aid and the focus of international aid organizations. Displaced persons should also be involved in external efforts at rehabilitating them, as stipulated in the provisions of the Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement (GPID) and refugee laws.

Reintegration is an important process through which former combatants, belligerents, and displaced civilians receive amnesty, reenter civil society, gain sustainable employment, and become contributing members of the local population. It encompasses the reinsertion of individuals into communities, villages, and social groups, and connotes a social and economic recovery process focused on the local community, while complementing other community-based programs that spur economic recovery, training, and employment services. As the government is already returning IDPs back to their local communities, provision for start-ups should be happening simultaneously. This is because, if rural populations are not supported and are hastily returned without sufficient means such as seeds, agricultural implements and fertilizers, they may be vulnerable to Boko Haram offering similar supplies, especially with the ban on economic activities in certain areas.

Likely strains to be encountered in reintegration efforts are already emerging. Women raped and abused by Boko Haram have found it difficult to be accepted in their communities due to what Hillary Matfess describes as the conservative values and ‘honor culture’ prevalent in northern Nigeria, which discourages premarital sex and extols virtues of chastity. Societal rejection appears more rampant against women who have been forcibly impregnated or who returned with children from Boko Haram camps. In light of the humiliation faced by these women, the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra’ad al-Hussein, has spoken out forcefully urging “the most compassionate possible interpretation of the current regulations in Nigeria to include the risk of suicide and risks to mental health for women and young girls who have suffered such appalling cruelty, and may resort to abortion or suicide as an escape from societal stigma.”

The plight of such stigmatized persons

170 Ibid.
173 Ibid, p.117.
suggests that reconciliation and national reorientation is also essential to assure near-seamless normalcy in the affected areas.

Conclusion
Much as exclusive military actions have eliminated the risk of terrorism in strategic parts of the world, its inadequacies do not make it suitable to counter Boko Haram’s terrorism in Nigeria and Africa. The combination of internal and regional forces from the Lake Chad region is helping to reduce Boko Haram’s deadly assaults. However, the force of bilateral commitments, plagued by operational and executional issues, is not enough to address Boko Haram’s resilience and resurgence capacities. Internal forces within Nigeria’s military have further mismanaged the security situation with their pervasive high-handedness that continues to increase the cooperation and intelligence gaps between them and the populace. Boko Haram’s history and ideology is deeply entrenched in socio-economic, political and religious contestations - dynamics that should not be confronted with exclusive military actions, with all the inadequacies it contains. These inadequacies are further complicated by the absence of political will to effect willful changes in the northeast of Nigeria.

In contrast to exclusive application of hard power, encouraging Islamic clerics to spread and support moderate ideology will address religious schisms that allow the emergence of radical, extremist ideologies. Creating alternative livelihood means for impoverished people in the north of Nigeria is essential in making terrorist recruitment unattainable. State actors also need to redeem the mandates entrusted to them in other to regain their legitimacy in the eyes of the people and gain support necessary for effective governance. Displaced persons from Boko Haram’s activities and other victims of terrorist violence needs to be properly reintegrated into the society, as they contain elements whose sufferings are likely to be transformed into aggression, and expressed via violent, insurgent or terrorist means. The government can avoid this with appropriate management of the displacement situation, proper reintegration mechanisms for victims, and effective rehabilitation campaigns that give victims the capacity to live purposeful lives. Being confronted with terrorism is certainly difficult, and countering terror is an unpleasant endeavor. The goal thus is not to kill all insurgents (which is impossible), but to ensure that people need not become terrorists in the first place.
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Terrorist Groups as Part of Society: A Comprehensive Approach to Counter-Terrorism against Al Qaeda’s Integration into Societies in the Sahel Region

Troels Burchall Henningsen¹

Abstract
How can NATO member states turn Al Qaeda’s ability to integrate into local societies into a strategic vulnerability? Al Qaeda in Maghreb (AQIM) meticulously strives to become part of Arab and Tuareg societies in Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. Integrating terrorist activities within a local society makes it possible for AQIM to tap into local resources and promote its ideology among the population. Moreover, integration into society makes a military-based counter-terrorism, such as the French Barkhane-mission, prone to alienating the local population and increasing the support for extremists. This article discusses three areas of strategic vulnerabilities that AQIM faces when integrating into society. NATO member states can exploit all three areas if they choose to do so, but it will take a long-sighted and comprehensive effort. However, it also presents pitfalls of trapping foreigners in local conflicts, which only alienates the local population. Building human-intelligence networks and gaining the trust of key elites require that NATO member states comprehensively rethink assistance to states and societal actors in the Sahel region before the outbreak of the next conflict.

Keywords: AQIM, Counter-Terrorism, Comprehensive approach, Sahel Region, Terrorists as part of society”

The strategic challenge of terrorists as part of society

“Lumping together all terrorist or extremist groups and all insurgent or militia organizations under the undifferentiated concept of a War on Terrorism makes an already difficult challenge substantially harder than it needs to be, while shoe-horning a fundamentally nonmilitary phenomenon into a conceptual framework, that of conventional warfare between states, to which it is spectacularly ill-suited. Instead, there is a need to disaggregate adversaries, separate them from each other, turn them where possible against each other, and deal with those who need to be dealt with in sequence rather than simultaneously.”²

How can NATO member states combat an elusive terror organization, such as al-Qaeda in Maghreb (AQIM), which is already deeply embedded in the social and economic fabric of the societies in the states in the Sahel region?³ This question remains a theoretical and empirical

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³This article defines the Sahel region as the area stretching from Senegal to the Horn of Africa. However, for the purpose of scope this article only examines examples from Mali, Mauritania, and Niger.
puzzle to scholars within counter-terrorism (CT) and counter-insurgency, and a policy challenge to practitioners working with the region. Many of the policy responses have so far yielded results, but also created unintended effects that limit the overall strategic effects of the responses. The military response of the French Barkhane operation and the United States’ training, assistance, and surveillance programs have eliminated a number of terrorists, as well as provided better image and signal intelligence. However, the lack of human intelligence is a result of the rather small size of the operations. Operation Barkhane and the combined military assistance and surveillance programs of the US total 3,000 and 6,000 soldiers, respectively.

The logistical constraints of operating in such an immense region only allow the small number of soldiers to have limited contact with the local population. Moreover, a neat distinction between the local population and AQIM is difficult to uphold, because in the last ten years AQIM has integrated into local Arab, Tuareg, and Fulani communities. Direct action against AQIM operatives is, therefore, likely to create local hostility or even increase the support for extremists.

This article shares the view expressed by Kilcullen that military means is a limited instrument in counterinsurgency and CT. More to the point, even low-footprint CT operations such as Barkhane, which are highly suited to the geographical condition of the Sahel region, are of limited value when AQIM remains embedded in the societies. However, instead of identifying the limitations of the current strategies, this article aims to identify how a Western strategy can help uproot AQIM from the societies, thereby supplementing the current strategies for CT in Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. To do so, this article answers two research questions: firstly, which strategic vulnerabilities does AQIM face due to their strategy of embedding operators? Secondly, how can these vulnerabilities be exploited in a comprehensive CT approach? Together the answers open an avenue for discussing future strategic choices for NATO member states, which the last section of this article outlines, discussing future comprehensive approaches to CT in the three states.

However, to understand how AQIM is able to integrate into local communities and why this translates into strategic vulnerabilities, one must first analyze the socio-political makeup of the three examined states in the Sahel region, which is the purpose of the first section of the article.

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The second section explores the vulnerability of the local government to changes in societal elites caused by AQIM, which in turn creates a strategic vulnerability for AQIM, because the local government has an incentive to cooperate with NATO member states. The third section examines the insecurity among other clans and tribes once AQIM integrates into a particular community, and it argues that the hostility of other actors is a strategic vulnerability to AQIM. The fourth section analyses the marginalization of elite persons within clans or tribes when AQIM tries to integrate into the community. The hostility of elite persons is a strategic vulnerability for AQIM, which NATO member states might exploit under certain circumstances. The fifth section outlines the fundamental aspects of a strategy that NATO member states might use to take advantage of the three strategic vulnerabilities of AQIM.

The strategic environment in Mali, Mauritania, and Niger

A once important tourist attraction for adventurous travelers in Mali or Niger was an off-road trip in the Sahara Desert. Now, such a trip would be highly dangerous due to the risk of robbery or kidnapping. However, a trip in the northern provinces of the three states would visualize some of the obvious, and not so obvious, aspects of the strategic environment of the three states. Driving for hours on unpaved roads from one small village to the next would reveal the absolute poverty found in these regions. Relative and absolute poverty has increased in Northern Mali over the last 20 years, compared to the Southern regions of Mali\(^6\). Developmental agencies have for decades operated in the areas near the capitals or in areas already experiencing economic growth in the three states due to the preferences of the government, as well as the worsening of the security situation\(^7\). The distances and poor road conditions make transport a demanding and time-consuming activity, which hampers economic activity as well as the lines of communication with the capital areas. Jeffrey Herbst argues that local governments in hinterland states – such as the states in the Sahel region- have no economic reason to invest in areas where potential income from tax or natural resources is unlikely to exceed the cost of building and maintaining public infrastructure\(^8\). The result has been neglect and a growing social and economic gap between capital areas and especially the Northern parts of Mali and Niger.

Subtler aspects of the strategic environment might be visible to the attentive traveler. State representatives are hard to find, and barely resemble civil servants in the metropolitan areas of

the three states. For decades, the states have left crucial functions such as education or health care to societal actors or international NGO’s\textsuperscript{9}. Even police officers and para-military or military forces are often absent, or have very limited mobility or even understanding of the local environment in which they operate\textsuperscript{10}. Corruption is widespread among officials, perhaps because of the low pay, and even collusion with smugglers is common, due to political protection\textsuperscript{11}.

Globalization has also made two subtle, but important, changes in the three states. First, smugglers have for decades used historic caravan routes in the Sahara desert to deliver state-subsidized Algerian goods to the states in the Sahel region. Since the 1990s, smugglers carry South American cocaine from West Africa to the Mediterranean coast. More recently, smugglers conduct human trafficking from Sub-Saharan Africa through the Sahara on the migrant’s way to Europe\textsuperscript{12}. The newfound wealth of smugglers is an important driver of change and provides the economic foundation of militant Islamism. In the same period, the oil wealth of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states created an influx of money for radical Salafi mosques, madrassas, and preachers in all three states. In parallel, workers from the Sahel region found jobs in the Middle East, bringing back a more radical understanding of Islam than the traditional Sufi Islamism of especially Mali and Niger. In many places, the Salafi infrastructure has outperformed the feeble state institutions and provided locals with the religious and political motivation for joining or supporting militant networks.

In fact, new power structures and lines of communication in the region have arguably supplemented or even superseded the porous lines of communication between the capital and the outlying regions. Perhaps Alex de Waal’s description of the development of the Horn of Africa is equally useable in Mali, Mauritania, and Niger: on the one hand, new horizontal connections increasingly tie the Sahara region together, which is made possible by new technology of handheld GPSs, and the spread of 4x4 vehicles. On the other hand, vertical connections tie the three countries to countries outside the region, especially in the Gulf States, which has brought in new ideas and money\textsuperscript{13}. This is in line with the findings of Clionadh

\textsuperscript{9} Gregory Mann, *From Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel - The Road to Nongovernmentality* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 207-208.
\textsuperscript{13} Alex de Waal, *The real Politics of the Horn of Africa* (Polity Press, 2015), p. 49-51
Raleigh and Caitriona Dowd, who reject the idea of an ‘ungoverned space’ in the Sahel region in which anarchy and criminality is rampant\textsuperscript{14}. Instead, the authors find that local actors, and to some extent regional actors, have replaced the state. Western soldiers and diplomats encounter a region with few actors, but a subtle and non-formal regulation of daily life and security.

To sum up, areas outside the capitals in the three states have been subject to contrasting developments of economic depression in general and wealth to a small group involved in transnational smuggling, the decline of state institutions, and the rise of Islamist institutions and NGOs. As we shall see, changes in the lines of communication have brought radical change to the local communities and their relationship with the states.

**Government survival and changes in societal elites**

Local governments in Mali, Mauritania, and Niger have always faced a highly dangerous domestic situation, as have all states in the Sahel region. In fact, since 2011, all states in the wider Sahel region have combated one or more internal threats, such as insurgency, coups, or terrorist groups with permanent infrastructure\textsuperscript{15}. However, in Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, the greatest threat has been coups. Since 1990, Mali has experienced two military coups and three unsuccessful attempts, Mauritania has experienced two coups and five unsuccessful attempts, and in Niger, three coups have been successful, whereas one was unsuccessful\textsuperscript{16}. Insurgencies might be dangerous and have almost toppled the local governments, as in Mali in 2012, but in the examined period, no insurgency groups have managed to topple the governments, nor have they achieved more wide-ranging goals such as secession of regions.

The high prevalence of coups has an effect on the survival strategies of the local governments. State institutions within the security sector are both an instrument for security and a threat to the survival of the government. All three states have arguably used two strategies to counter the threat from the security institutions. First, they organized and nurtured elite units tasked with protecting the government rather than the state\textsuperscript{17}. One such unit was the Presidential Security


\textsuperscript{15} Based on data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, version 4-2016, downloaded on September 14, 2016, from http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/replication_datasets/

\textsuperscript{16} All data are from the Coup D'état Project Data, Cline Center for Democracy, Illinios University, downloaded on September 29, 2016, from http://www.clinecenter.illinois.edu/data/speed/coupdata/, except the newest coup in Mali in 2013, Mauritania in 2008, and Niger in 2010.

\textsuperscript{17} Units designated for government protection are a common coup-proofing instrument, which in most cases is supplemented by other strategies such as competing security institutions and insufficient funding of the regular forces. For detailed studies of coup-proofing strategies see Philip Roessler, “The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa”, World Politics 62 (2) 2011, pp. 300-346 or Jonathan M.Powell, “Trading coups for civil war”, African Security Review 23(4), 2013, pp. 329-338.
Battalion in Mauritania, which was heavily involved in deciding the outcome of the successful 2008 coup. Second, the local governments relied – and still rely – on other armed actors within the society for combating internal threats and countering the armed forces. Moreover, the weakness of state institutions, especially in the Northern provinces, further induces the local governments to cooperate with local actors. Mats Utas labels this reliance as “network governance”, where power brokers aligned with the regime are the main providers of security. In Niger, the government has made use of some of the multiple new actors providing security, such as vigilance groups, and co-opted, for example, Tuareg units into military or paramilitary units. In most cases, loyalty in exchange for money or access to privileges from the state are the basis for security networks.

The Libyan civil war in 2011 had two very different outcomes in Mali and Niger, despite their structural similarities. The difference might be explained by the different policies of the two governments towards armed actors within their society. Tuareg mercenaries from the Libyan armed forces returned from Libya through Niger in the months after the fall of Gadhafi in October 2011. Both Mali and Niger had fought Tuareg insurgencies in the mid-1990s and relied on the marginalized Arab Lamhar clan and the Tuareg Imghad clan to combat the insurgents from the noble Tuareg Ifogha clan. The return of Ifogha Tuaregs to Mali changed the relative strength of the government and the Imghad clan aligned with the government, which made the fast-paced conquest of Northern Mali in 2012 possible. Niger, in contrast, avoided a Tuareg insurgency, most likely because Tuaregs are living alongside other population groups, but also because the political system has integrated Tuaregs into the highest political levels in Niger.

The ability to handle non-state groups and co-opt or balance threatening groups proved the difference between Mali and Niger, and demonstrated the vulnerabilities of the local government. Changes in the relative power of different armed non-state actors threaten the survival of the government, as the examples demonstrate. The government is likely to fear the decline in the power of an aligned non-state actor vis-à-vis other non-state actors who are hostile to the government. The rise of armed non-state actors who are economically independent of the state.

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are especially worrisome to the local government. The chance of turning a non-state armed actor into the government’s local power broker is slight, if the economic incentives are too small, because of the size of the alternative income from, for example, smuggling. Even though the state might appear to be missing in the Northern parts of the three states, state officials are constantly monitoring and negotiating with the non-state armed actors to estimate changes in the level or threat, or negotiating with the price of loyalty from actors still dependent on money or privileges from the state²³.

NATO member states are typically concerned about the same kind of armed non-state groups as the local government. Smuggling of drugs, human trafficking, terror against Westerners in the three states are all too some extent connected with the same groups that threaten the local governments’ grip on power. Monitoring developments in the relative power of the non-state actors as well as the development in alignments – or networks – might provide a decisive advantage to the NATO member states. More to the point, identifying and combating threats that both NATO member states and the local governments perceive as a common threat is the key to local ownership. Mauritania has continuously fought AQIM along its shared border with Mali because of AQIM’s potential to empower rival political elites threatening the survival of the Mauritanian government²⁴. The local governments’ will to fight terrorist groups is the first and most important element of a successful CT strategy.

Insecurity and change among societal elites in the Sahel region
Changes brought about by globalization created, and continues to create, winners and losers among tribal, racial, and sectarian groups in the three states. Combined with the quasi-anarchical conditions created by the retracted states in especially Mali and Niger, the changes create insecurity and self-help among the groups. In general, historically privileged groups are under pressure from the underprivileged groups. The political dominance of noble clans is waning as new economic opportunities increase the relative power of marginalized clans. Egalitarian Salafi interpretation of Islam threatens traditional sects of Shia Muslim brotherhoods, because Salafi preachers offer hope of change to especially the marginalized youth. Increased militancy and conflicts among groups in some cases lead to an increase in self-help and the

arming of non-state groups previously protected by the security institutions of the states, which is most noticeable in the Central Mopti region near the capital region in Mali.

The mistrust and insecurity among actors in Northern Mali since 2013 is perhaps the best example of the long-ranging consequences of changes in the power balance among societal groups. On paper, most of the militant groups in Northern Mali share the goal of increased autonomy from the government in Bamako. In reality, they have organized into two opposing alliances, the Platform group aligned with the government, and the Coordination group opposing the government. However, in October 2015, to some surprise, the Platform and the Coordination groups agreed on the division of zones of influence and trade – most likely smuggling routes. What is striking is the inability of the government to control the level of violence among societal groups, which points towards the importance of NATO member states engaging societal groups in addition to engaging local governments.

Traditional Sufi orders have mended social and ethnic cleavages in societies in the Sahel region. However, the general rise in political Islam as well as Saudi-funded Mosques, madrassas, and Salafi preachers, especially in Mali and Mauritania, has destabilized the role of the Sufi orders. Moreover, Sufi orders have chosen to align closely with local governments. Consequently, they have increasingly been associated with governments, which the populations consider corrupt and inept. In contrast, Salafi preachers are mostly in opposition to the established structure and preach a more egalitarian ideology that attracts persons marginalized from the traditional power elites. The spread of radical Salafi Islam has paved the way for Jihadists seeking the overthrow of existing political structures. Government intervention has the potential to curb the spread of militant Salafism. Since 2010, the government of Niger has actively kept out foreign preachers and religious NGO’s to avoid the radicalization of Muslims in the country. So far, the strategy has produced better results than those of the neighboring states, yet the split between radicalized Islamists and Sufi Muslims persists. Clans and tribal elites with a Sufi confession and moderate religious communities are likely to feel threatened by militant Islamism, because radical militants consider them takfirists, apostates.

29 Ibid, p. 596-597
Ethnic tensions between Arab tribes and black Africans are present in all three states. However, in Mauritania, a strong hierarchy persists among the three larger groups of Mauritanians, namely the dominating Bidans (“white Moors”), the Haratins (“black Moors”), who are descendants from slaves but speak Arab, and the black communities speaking, for example, Wolof or Soninke. Mauritania, in this sense, is different from Mali and Niger, as the Arab communities dominate Mauritanian politics. However, the discrimination of the Haratins has made that group more prone to accept radical versions of Islam, and all Mauritanian suicide bombers have been of Haratin origin.

The new radicalized groups are ideal for infiltration by AQIM, but groups threatened by radical Islam are also very likely to seek out new allies. In the Mopti region in Central Mali, members of the local tribes chose to resist AQIM-backed groups in 2012. Elite groups within the Fulani and Songhai tribes decided to activate the two dormant militias, Gonda Koy (Lords of the Land) and Gonda Izo (Sons of the Land) to counter the threat from the Tuareg and Arab insurgency. Living in the Mopti region, Fulanis and Songhais were the first in line to experience the aggression of the Islamists and Tuareg nationalists in 2012. A long history of struggles over land made the threat of Arab or Tuareg conquest of land a very dangerous prospect to the Fulanis and Songhais. Even though the Mopti militias were unable to stop the advancing columns from the North in 2012, they were willing to cooperate with the local government. This example demonstrates the possibility of assisting motivated actors to resist aggressions by AQIM-backed foes.

Theoretically, if NATO member states would want to take advantage of the insecurity among the groups, they would face the choice between balancing, bandwagoning, or acting as mediators. Balancing would entail aligning with groups threatened by competing tribes or clans, radicalized and strengthened by their alignment with AQIM. In the case of Mopti, the strategy would have been to strengthen the Gondo Izo or Gondo Koy in the face of an increased threat in Northern Mali, if the Malian government had allowed it. Bandwagoning with the strongest power could be a strategy in Mauritania, if radicalization spread among Haratins. Working with the Bidans is actually very close to the current strategy of the West of working with the military government.

31 Ibid, p. 133
Finally, acting as an arbitrator would be politically unfeasible if AQIM aligned with one of the parties. In some cases, NATO member states are able to work as brokers among non-radicalized organizations opposing the government. The best example is France, who has managed to utilize its good relations with the Tuareg organization MNLA to drive the peace process forward in Mali since 2013\(^\text{34}\). However, in most cases, balancing is the most feasible and effective way for NATO member states to exploit the strategic vulnerability of creating insecurity among societal groups.

**Strangers and foreigners**

From the beginning, AQIM was a foreign implant in the societies in the Sahel region. Named the Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat until 2007, AQIM was a splinter group from the once powerful Islamist insurgency during the Algerian civil war in the 1990s\(^\text{35}\). Since 2000, the Algerian state has made it extremely difficult to operate in the Northern parts of Algeria, forcing the group to establish itself in the Southern parts of Algeria as well as Mauritania, Mali, and partly Niger. Abdelmalek Droukdel, the leader or Emir of AQIM, is a veteran from the Algerian civil war, as are several of his commanders\(^\text{36}\). To survive and thrive in the new strategic context of the Sahel region, AQIM operatives have had to adapt to life among local communities foreign to its Algerian operatives.

One of AQIM’s strategies to integrate the terror organization into local communities is to use its financial resources for building networks. Kidnapping of Westerners was a very profitable business in the 2000s, which caused a steep decline in tourism in the Sahel region. Combined with smuggling or illegal taxation of smuggling, AQIM has become a very wealthy branch of Al Qaeda\(^\text{37}\). One of the best-documented examples is Mokhtar Belmokhtar, who got the nickname ‘Marlboro Man’ due to his alleged involvement in cigarette smuggling. He married several local women in order to become part of the established clans. The advantage for Belmokhtar was that he ceased being a foreigner and instead became part of the social fabric, with access to


\(^{36}\) Besides Droukdel, two important commanders of AQIM, Djamel Okachawho and Mokhtar Belmokhtar, were both active members of GIA (Islamic Armed Group), which was the forerunner of the Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat. From 1994 to 1998, GIA was involved in some of the most brutal massacres of the civil war in Algeria. See Sergei Boeke, “Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism, insurgency, or organized crime?”, Small Wars & Insurgencies 27(5) 2016, pp. 914-936.

intelligence as well as hideouts\textsuperscript{38}. However, new evidence suggests that Belmokhtar did not integrate as smoothly into Arab tribes in Northern Mali, as most analysts imagined. In fact, local sources say that Belmokhtar was never part of the cigarette smuggling networks, and even intercepted and burned cigarettes, declaring them “Haram”\textsuperscript{39}. Such a behavior against one of the few sources of income must have sparked resistance among smugglers from both Mauritania and Mali. Yet, no evidence suggests that local authorities or Western forces took advantage of the unpopularity of Belmokhtar.

The funding of AQIM through local illicit activities has provided the organization with the ability to sustain itself, despite international attempts to crack down on the financing of international terror. However, control of illegal activities is to a certain extent a zero-sum game. Only a limited number of smuggling routes or hostages are available, and the control of resources is bound to be conflictual. Furthermore, to take full advantage of the existing clan and tribal structure, AQIM leaders need to have loyal elites in place. One example is the return of Lyad ag Ghali from the Ifogha clan of the Tuaregs in 2011. A struggle over who was to lead the reorganized Tuareg organization, MNLA, erupted because of the different opinions of the role of Islamism in MNLA. In the end, the elite families preferred a more nationalistic leader to promote Tuareg interests. In reaction, ag Ghali formed Anser Dine and aligned with AQIM and played a dominating role in the offensive in Northern Mali in 2012. However, despite representing the same clan within the Tuareg tribe, Anser Dine and MNLA clashed within months, and the conflict between the organizations persisted after the French intervention.

On a broader scale, the leaders of AQIM are keenly aware of the dilemmas in integrating into existing communities. Papers found in Gao during the French intervention in February 2013, show the importance AQIM leader Droukdel attached to this subject\textsuperscript{40}. Droukdel instructed the leaders of the affiliated organizations, Anser Dine and Mouvement pour l’unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l’Ouest (MUJAO), that they must hide the Salafist agenda from the local population. He explained that the goal of building bridges to the local population “(…) is to make it so that our Mujahedeen are no longer isolated in society, and to integrate with the different factions,


including the big tribes and the main rebel movement and tribal chiefs.\textsuperscript{41} In the end, Droukdel failed to prevent MUJAO’s or Anser Dines’ harsh implementation of Sharia. However, AQIM’s strategy of using local fronts is still in place to avoid creating local resistance or drawing the attention of Western anti-terror efforts\textsuperscript{42}.

From a Western perspective, this strategic vulnerability is difficult, but not impossible, to exploit. The disadvantages for the Western security agencies are obvious: clandestine meetings taking place at a low level, contacts building over several years, dispersed small societies placed in inaccessible areas with little contact with Westerners. However, most of the examples are from Mali, which to some extent reflects the ability of Mauritania and Niger to prevent AQIM operatives from integrating freely into societal groups. In Niger, the government consciously integrated Tuaregs into mixed military units, which increased the Tuaregs’ confidence in the Armed Forces. Moreover, the government honestly promoted meetings between ex rebels, state officials and local communities, which probably increased trust and knowledge of possible infiltration attempts\textsuperscript{43}. Similarly, so far Mauritania has managed to keep AQIM’s infiltration of local communities at a low level. One explanation is that the government co-opted individual preachers most likely to embrace militant Jihadism\textsuperscript{44}. Even in Northern Mali in 2016, local communities are fully aware of the dangers of aligning with AQIM. Sergei Boeke reports that operators from AQIM interrupted two inter-communal meetings in Timbuktu to encourage Arab and Tuareg cooperation and to threaten individuals collaborating with the government\textsuperscript{45}. In such an environment of intimidation, individuals contemplating cooperating with the government would be highly receptive to offers of protection and support.

Finally, Western agencies and local authorities could reduce the need for infiltrating local communities if they gave dissatisfied local actors an incentive to cooperate, such as economic support, being the local agent of a development project, or military support\textsuperscript{46}. Still, to sum up, AQIM is prone to be on the margin of local communities, because AQIM operators come with a

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid, chapter 1, p. 2-3.
\textsuperscript{42} Jacob Zenn, “The Sahel’s Militant ‘Melting Pot’: Hamadou Kouffa’s Macina Liberation Front (FLM)”, Terrorism Monitor 13(22) 2016, pp. 3-5.
\textsuperscript{45} Sergei Boeke, “Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism, insurgency, or organized crime?”, Small Wars & Insurgencies 27(5), pp. 914-936, p. 926.
\textsuperscript{46} No doubt, such a tactic runs the risk of the local actor being able to take advantage of the Western agencies and local authorities. Asymmetry of information might allow the local actor to portray the situation on the ground to gain advantage. See, for example, Walther C. Ladwig, “Influencing Clients in Counterinsurgency: U.S. Involvement in El Salvador's Civil War”, 1979–92, International Security 41(1) 2016, pp. 99-146.
revisionist agenda and use terrorist tactics likely to draw violent crackdowns. Taking advantage of local grievances inside clans, tribes or other local communities is one way NATO member states may exploit the precarious position of AQIM.

**How to exploit the vulnerabilities? Strategic recommendations**

In many ways, military operations by NATO member states in the Sahel region reflect the current state of the academic debate on external intervention in insurgencies. In general, current theories tend to emphasize low footprint interventions, with very limited use of land power.47 Moreover, many theorists and practitioners alike now emphasize countering violent extremism before internal conflicts escalate. This article takes it departure from the idea of using low footprint interventions and intervening as early in the conflict spectrum as possible.

Therefore, the strategic recommendation of this article is not to add new instruments or to increase resources. Instead, NATO member states should take two steps to increase the effectiveness of the current engagement. The primary step is to develop ways to systematically exploit the three identified vulnerabilities. The argument is that all three ways have higher strategic benefits than cost or risk, and would provide the military engagements with a coherent strategy that links instruments and political aims. The second step is to increase the unity-of-effort among the state agencies to direct efforts towards the strategic vulnerabilities. The argument here is that any NATO member states would need to draw upon at least four different instruments to exploit the vulnerabilities of AQIM, namely intelligence, diplomacy, as well as military and economic power. However, this article does not advance any solutions to coordination issues within the whole-of-government approach, it rather points out the potential benefits of coordinating these exact four instruments to maximize the chance to exploit the three vulnerabilities.

Strategy is the bridge that connects available resources with the political goal of eliminating or reducing the effectiveness of AQIM.48 Each of the three strategic vulnerabilities of AQIM constitutes a way to achieve the political goal with the existing resources or even fewer in the area. However, all three ways might not be feasible or desirable to pursue at all times. The first way is aligning the military assistance of NATO member states to the security interests of the

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local government. NATO member states would be able to track changes in the internal balance-of-power by using the diplomatic or intelligence instrument inside the target state. If detected, minimal support of threatened pro-government militias or the local government could restore a favorable balance-of-power. Due to the shared threat perception, local actors would be motivated to put outside assistance to use. However, too much outside support might create a moral hazard problem, if NATO member states reward incompetent or complacent behavior of the local government or pro-regime militias with extended military support49.

If the right balance were achieved, the benefits would be a reliable and motivated local ally that would be willing to fight effectively, at least until the threat of AQIM and its local allies was diminished. After that culminating point, the decelerating decline of the insurgents identified by Gordon McCormick would probably threaten the coherence of the alliance, as further action would be time consuming with little visible result50. The cost would primarily be political, as the NATO member states might have less leverage to demand political or administrative reforms to improve good governance. Rather, fighting with the local government as well as their local allies would make the external actor a backer of the regime, which means that the NATO member states also run the risk of being equated with a regime perceived as illegitimate among large parts of the local population. However, NATO member states already have extensive ties to local governments in the Sahel region so the benefits of the strategy are likely to outweigh a cost already paid.

The second way is providing local tribes with the means to counter the threat from tribes or clans cooperating with AQIM. Direct engagement in tribal politics would reduce the authority of the local government, but provide the NATO member states with an increased ability to influence regions marginal to the local governments. Despite more weapons becoming available in the Sahel region, Western weapons, training, or provision of intelligence from, for example, drones would still be a great improvement in the strength of a clan or tribe in comparison with their opponents. Yet, the very effectiveness of outside support would also carry the risk of local actors taking advantage of support from NATO member states by framing a local conflict as part of a greater struggle against AQIM. To reduce that risk, NATO member states would have to rely on independent intelligence assessment to validate the claims of local actors. If successful,

engaging local tribes would provide NATO member states with a flexible and low-cost alternative to operating through formalized military assistance to the local government.

The third way is identifying and offering a path to victory to marginalized factions within tribes or clans infiltrated by AQIM. Western-provided money, weapons, intelligence, or drone strikes would allow the marginalized factions to balance factions supported by AQIM. If successful, this strategy would enable NATO member states to combat AQIM in a very early phase of infiltration into local communities. The selective targeting of AQIM operatives or elite factions close to them has the potential to remain a CT mission without turning into a broader counterinsurgency trying to address all the grievances of the local community. In a few cases, such as the French intelligence network among the Tuaregs, NATO member states have a sufficient intelligence network to provide knowledge of power struggles within clans or tribes. However, in most cases, the cost of the strategy would be a painstaking build-up of finely masked intelligence networks. If not possible, NATO member states would have to run the risk of relying on, for example, a reward system that individuals might manipulate to settle internal conflicts not associated with terrorism. This problem has marred efforts in non-permissive areas such as Afghanistan or the tribal areas in Pakistan. If some level of intelligence is available, the strategy provides a fine-tuned and preventive response to AQIM infiltration.

Table 1 provides an overview of the three strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vulnerability</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Risk</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I vulnerability</td>
<td>Support the alliances of the local government</td>
<td>The local government and Western powers share a common threat perception</td>
<td>Difficult to demand reforms – merely accepting status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II vulnerability</td>
<td>Engaging tribes to influence the security dilemma</td>
<td>Enable tribes to use local knowledge to combat tribes supporting AQIM</td>
<td>Reduces the authority of the local government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III vulnerability</td>
<td>Offer path to victory for factions marginalized by AQIM</td>
<td>Ability to combat AQIM in the earliest phase of terrorist infiltration of local communities</td>
<td>Requires a sophisticated intelligence program with local outreach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: An overview of the three proposed strategies

At best, all three strategies offer the continuation of the status quo. They do not settle long-term grievances, nor do they increase the capacity or legitimacy of the local government. Instead, the turbulent political situation in the three states would continue. One could take the position of Alex de Waal and argue that this is the same as accepting the realities of politics in the Sahel region, which would allow a more honest dialogue with local governments\(^5\). In contrast, a more conventional comprehensive approach to CT in the Sahel region includes making unpleasant demands such as crackdown on corruption in state institutions and political institutions. Any CT strategy against AQIM would have to decide on the long-term goal of the strategy. If the strategy includes short-term exploitation of vulnerabilities and long-term capacity building, NATO member states would have to put emphasis on making their demands acceptable to the local governments.

In order to simultaneously exploit the strategic vulnerability of AQIM and facilitate long-term stability, NATO member states need a truly comprehensive approach in the Sahel region. At least four instruments of state power would have to be synchronized. Beside the use of economic, military, and diplomatic means in the described strategies, development aid would be critical to provide more economic opportunities to marginalized communities in the Northern regions in the three states. Moreover, the military engagement would have to encompass military assistance on a larger scale than today to move away from a narrow CT training to training of, for example, border patrols or gendarmerie units. One promising example is USAID’s program to help local communities spot extremism\(^6\). Such programs could be a mainstay in a truly comprehensive strategy of short-term exploitation of strategic vulnerabilities and a long-term build-up of local capacity.

**Conclusion**

Mali was a reminder of how dramatic changes can be under such strategic conditions as are found in the Sahel region. Infiltration into local clans and tribes allowed AQIM to tap into local grievances and insurgencies. Mauritania and Niger have so far proved more resilient to infiltration and insurgency. However, the long-term development in the Sahel region of poverty, demographic pressure, and radicalization makes violence a constant possibility. The three identified strategic vulnerabilities of AQIM offer ways for NATO member states to combat the spread of AQIM in the region. The common logic in all three strategies is to align the threat

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perception of NATO member states with the threat perception of the local government, local communities, and marginalized individuals. In short, the key question “who is threatened?” can help to determine how to link means to ends. When changes in the power relations within the state threaten the local government, NATO member states should assist the efforts of the government to make the security situation favorable to the government. When AQIM-backed tribes threaten other tribes, NATO member states should have adequate intelligence sources to pick up the information, and act upon it by supporting the threatened tribe. When AQIM operatives marginalize individuals in their own tribe or organization, NATO member states should empower them to take back power.

All three strategies come with cost and risk. The most notable cost is that aligning closely with the existing power structure, whether the local government or tribal leaders, requires acceptance of the status quo. Demands for rule of law or democratization are unlikely to be effective, when NATO member states align with local power brokers who benefit from the current state of affairs. Moreover, NATO member states run the risk of local actors manipulating them to gain advantages in local power struggles unrelated to AQIM. A truly comprehensive approach might be a way of mitigating some of the costs and risks of the strategy. Development aid could lay the foundation for long-term government reforms, while a short-term CT strategy prevents AQIM from spreading. Similarly, synchronizing diplomatic, military, and economic means with a detailed intelligence picture might prevent local actors from manipulating NATO member states. Yet, this article is only a first step in thinking through a CT strategy based on local self-interests. As such, the aim is merely to provoke thought and debate among practitioners in NATO member states.

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Religious radicalization and violent Islamist extremism in Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo

Gerta Zaimi¹

Abstract
Terrorism and violent extremism (VE) have become perhaps the most widely used terms in recent times. When talking about VIE (Violent Islamist² Extremism) we are not dealing with a monolithic block. This brings about more complex responses.
The author contributes to the knowledge of radicalism and of the VIE phenomenon in the Albanian Balkans, a critical area for the interests of NATO and consequently the implications in terms of security.
This article aims to present an analysis of internal and external factors that have contributed to the development of the phenomenon: the economic, social and ideological aspects, and the areas most affected by this issue. Various factors that are encouraging the recruitment of Albanians by jihadist movements are different and intertwined with each other. Pointing the finger just to one factor would lead to a partial understanding of the reality, and consequently to an ineffective response.
In most areas, the State is almost inexistent: investments in education are seen only as a form of business, thus lowering the level of education; unemployment of young people, who comprise the majority of the population, is very high; corruption is part of the *modus vivendi*; and we face patriarchal societies emerging from isolation and totalitarianism, still in transition from an economic, political, and social point of view. This is the ground that hides the roots of the fundamentalist movements, which are not necessarily violent (the distinction between these movements is very important in the search for answers to counter VIE).

Keywords: Radicalization, Violent Islamist Extremism, Jihadi-Salafi, Takfiri, social political alienation.

Introduction
Since the attacks of September 2001, followed by those in Madrid in March 2004 and London in July 2005, international terrorism has definitely become part of our daily lives.

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² While Islam is a religion, Islamism is a political ideology. The term is used only by Western scholars. It is not used by Islamic scholars, and no one accepts it. Islam is self-defining and does not accept formulation outside it. The author considers that the distinction is crucial in understanding the phenomenon of extremism. Islamism (within it there are the institutional Islamist and the Jihadist) is about religionized political order and not faith.
When talking about terrorism or radicalism we know it is not a new phenomenon. It is a rather ancient one, which has never ceased to evolve, thus making it of a very particular complex and detailed nature. We are not dealing with a monolithic block, with the same characteristics for all countries. This brings about even more complex responses.

Albanian speakers are the largest Muslim community in the Balkans today, with the language spoken widely in Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. This article contributes to the knowledge of radicalism and of the violent Islamist extremism phenomenon in the Albanian Balkans.

The ideological indoctrination of the young and the not so young, what pushes them toward jihadism – recruitment finds a fertile ground because of: the existence of weak States politically, socially and economically creating alienated citizens, patriarchal and conservative societies still in transition from a post-communist era, or wars in crisis of values and social structure. A very low level of education, fragmentation, weakness and loss of credibility of the religious institutions of the Islamic community, secularization of a totalitarian character and nature that foments Islamophobia, despite the majority of the population being Muslim. There is a lack of a true intellectual and theological debate between the intellectuals and Islamic clerics that creates disorientation, weakness and lack of credibility in the Islamic Community Institutions.

Among the external factors, the geopolitical situation prevailing in the Middle East context and the growth of terrorist movements such as Al Qaeda and DAESH/ISIL definitely have to be mentioned.

The factors we have described are interwoven, do not exclude each other, and not necessarily all causes have to be present to become radicalized.

Islam is a religion and, in itself, it cannot explain indiscriminate violence. But Islamism, ideologizing religion, its use for political platforms, having as goal the triumph of politics rather than religion, it is helpful to understand why some of the radicalized people choose jihadism and terrorism, and no other forms of radicalization which are not lacking on the ground.

Islamism is certainly a complex process where we find political, religious, and geopolitical aspects.

Radicalism, as well as terrorism, is widely used terms, yet academia has never managed to agree on a single definition. Given that governments, institutions, and the media in the countries that we observe use the same connotation for the words ‘terrorism’, ‘fundamentalism’, ‘radicalism’ and ‘violent extremism’, it is appropriate to clarify the differences.

In politics, radicalization consists in the refusal of any compromise with the existing power, thus looking for violent or non-violent means to undermine the status quo. It is the process
through which the individual approaches extremist ideas, actions in support of a group in a conflict. In religion, radicalization has a completely different definition. Nowadays, there is a tendency to consider religious and political radicalization as one and the same phenomenon.

The puritans are generally conservatives who want to modify, adapt practices and individual behaviors according to religious values. The fundamentalist has the desire to return only to the foundational texts of the religion, by bypassing all the contributions of history, philosophy and heritage of men. Fundamentalism is not in itself a radical or politically revolutionary action. It connotes the idea of breaking with contemporary society. Radicalism is the rooting of fundamentalism. When fundamentalism expresses itself politically as a comprehensive reform of society, then in this case the fundamentalism can be considered to be radicalism.³

According to Alex Schmid, radicalization is:

*an individual or collective (group) process whereby, usually in a situation of political polarization, normal practices of dialogue, compromise and tolerance between political actors and groups with diverging interests are abandoned by one or both sides in a conflict dyad in favor of a growing commitment to engage in confrontational tactics of conflict-waging. These can include either (i) the use of (non-violent) pressure and coercion, (ii) various forms of political violence other than terrorism or (iii) acts of violent extremism in the form of terrorism and war crimes.* ⁴

Radicalization is a natural phenomenon. Everything that goes beyond the norm, that crosses the border of the natural, the suitable, can be considered to be radical. In this sense, radicalization is not very common.⁵ And only a few among thousands of radicals are involved in radical actions.

Violent Extremism, the terrorism, is an ideological language, an extremist ideology combined with a violent action. The degree of the extremism is different.

Radicalization is valid for anyone, and anyone can be radicalized. Every ideology radicalizes.

We can be radicalized in the name of a religious or a non-religious ideology.

There are two types of radicalism in Islam:

1. As in other *Abrahamic* religions, Islam can serve as the ideological foundation of a theocracy. Theocracy itself is a set ideology. The Qur’an is not a State constitution but a civil one. Islam is not a religion for a specific territory where everyone speaks the same language and shares the same nationality. It is a civil

³ Saoud el-Mawla, professor of sociology at The American University of Beyrut. Interview with the author.

⁴ Alex P. Schmid, Radicalization, “De radicalization, Counter radicalization: a conceptual discussion and literature review” (ICCT Research Paper, March 2013). Alex P. Schmid makes a list of the differences between (open-minded) radicals and (closed-minded) extremists, p.18.

code for relationships between citizens of a country or many countries; it is not a theocracy. Islam creates a horizontal Islamic civil society and not a vertical State. Adherence to a specific religion is an individual choice. Individuals join other adherents voluntarily, based on a shared faith. Faith (iman) and religion (din) are therefore individual and personal. Individuals united in the din and the iman produce jamaat, which in turn produces a system of ethics, but no state, no army. An Islamic theocracy uses Islam, the religion, in a mistaken context, for the purpose of political, state power, and in doing so, thus creates radicalism. Therefore, Islamic States do not produce Islam, but radicalism.

2. Muslim identity is based in large part on what is forbidden. Many radical Muslims spend their time looking for fault in others, judging them based on what is prohibited. When Muslims accept this kind of scrutiny, this represents a voluntary devolution of individual freedom, which can create frustration for the individual and division within the group. Radicalization starts at the moment of division within the community, where the interests of specific groups who aim for this disruption get crystallized. The blaming and accusing of fellow Muslims as kafar, which can go as far as takfirist (excommunication, which is violent extremism), creates radicalism. The radicals want to impose a narrow, rigid form of Islam and they fight for this. This is what creates deviance.

Islamist terrorists, who justify their violence through a specific interpretation of Islam, are hybrids of an exclusive, takfirist, radical version of Islam and Islamist political ideology. Takfirs are members who evaluate the belief, the purity of belief, and the value of another Muslim’s belief. In religious terms, terrorism uses passages from the Qur’an selectively and out of context, ignoring historical analysis. In political terms, it uses the ideology as the foundation to morally justify the violence.

The ways in which radicals gain supporters are very diverse. Who is the contingent and why do they join the radical’s cause have to do with sociology, specific individual conditions, and the environment. Those who get radicalized often use religion to justify their use of violence as a means of compensating for their personal failures, weaknesses, and frustrations. In most cases, however, they have little knowledge of religion at all.

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6Jamaat: - Muslim community.
7Kafir (pl.Kuffar) - in Arabic, it means unbeliever. It is considered the major sin because one has left the basic creed behind.
8 We will discuss takfirism later.
9Takfir – excommunication. The practice of declaring another Muslim a kafir, outside of the community of believers, is known as takfir.
The socio-economic situation of the countries

Albania

The three countries in question are characterized by socio-economic conditions identified as among the worst in the Balkan area. Because of this socio-economic situation, Germany faces a mass exodus from Albania and Kosovo, and both countries are under scrutiny for entry into Europe. This flow of economic migrants has created such a serious situation that the German Embassy in Tirana has launched a publicity campaign to convince Albanians not to leave.

A government official who declined to be quoted says that, in 2014, approximately 400,000 Albanians have applied for the “USA Green Card Lottery” and, in 2015, approximately 700,000 people - out of a population of 2.8 million.

"One of the poorest countries in Europe": this is the most widely accepted description of Albania in international relations. In its latest report on Albania, the German Bertelsmann Stiftung think tank provides this summary of socio-economic indicators identified by international associations:

The unemployment rate has increased in recent years, reaching 17%, while 14% of the population live on the verge of poverty in 2014. Some 75% of unemployment, moreover, is considered as long term. Also, there is a large gap in gender differences when it comes to labor participation, public representation, education and property. Last, but not least, the share of youth unemployment is at 30%, twice the EU-27 average.\(^{10}\)

Corruption has been identified as the central problem for all branches of public administration. The last report of the Transparency International Association ranks Albania in 88th place, while social surveys signal a shift away from local politics and a substantial lack of confidence in the State. Albanians have more confidence in international institutions such as NATO and Europe than in their own.\(^{11}\) But, above all, they continue to refer to traditional support systems, such as family or territorial clan, rather than institutional ones. In crisis situations, they turn more to these structures than to a welfare system considered insufficient and unreliable.

With its 19% of people between 15 and 24 years, Albania is one of Europe’s youngest countries. But young people are also the social category that suffers the most uncertainty and discomfort from these conditions. Less than 30% of young people complete high school and only 50% of them can access the world of work.


\(^{11}\) Ibid, p.15.
According to the last census of 2011, the Albanian population is essentially divided into three religions: Muslim (56.7%), Catholics (10%) and Orthodox (6.8%). Traditionally, there has been substantial peaceful coexistence among these three communities. In recent times, however, they are manifesting increasing tensions, especially in terms of Islamophobia.

In her report on Albania for the think-tank SETA\textsuperscript{12}, Prof. Juliana Ajdini writes: "[…] problems exist that are linked to religion, and Islamophobia is one of these. Some results of Islamophobia are discrimination, exclusion and prejudice of people, all of which emanate from religious beliefs". The field of sociology of work gives a concrete example: "According to a study (Kocani, 2015) conducted with 248 women who wear the hijab in Tirana, 18.8% were employed in the private sector, 2.1% in public institutions, 5% in NGOs and only 2.5% were self-employed".\textsuperscript{13}

\textit{Macedonia}

The population of Macedonia is about two million inhabitants. Orthodox Christians represent between 64-66%, Muslims 33-35%, and 1% are Catholics, Protestants and other denominations. The last census was done in 2002 and since then, Macedonian institutions have blocked every new census. Ethnic tensions between the majority Serbian-Macedonians and minority Albanians date back to early last century and have never been dormant. Albanians in Macedonia are not included in the Constitution, they are continuously marginalized. The exclusion of Albanians from the Constitution was manifested even in 1989 when, exploiting Serbian nationalism, amendments that abolished a number of rights of Albanians were added to the existing constitution of 1974. This arrogance in relation to Albanians also appeared in the drafting and approval of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia. For ten consecutive years, Macedonia became a typical model of a society of conflict that ended in 2001 with the war. Under international pressure, an agreement was reached between the two parties - the Ohrid Agreement. It is more than evident that the Ohrid Agreement has failed in its implementation, pointing to the need for a new accord. And, despite the current Serbian-Albanian coalition in the government, discriminations against the Muslim minority are obvious:

Albanians remain overrepresented amongst the unemployed, still underrepresented in state employment, and those who live in areas where they do not constitute 20 per cent of the population face problems with language use in public administration and

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid, p.15.
access to education in their mother tongue. Ethnic Albanians are often victims of hidden discrimination, including by public officials. As all groups in Macedonia, they face problems because the education system is segregated and heavily influenced by political parties.\(^\text{14}\)

According to the latest report by Freedom House, the political and security situation has significantly decreased in 2015.\(^\text{15}\) The causes: the scandal of illegal wiretapping ordered by the Government and a mysterious bloody incident in the village of Kumanovo, on the border with Kosovo, where they have killed fourteen ethnic Albanian militants and eight members of the police.

While the assessments on human rights are negative, the data on the social economic situation is not discouraging. Unemployment remains at 28%, but the low cost of food and energy maintain acceptable price levels.

The problems are mainly of a social nature. Transparency International puts Macedonia in the 66th place of their ranking, but it is observed that the new anti-corruption laws are not enforced. The media are under pressure and are divided by ethnic factions.

According to a survey of IRI Centre, 60% of the population has no confidence in State institutions. 81% of the population is afraid to express their opinions because of the climate of intimidation.

**Kosovo**

Data on Kosovo’s socio-economic situation is disastrous. Unemployment, especially of the youth, runs at very high levels, while 10% of the population lives below the poverty level.

“The GDP per capita in 2013 was 2,935 euros, nearly twofold less than in the poorest country of the EU, Bulgaria, where according to Eurostat it was 5,600 euros, and nearly nine times below the EU average of 26,600 euros per capita in 2013”.\(^\text{16}\)“The unemployment rate increased to 35.3 % in 2014 from 30 % in 2013. Labor market conditions are especially difficult for women.”\(^\text{17}\)


A young country, still living the trauma of the war, the new State of Kosovo presents additional problems related to its transition period. Organized crime is among the most violent, where, in 2015, there were still 10,814 missing people, in contrast to only 1,670 missing from the war.\textsuperscript{18}

These data probably explain the exodus of Kosovars, particularly in the direction of the countries of Northern Europe and Germany, over the last two years. “Limited job opportunities, especially for young people (61 % youth unemployment), are also putting a strain on social cohesion and encouraging emigration.”\textsuperscript{19} “Kosovars are the second largest group after Syrians to have migrated lately. It is estimated that 100,000 Kosovars left the country from August, 2014 to February, 2015.”\textsuperscript{20}

In the ranking of Transparency International on corruption, Kosovo trails Albania by more than 10 spots, ranking at 103rd place. Only 13% of the Kosovo population has a University/College Degree and the Ministry of Education and Science hopes to raise this level within the next year to "at least 35% of the school's population." The OSCE states that in Kosovo there are no reliable data on education but the situation is judged insufficient by all, especially in rural areas where religious institutions play an increasing role of substitution to public facilities.

Kosovo, just as Albania, despite being a country with a 95% majority Muslim population, figures in the European Islamophobia Report,\textsuperscript{21} edited by the think tank SETA, where the debate that has developed in Kosovo’s media following the arrest of alleged jihadists exhibits strong anti-Islamic connotations.

\textbf{The institutions and Muslim communities in 3 countries} \textsuperscript{22}

After the fall of communism, Albania emerged as the only atheist country in the communist bloc. The clergy were almost nonexistent, and new generations had to be developed. After 23 years of interdiction of religion, the KMSH was formed (the Albanian Islamic Community/Komuniteti Myslyman Shqiptar) and, in subsequent years, hundreds of mosques were built and reconstructed. The Bektashi community has taken more time to regroup. After 1993, the Islamic Community was dissolved in the former Yugoslavia. The Islamic communities separated from each other and created in Kosovo the BIF (Islamic Association of Kosovo/Bashkesia Islame e Kosoves) and, in Macedonia, the BFI (Religious Islamic Association/Bashkesia Fetare Islame).

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{18} ibid
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid
\textsuperscript{20} “Recent Migration from Kosovo” (23 December 2015), Global Public Policy Watch at https://globalpublicpolicywatch.org/2015/12/23/recent-migration-from-kosovo/ (accessed 2 November 2016)
\end{flushright}
In Kosovo, the Faculty of Islamic Sciences was founded in 1992 and in Skopje in 1997. The University “Beder” of the Islamic community in Albania was created only in 2011. Islam becomes much more visible, new mosques are built, the celebration of Muslim holidays becomes the norm, there are publications of books by various authors, an increase in number of Islamic magazines and publishing houses. The number of madrassas is also increasing, and religious teaching in schools was introduced in Macedonia, but not in Kosovo and Albania.

In these years of Islamic revival there was a flow of aid, funds and charitable organizations from many countries: Turkey, Iran, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar. Very soon such terms as ‘Wahhabi’, ‘Salafi’, ‘bearded’, ‘radical’, ‘fundamentalist’, ‘terrorist’ begin to circulate as if they are the same thing when, in reality, except for a few theologians, no one has any idea what the meaning and the differences between all these terms are. According to Nathalie Clayer, probably the most suitable term would be neo-Salafis, or neo-fundamentalists according to Olivier Roy. Their presence is undeniable and it is manifested in different forms and modalities. There are different currents; ‘the quietest’, ‘the jihadist’, and also ‘the Tekfirs’. Organizations and different individuals approached each of the currents. First came the charitable organizations and funds from various countries for the construction of schools, mosques, scholarships for young students in the universities of the Arab world. Hundreds of boys, mostly from rural areas, left for their studies in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Turkey, Libya, Lebanon and Syria. When they returned many of them brought with them clothes, habits and different interpretations.

I do not see anything negative in the fact that a good part of our imams graduated in Arab countries! This for the simple reason that Arabic is the language of Islam, the Qur’an, the Prophet’s Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) message, etc. Thus, it remains an essential detail in the literal meaning of religious sources. But I think that evil comes across this fact. In the transmission, from the earliest traces of our Islamic culture is said that: “There will come a time when there will be promiscuous readers and ignorant fans!” So, promiscuous readers and ignorant followers starting from the very initial goal of worshiping. This means that reading the wrong essence of religion by individuals (whether the imams or clerics) may introduce hybrid forms of manifestation of religious sentiment, as has happened throughout the world, in different times and different countries.

The funds from the Gulf countries, from Turkey, from Iran, and from others arrive not only through NGOs but also in the form of State investments. While investments funds to the

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25 Muhamet Syrtari, Mufti of Shkoder. Interview with the author December 2015.
State are traceable and visible, the ones that come through the NGOs are completely unknown.

A portion of that money was used often in the interest of groups close to Al Qaeda, with geopolitical objectives. For example, the non-governmental organization IIRO (International Islamic Relief Organization), and the foundations Al-Haramain, Muwafaq, and Al-Waqt al-Islami, were accused of supporting terrorist activities both in Albania and in Macedonia. Consequently, an unknown form of Islam emerged: Salafism. Many journalists and researchers accuse this proselytizing, unknown to the traditional Hanafi Islam in the Balkans, as the real culprit of radicalism and violent extremism. This is not entirely wrong, but not quite right either; and it is much more complicated than that. Albania became a member of the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) with a decision of the President of the Republic, Sali Berisha, in 1992 - precisely to attract funds and financial aid. “Albania became a transit point for weapons to be sent to Bosnian Muslims … Some Islamic fighters also passed through Albania on their way to Bosnia at the time, hoping to make it a European base.” These were the years in which takfirism and jihadism of Islamic Jihad and Al Qaeda penetrated into Albania. “The cell of Tirana was regarded as one of the most important committees of Jihad. They took part in some of the well-known exponents of the organization, who were disguised as Muslim missionaries, and charity coming from the Arab world”. The first extraditions to Egypt began in 1998, but the roots of takfirism remained.

The first radical movements in Macedonia begin to come in the years 1988-1989. Tabligh are the first missionaries and, after that, the beginning of the neo-Salafi movement in the early nineties. Here, too, the arrival is accompanied by the activities of charitable organizations, publications, scholarships for students to Arab countries. The first mujahedden appeared during the armed conflict in 2001. Takfirism appeared in 2005-2006 and it successfully penetrated in poor rural areas.

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27 Fred Abrahams, “Nga Shqipëria në Bosnjë: Vëllezërt kanë nevojë për armë” (1 June 2015), BalkanInsight at http://www.balkaninsight.com/al/article/nga-shqip%C3%ABria-n%C3%AB-bosnj%C3%AB-v%C3%ABllez%C3%ABbrit-kan%C3%AB-nevoj%C3%AB-p%C3%AB-br-arm%C3%AB/1431/64 (accessed 7 November 2016).
28 Ibid
30 Tabligh- Tablighi Jammat, a Sunni Islamic proselytizing and revivalist movement that focuses on urging Muslims to return to primary Sunni Islam, and particularly in matters of ritual, dress, and personal behavior. They encourage people to follow Islamic principles and the life of the prophet Muhammad. It was founded in the late 1920s by a Deobandi cleric.
31 Mujahedden- Mujahedden (pl. Mujahiddeen) is a Muslim fighter in religious war, especially those who are fighting against non-Muslim forces.
Everything in Kosovo began in 1992. We have the first imams returning from studies in Egypt. Until 1998, we only have small groupings. In contrast to Bosnia, in the Kosovo War, there are no mujaheddin.

In 2001, the first neo-Salafist NGO also entered Kosovo. It is during the first year that takfirim appears that, according to interviewed sources in 2007-2008, it completes its organizational structuring.

It is in this context that, over the years, Islamic institutions have lost credibility with the community of believers. In their eyes, they have become corrupt, incapable of dealing with religious matters, because they are too absorbed by power dynamics, weak, and institutionally indifferent to preventing the rise of the radical wing.

The word ‘Islamophobia’ means fear (phobia) of Islam. But ‘Islamophobia’ isn’t simply about ‘fear of Islam,’ this fear of Muslims’ religion plays an important role in engendering prejudice and fueling discrimination.”  

Paradoxical for countries with a predominantly Muslim population, this phenomenon is growing both in Albania and in Kosovo. We cannot say the same with regard to Macedonia. There, the problem is basically ethnic and national. Both Albania and Kosovo are secular States. Islamophobia in these countries is mainly fueled by an intellectual elite that is atheist, secular, and Eurocentric.

Since the beginning of the first years after the fall of the communist regime, Ismail Kadare suggested that the mosques should not be opened. An idea that continues to accompany the thought that “the opening of and increase in the number of mosques leads to radicalism and extremism”. In his pamphlet, “The European Identity for Albanians”, Kadare makes clear that Islam for Albania is a fatal historical accident and a major obstacle to the return of Albania into the “European family”. This position was articulated by former head of State, President Alfred Mojsiu, in a speech delivered in England in 2005, where he said that basically all Albanians are Christian and that Islam is a religion of “nested”, not historical, Albanians.

According to many, Islam is an inferior religion; one that does not share Western values, unable to advance because of its archaic and barbaric nature, a religion that supports violence and terrorism. The attack against Islam in these two countries aims to cede the autochthony of a majority of the population. Islamophobia in these two countries is combined with a strong feeling of Ottomanophobia (fear of Ottoman history, particularly Ottoman culture and legacy).

In recent years, when new forms and currents of Islam came to be part of the lives of believers, talk of ‘moderate Islam’ kept fomenting more confusion and division among the

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32 “Islamophobia: The Right Word for a Real Problem” (26 April 2016), Bridge Initiative Team at http://bridge.georgetown.edu/islamophobia-the-right-word-for-a-real-problem/ (accessed 8 November 2016)
33 Ismail Kadare, Identiteti Evropian i Shqiptareve (Onufri, 2006).
Muslim faithful. According to this principle, moderate Islam would be an invisible Islam: without a veil for women, no beard, no pants above the ankle, praying in enclosed spaces and invisible to the 'naked eye'. Once you leave this frame, it is very easy to be laughed at or labeled, thus making parts of the community feel isolated and marginalized.

**Wahhabism and Salafism**

Ideology seems to be one of the main factors in pushing radicalization, which is true, but that should not be isolated from all those factors we have outlined above.

“Wahhabism” is the term used for the doctrine of Muhammad ‘Abd al- Wahhab (1703-1792) and his followers.° Wahhabism emerged as a revivalist movement directed to the purification of the doctrine and later it rejected all western models. The very core of his teaching was made up of a concept of *tawhid* and its opposite *shirk*.°° Wahhabism was born as a political alliance of the emir Muhammad ibn al-Saud of the tribal clan of Saud with the religious reformer Saoud Al-Wahhab in 1744. The descendant of Abd’al-Wahhab created a religious dynasty, the al-Shaykh, with power over the religious establishment independent from the Al-Saud dynasty, who provided the political elite of the State.

Abd al Wahhab’s followers would rigorously propagate Islam and support the idea of *jihad* as a struggle for the true religion, expelling (takfir) the Muslims who resist it.°°° The Wahhabis describe themselves as *Muwahiddun* (unitarist), but “…the takfiri ideology …for which the Wahhabis became noted historically was not present in the foundational writings of the reform movement, suggesting that State formation and jihadist expansionism were not the central vision of the movement’s founder.”°°°°

Salafism is a neo-orthodox brand of Islamic reformism.°°°°° It derives from the term the pious forefathers (al-salaf al-salih), the first three generations of Muslims who had first-hand experience of the rise of Islam. Salafism preaches the return of the study of the basic sources of Islam: The Qur’an and the Sunna, rejects the following of the four *madhahab* (the four canonic law schools) and accepts *ijtihad*.°°°°°°

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°° Tawhid- is the indivisible oneness concept of monotheism in Islam. The God is One and Single.
°°° Shirk- In Islam is the sin of practicing idolatry or polytheism.
°°°°° Jihad- struggle, or religious war.
°°°°°° Serge Laffite, Chites et Sunnites, (Pion, 2007), p.15.
°°°°°°°° Sunna- the perfect habits and ways (words and acts) of the Prophet, transmitted from him in the ahadith.
°°°°°°°°° Ijtihad- individual interpretation of the two sources (Qur’an and hadiths) opposed to the following of one of the canonical schools of jurisprudence.
The term Salafism refers initially to a deep and sincere religious reformist movement that fought for the recovery of Islam and has almost nothing to do with what we now identify as Salafism. The authors were the Persian Jamal al Din Al Afghani (1839-97), the Egyptian Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) and the Syrian Rashid Rida (1865-1935). The movement is only later radicalized, with the weakening Ottoman Empire, the arrival of colonialism, and after the secular elite of the Arab countries attained power in the newborn States. Wahhabism differs in content from the Salafi reforms led by the first thinkers. While they were *scripturalists*, they were not *literalist* (differently from Wahhabism), trying to find all answers to life in the *Hadhit*,\(^44\) as al-Wahhab had done.\(^45\) In terms of their respective formation, Wahhabism and Salafism were quite distinct. Wahhabism rejected the modern influences, while Salafism sought to reconcile Islam with modernism. What they had in common is that both rejected traditional teachings on Islam in favor of direct, ‘fundamentalist’ reinterpretation.

While Saudi Arabia is usually characterized as exporting Wahhabism, it has in fact imported pan-Islamic Salafism, a conservative Islam from the doctrinal point of view.\(^46\) “From the early 1960s the Muslim World league and affiliated organizations began to spread Wahhabi ideology worldwide”\(^47\), distributing books and cassettes by Al-Banna, Qutb and other foreign Salafi luminaries, courted academics at Al-Azhar University, and inviting radical Salafis to teach at its own Universities.\(^48\) Saudi Arabia founded transnational organizations and headquartered them in the kingdom, but many of the guiding figures in these bodies were foreign Salafis. To the Wahhabi *ulama*\(^49\) were given all the financial means and institutional basis by which they might spread their ideology abroad.

Salafism is certainly not a unified movement and assumes the most diverse, contradictory, fragmented and ambivalent forms.\(^50\) Salafis are considered puritans in their practice of Islam. The word “Salafism” itself tells us very little in terms of policy choices.

Jihadi Salafism found its original inspiration in Sayd Qutb, but is much more highly politicized.\(^51\) Salafism’s political dimension adopts three forms: quietist and discrete, covert (professing quietism, but acting politically) and openly activist.\(^52\)

\(^44\) *Hadith* (pl.ahadithe), tradition or saying of the Prophet Muhammad. The hadith make up the Sunna.
\(^47\) Guido Steinberg, “Jihadi-Salafism and the Shi‘is: Remarks about the intellectual” in Global Salafism, pp.115-116.
\(^49\) *Ulama* - religious scholars
\(^51\) Roel Meijer, “Introduction”, in Global Salafism, (Roel Meijer), p.25.
\(^52\) Ibid, p.17.
The political actors labeled as Salafi “…constitute a politically very heterogeneous group. It includes actors who between themselves have diametrically opposing views on crucial political issues. Alleged Salafis include bitter enemies of the Saudi regime […] on the other hand apologists like the official Saudi ‘ulama…”\textsuperscript{53} The problem then with the term Salafism is that it is a theological, not a political category. It is difficult to analyze all the actors labeled as Salafist as part of one single Salafi movement.\textsuperscript{54}

Jihadi-Salafism includes three branches: the first originated in Egypt from the radical faction of the Muslim Brotherhood; the second originated from the neo-Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia, and the third derives from Palestine. The latter consists of the trio of Abdallah Azzam, Umar Abu Qatada and Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, the spiritual father of the fusion between the Wahhabi \textit{tawhid}\textsuperscript{55} and the violent \textit{takfiri} jihad.\textsuperscript{56}

The principle of \textit{takfir} by excommunicating not only infidels, but every Muslim who does not follow the Jihadi-Salafi doctrine, comes from here. The concept of social justice of Sayyid Qutb is replaced by that of the violent jihad. This jihadi thought has no connection either with the initial Salafi reformist thinking, even with the Salafi Puritans today. Within the same al Qaeda there are two schools of thought: the first school of Al Maqdisi and Al Tartusi is opposed to the second school of violent jihad (the one of the Saudi Jihadi-Salafi scholars), which is called the “Zarqawi doctrine” - indiscriminate violence against everyone who does not support Jihadi-Salafism.\textsuperscript{57}

The followers of radical jihadism have no Interest in calling themselves Salafi. For their part, Saudi jihadists to which most of the responsibility is given, represent post-national non-state actors, reflecting the unresolved tension and troubled relationship between religion and politics in Saudi Arabia.\textsuperscript{58} The current Saudi State, founded in 1932, remains contested by the Saudi Salafi Jihadist. Its creation is attributed to an illegitimate relationship with Britain and as a corruption.\textsuperscript{59}

\textbf{Kharijites e Takfir}

\textit{Takfirisim} in the modern political context of excommunication is essentially a theological or ideological manoeuvre to ostracise other Muslims. They invoke the Kharijites doctrine. “Assured of their own religious purity, the Kharijites judged other Muslims - those outside the

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid, pp.250-251.
\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Tawhid} - unity of God
\textsuperscript{56} Reuven Paz, “Debates within the Family”, in Global Salafism (Roel Meijer ed), p.269.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid, p.278.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, p.309.
Kharijite fold - as unworthy of the name of Muslim and set about creating, through violence, an ideal community of the saved".  

The Kharijites refer to "those that seceded". After the murder of Caliph Uthman, a relative of Uthman, the Umayyad Moawiya ibn Abi Sufyan, then governor of Syria, accused Ali and his supporters of killing Uthman. After Ali agreed to be the Caliph, the aristocracy of Mecca instigated a series of revolts against him. The most violent was the one organized by Moawiya, which refused to recognize Ali as the fourth Caliph. The arbitration of the conflict favored the Mowaiya party, a decision that caused the first split between the followers of Ali: 12,000 broke away from the faction loyal to Ali, accusing him of weakness, and began to fight him by creating the movement that was called the Kharijites, the first political radical group within Islam. The Caliph Ali died in Kufa, a stronghold of his party, due to the wound of a poisoned sword, during an ambush organized by a group of Kharijites.  

"...[B]y pronouncing Ali and the Umayyad Caliphs unbelievers (takfir), the Kharijites introduced this notion into the discourse on social life of early Islam."  

The Kharijites Doctrine was always present in history and it remains always latent in history, especially in the memory of the Egyptians and the Islamic scholars, and it is used only in such moments of political conflict. 

The word takfir or kharajit is actually used by the majority of Muslims who do not share their ideology and has a pejorative connotation within the same community. Many testimonies tell us “takfirs justify robbery and theft (e.g., I stole from that person as he did not pray). Takfirs do not refer to the ancient scholars, but the new ones - a clear testimony of the disdain that the community has for the Takfirs.

Process of radicalization and the path to extremism

Based on what we have described, radicalization is the process of developing extremist ideologies and beliefs. Radicalization is marked by the articulation between a radical ideological vision and relentless will to carry it out. So we can clearly make a distinction between extremist ideology and extremist action.

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60 Jeffrey T. Kenney, Muslim Rebels: Kharijities and the politics of extremism in Egypt (Oxford University Press, 2006) p.4.
62 Jeffrey T. Kenney, Muslim Rebels: Kharijities and the politics of extremism in Egypt, p.3.
63 Ibid, p.4.
64 Interviews by the author with members of the Islamic community in the three countries that are the subject of this chapter.
65 Farhad Khosrokhavar, Radicalisation, p.21.
While all the interviewees⁶⁶ refer to radicalization as an individual process that is long and dynamic, violent extremism appears to be a short process, individual, and in the majority of cases difficult to understand.

In the Albanian reality, the individual keeps finding himself facing a dichotomous state media: white and black. This leads to frustration. Adding the marginalization within the metropolis, a certain lack of social standing, lack of employment opportunities, Islamophobic propaganda, lack of education, and we have people who feel humiliated and victimized. The initials changes of the person who is radicalized are imperceptible. He begins to change his way of thinking, his friendships; starts researching the internet, reading religious literature that most attracts him. In his private life, he gets isolated and becomes more aware of social differences. He changes his congregation and approaches everything by self-isolation. He holds contrasting positions with those of his previous group where he could not integrate, or his own family members.He fails to understand himself and to understand others. His knowledge of religion is very limited. He takes everything as excuses for his personal frustrations, feelings and grievances. His new Islamic identity gives him self-respect that he feels society has taken away from him. The individual seems to take control of his life and to become decisive. In reality, he has a sense of inferiority toward society and the rebellion is against a world that denies you, and you have not access to a life worthy of being lived.

Entering into religion is easy, the problem is to leave it behind because it becomes a personal problem. Starting from what you read, self-approach, the imam. The influence of the friends you choose to round with plays a big role. We read together only in Albanian. For us, Islam is one religion. What is important is meeting the preacher. The internet has something, but the preacher has more. Religion makes you stronger, makes you feel powerful. The very fact that you consider each other brothers empowers you in a special and euphoric way.⁶⁷

In radicalization, the effect of being part of a community is extremely important. The trends are based on clandestinity and group dynamics. The principle is the inclination to find an environment free of competition. One goes looking for peers, and those who think like him, because only in that way does he feel protected and equal. The violent action mode may become more attractive because the group loses a sense of reality in isolation. In religious practice, extremism develops within a strong, closed circle of a powerful religious group which acts on the basis of an overarching ideology. Clearly not all sectarian groups become

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⁶⁶ The author relies on a large number of interviews with members of the Islamic community of the three countries and Muslim intellectuals, as well as to some people back from the war camps in Syria and Iraq.

⁶⁷ Author’s interview with a foreign fighter.
violent and not all its members are radicalized. But if all of radicalization’s ingredients are there, the fact they are confined together can favor the transition to violence.\textsuperscript{68} Religion is easier for them: I am right, you are wrong! Everything prescribed: halal/haram (permitted/forbidden)! Not being able to think more deeply, they turn to extremism. Islamization is seen as a form of protection, amounting to a distortion of religion.

“Radicalization is a constant process that develops over time, while the decision to leave is almost instantaneous. Basically, I like war, everything before the departure is a particular emotion. From the moment you decide, everything is fast. You decide to leave for the values of this world and the one beyond\textsuperscript{69}. Travel to Syria and Iraq is linked to the concepts of \textit{hijrah}\textsuperscript{70}, jihad and \textit{shahid}\textsuperscript{71}. Here you have the element of religious conscience, and religious clergy play a key role here. The radicalized choose the Imam who, in turn, influences the selection and interpretation of his readings. From the interviews, it seems that the scholars most often referred to by the imams for their interpretation of Jihad are Ibn Taymiyyah and the Pakistani Abul Ala Mawdudi. The imam is the central figure to give them the conviction of being on the right path of Islam, and that what they do is the best choice. Videos, YouTube, the internet all reinforce this path. Jihad becomes the sixth pillar\textsuperscript{72} for them, an individual obligation. If this religion does not permit suicide, then they commit suicide by legitimizing the \textit{shahid}. Their sacrifice is seen as a mission for the Islamic cause. Jihad and martyrdom have a semantic continuity with the past, but actually take on new meanings in modern times. Jihad and sacrifice give a meaning to his life and so even to his death. Death in that way is not a simple suicide, but a suicide that has a special meaning to him. Therefore, the external factor becomes important in maintaining legitimacy. They need to be seen as defenders of the cause, and so they act. It does not matter how negative; he sells himself as a hero falling in battle. The caliphate is like a promised land for them, the life for an imaginary, egalitarian and absolute society. They have the illusion that DAESH/ISIL is providing them with more opportunities for life.

\textbf{Foreign Fighters (FFs) from the 3 countries}

There are three stages of development of the situation in which persons from the three States move toward jihadism.

1. The first phase, or the beginning (2011 – most of 2012) is when the war in Syria is seen as a war for democracy and freedom from the dictatorship. A wide range of people become involved initially as mercenaries, persons associated with

\textsuperscript{68} Farhad Khosrokhavar. Radicalisation, pp.23-24.
\textsuperscript{69} Author’s interview with a foreign fighter turned back from Iraq.
\textsuperscript{70} \textit{Hijrah} - the migration of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina to escape persecution a.d. 622
\textsuperscript{71} \textit{Shahid} - martyr, who dies in \textit{Jihad}.
\textsuperscript{72} There are actually only five pillars of Islam: Shahada – Faith; Salat – Prayer; Zakat – Charity; Sawm – Fasting; Hajj – Pilgrimage to Mecca.
those who had fought with the KLA in Kosovo or who had been in Bosnia. Here, the role of the media is very important and has a big impact. The media emphasize the solidarity of the Albanian and Kosovan governments with the Syrian people in their revolution against the dictator Assad, often making comparisons with the dictatorial period in Albania with Milosevic, leading to Kosovo’s war. The gory images of Syrian government shelling, the use of chemical weapons in Ghoutta against innocent civilians reinforce the idea of Sunni persecution. At this stage, we are still in the moment where jihad is perceived as a struggle for freedom and democracy. Religious and humanitarian feelings are intermingled in those who leave to fight in Syria. Those who leave in this period are mainly from Kosovo and Macedonia.

2. The second phase is the period from the end of 2012 to the beginning of 2013. At this stage, poverty plays a crucial role, i.e. “we have nothing to lose”. Jihad is not yet the main motivation. The imams themselves started to tell Albanians not to go to Syria to fight because it is not a religious obligation to go to a foreign land for war. Nearly 40 people have returned disappointed. Initially they went to fight for the Free Syrian Army, then for Al Nusra which was cooperating from the beginning with DAESH/ISIL. Clusters created division and infighting and frustration among those who came.

3. The third phase, 2013/2014, involves religiously radicalized people directly influenced by radical Takfirism. The Takfir imams in this phase has direct influence and they are almost leading this stage. DAESH/ISIL propaganda, the Internet, and its achievements in the field at this stage have a very big impact on the recruitment of the jihadist. At this stage, we are dealing with “total jihad”.

The ones who go have no tradition of Islam, but religious preparation for about two years. They are convinced that the true Islam is what they are being taught and they have taken their path towards paradise. The imam is the main figure of recruitment. The internet is used, but is an associative element of the imam’s preaching. The imam’s influence is even greater among uneducated poor youngsters, with a criminal record, who have problems in their families and internal frustrations. There is also a contingent of those who leave with their entire family. In these cases, religious belief is absolute. They are applying the hijrah.

Albania
The figures given are 83 FFs and, in addition, 32 members of their families (elderly, wives and children) - a total of 115 people, including 30 who are currently active in combat, 13 who have died, and 40 who have returned home. The age range of those who go to battle is between 20 and 45 years. Nearly 45% of the fighters had a criminal record before leaving. In
November 2016, in Shkoder, four people were arrested on suspicion of collaboration and recruitment of persons to go to Syria in support of DAESH/ISIL.\textsuperscript{73}

\textit{Kosovo}

According to official sources, there are 340 individuals who went mainly to Syria but also to Iraq, of which almost 52 have died and 130 are back. The numbers change slightly from month to month. The age range of those who go to battle is between 20 and 35. Here the official sources do not give an exact figure on the proportion who had a criminal record before leaving. After a long period of silence, in September 2016, a television channel (not an official source) reported that there are seventeen new departures and, in October 2016, seven people were arrested and accused of organizing a terrorist attack in Kosovo on order of Lavdrim Muhaxheri, one of DAESH/ISIL’s leaders of Kosovar origin.\textsuperscript{74}

\textit{Macedonia}

It is said that there are 100 FFs who left for Syria and Iraq, 18-20 dead, and 10 returnees. 70\% of them have a criminal record. The age of the fighters who have left is between 19 and 50 years. Most of the returnees are UN prisoners.

The law in the penal code on persons who go to wars in foreign countries exists in Albania and Macedonia since 2014 and in Kosovo since 2015.

As for gender, from Albania and Macedonia, women basically follow their husbands. There are four women who went from Macedonia, 32 from Kosovo, and more or less 30 from Albania. Single women have left Kosovo to join DAESH/ISIL and its \textit{Shari’a} police (the Brigade Al Khansaa) that monitors women’s morality. Women are often used to make propaganda for recruitment through social networks.

Foreign fighters generally travel by land from Greece to Turkey, or via Macedonia or Bulgaria. To a certain extend it might seem easy to enter these countries because there is no need for visas, however there are identity checks of the national authorities in place. The alternative is to fly directly from one of the three airports (Tirana, Pristina, Skopje) to Turkey. Those who leave to join DAESH/ISIL or Al Nusra always have a contact that connects them from within the organization and an imam in the country of origin who recruited them and acts as a guarantor, providing the money needed for the journey. The family has no role in recruiting and has nothing to do with the dynamics that characterize the recruiting

\textsuperscript{73} “Rekrutonin luftetare per te ISIS, kater te arrestuar ne Shkoder” (5 November 2016), Shqiptarja at http://shqiptarja.com/m/aktualitet/rekrutonin-luft-tar--p-r-isis-kat-r-t--arrestuar-n--shkod-r-383904.html (accessed 8 November 2016).

organizations. The path to jihadist radicalization is completely individual and, in some cases, a radicalized individual can then try and recruit his brother or father as well. The money is mostly passed from hand to hand, through simple couriers or businessmen, but they are very faithful and loyal people. The guarantee is given only by the imams, who are the link with the DAESH/ISIL organization. Without it, you cannot enter Syria.

The Takfiri imams who recruit for DAESH/ISIL or Al Nusra are actually few in number. According to Institutional sources in the three countries, they are as follows:

**Albania**

Genci Abdurahman Balla (imam of the mosque "Unaza e re" in Tirana), along with another eight imams who were convicted of recruiting and financing terrorist activities. Genci Balla first studied in Jordan and later went to Damascus, from where he was expelled. Then he went to the University of Medina, where he wanted to complete a Master’s, but was also expelled from Saudi Arabia because of suspected takfirism. Before he went to Egypt, Bujar Hysa (imam at the mosque Yzberisht in Tirana) had begun his studies in Damascus, but did not conclude them. Other imams are Gerti Pashja and Kreshnik Cili in Cerrik. Almir Daci, who is now in Syria, has recruited many fighters in the Leshnica Mosque in Pogradec.

**Kosovo**

Zeqirja Qazimi of Gjilan (now in prison) and Ridvan Haqifi, imam of a mosque in Gjilan, who is now in Syria as emir for Albanians. Both recruiters have a religious education. Recruitment in Kosovo was done through the associations Nektari H.E, Rinia Islame in Kacanik and Rinia Islame in Gjilan.

**Macedonia**

Rexhep Memishi of the "Tutunsez" mosque went to study Arabic, but he did not study theology because he was expelled. He is currently in prison.) at the "Tutunsez" mosque (actually in Prison). This imam is one of the first to start creating a takfirist network across Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania. Imam Omer Bajrami (with education in theology) of the Abdul Kader Alban mosque in Skopje and Abdyl Fuga (he did not study theology) of the Vizbeg mosque are suspected to have arranged departures to Al Nusra Front.

In Albania, the most sensitive areas in terms of FFs are: Tirana, Kavaje, Cerrik, Elbasan, Pogradec, Librazhd, Bulqize, Peshkopi and lately Shkoder.

In Kosovo, the epicenter of the jihadism is in Mitrovica and surroundings, in the Gjilan El-Kuddus mosque with the villages in the surrounding area, Hani Elezit, Kaçaniku and Vushtrina.

In Macedonia, the departure areas of the jihadists have mainly focused on Skopje, in the neighborhoods of Gazi Babe, Seraj and Cair.
The level of education of people from all three countries varies. In most cases, it is very low and in many cases, we are dealing with functional illiteracy. The recruits come from poor and abandoned areas where the state basically does not exist.

In different percentages, from 45% in Albania to 70% in Macedonia, they have criminal records. Albanians are more jihadist rather than suicide bombers. For them, the concept of martyrdom seems to be more related to the hero fallen in the battlefield rather than as a suicide bomber. The only Albanian suicide bombers among DAESH/ISIL are three from Kosovo and four from Macedonia. According to our respondents in the communities we studied, those who go to fight for Al Nusra observe shari’a more than those who go to fight for DAESH/ISIL.

The reasons why some come back from Syria and Iraq are:
- disappointment with the way they were treated by DAESH/ISIL;
- war fatigue;
- a perception that they would never have an opportunity to join the battlefield because they were kept on the sidelines at training grounds;
- ethnic and racial discrimination between fighters of different origins;
- being wounded and returning home to be cared for within families;
- other family reasons.

The categories of those who returned are divided into three groups:
- Those who renounce the ideology (repentant, deradicalized);
- those who regret having gone to war (disengagement) but still believe in the cause (they are still radicalized and often punish themselves for the weakness shown by returning);
- those who remain radicalized and have returned with assigned tasks (carrying on the fight at home).

**Conclusions**

Manipulation and indoctrination certainly have a role in radicalization and violent extremism, but they are not the only factors and it is important to understand the process. Otherwise, the risk is to impugn an entire community for their ideas and choice of religious practices, creating enemies and pushing them into a clandestine network. As Olivier Roy states: "I simply say that this fundamentalism is not enough to produce violence."\(^{75}\)

The factors driving this move towards violence are numerous and multifaceted. Economic, sociological, and psychological functioning are interrelated. If they are analyzed separately, the results of the analysis will be artificial.

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\(^{75}\) Olivier Roy, Le Dijhad et la mort (Debats) (Kindle edition, 2016) loc. 171.
We are faced with weak States in transition that are unable to build a real State system. Corruption, crime, low level of education, a dysfunctional and corrupt health system and judicial system, stigmatization, hatred and ethnic marginalization are all on the agenda. Radicalization, the need to radicalize religion and the motivation of violent reactions stem from a combination of personal weaknesses, frustrations, prohibition, a legitimized propaganda of Islamophobia, feelings of inferiority, failures in one's personal life, marginalization.

The Salafists, or what are called Wahhabis, represent the various currents of the new neo-fundamentalism or neo-Salafism that still represent a minority. They do not want to be labeled as “Salafis”, “Wahhabis”, “Takfiris” etc. and they are divided among themselves. The ideological doctrines they claim are different. It is a broad movement, complex and very unstable.

The new fundamentalism wants to make a clean sweep, rejecting Sufism, the division between the major schools of law; it does not recognize Shiites as Muslims, and rejects any form of integration.

This neo-fundamentalism, de-territorialized and de-cultural by definition, adapts very well to globalization, which explains its success. “Salafism is the negation of cultural Islam that is the Islam of their parents and of their roots. Instead of providing them with roots, Salafism glorifies their own deculturation and makes them feel better ‘Muslims’ than their parents. Salafism is the religion by definition of a disenfranchised youngster”.

The construction of new and different styles of mosques, new practices in the daily lives of believers, the spread of this neo-Salafism should not be considered as the antechamber of the transition to violent extremism. But the spread of neo-Salafism cannot be totally exonerated. The rigid and violent language, the close-mindedness, the hatred of Shiites and Sufism, the arrogance, the ultra-conservatism, the violence against thinking differently, the stuffy and violent vision against women, all features in common with the Jihadi-Salafist school of thought, create what are essentially social problems. However, they also constitute the ideological environment, since individuals who in their quest for identity and fulfillment choose the path of jihad and violent extremism feel at ease with this religious backdrop, this particular vision of Islam.

Such a challenge can trigger debates among different currents within the Muslim community. While political radicalization is a collective responsibility and task of societal institutions, of

76 Olivier Roy, Le Croissant et le Chaos (Hachette Littératures, 2006), p.73.
civil society, elites and intellectuals, radicalization in religion can only be fought and resolved by the Islamic community, the Muslims themselves. The debate is an internal debate and any outsider would not have the credibility to do it.

The definition of islamophobia by the institutions themselves is of a crucial importance. Fighting islamophobia is not merely a human rights issue, but also a strategic choice to built safer societies.

For the security forces, arrests are necessary, but only at a final stage, and where the rule of law prevails in providing evidence of crimes as defined in the Penal Code. Mass arrests and closures of associations or non-governmental organizations in Kosovo without clear evidence have shown that they are only counterproductive in the fight against violent Islamist extremism.

Having said that, however, we must remember that Islam cannot be more progressive than the society in which it exists and the average education of the clergy is not greater than that of the society. They go hand in hand. All these three States are secular, despite the flow of different Islamic or Christian currents. Laicism of the State is never questioned. The societies are conservative, but secularism is non-negotiable.

The radicalization trend will likely increase over time, unlike the jihadist trend that now seems to be contained. Conferences against radicalization that have been organized in the Balkan countries have not yet led to any decrease in the phenomenon. They are not credible in the face of an Islamic audience attracted by fundamentalism.

Albania, along with Croatia, Slovenia and Bulgaria, are NATO members; Kosovo, Macedonia and Bosnia aspire to become such, while Montenegro is in the process of joining the organization. NATO's post-Cold War evolution has been strongly influenced by events in the Balkans. For the Alliance, the area -especially the Western Balkans- remains a region of special concern78. Terrorism and violent Islamist extremism pose a threat to the security and stability of the people and the countries. The threat of terrorism can come from "lone wolves", who may act alone or as directed by DAESH/ISIL cells, as well as from networks that act according to specific orders from DAESH/ISIL in Iraq or Syria. Nevertheless, among the most important implications is the recruitment for the cause of jihad, not only in the Balkans but in other European countries as well. Also of concern is the possible close ties with organized crime organizations, which facilitate the weapons trade. Weapons from the '90s wars continue to circulate, and Serbia is still one of the biggest manufacturers. Several weapons that were used by the jihadists in the terrorist attacks of November 2015 in Paris, were produced in the factory of Kragujevac, Serbia.

78 NATO Warsaw Summit Communiqué, July 2016, 107
Bearing in mind that the different countries in the region live in unstable political situations, under weak Governments and security institutions, and are stretched thin by economic crisis, war, political infighting and corruption, one of the greatest dangers is the potential use of these radicalized people (with or without war experience) to create political or ethnic instability as a means of furthering hidden national and international agendas. This the main reason why an understanding of the phenomenon by governments, and consequently the choice of appropriate measures, remains a strategic need for the Balkan area.

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Safety and Security Assessment in Albania to Prevent Terrorist Attack on Radioactive Waste Facilities: Lessons Learned

Luan Qafmolla

Abstract
Substantial progress has been made in improving safety and security for nuclear material worldwide, both by states’ own domestic actions and through international cooperation. Terrorist groups have continuously expressed interest in unleashing radiological terrorism by building and using radiological dispersal devices (RDDs), known as “dirty bombs”. Since 1998, a special centralized building exists in Albania for radioactive waste management and temporary storage facility situated inside the Institute of Applied Nuclear Physics (IANP) territory. Conditioned radioactive waste, with or without shielding, was successively placed into this building for long-term storage.

So far, worldwide, there have been several incidents with terrorism potential that have involved nuclear waste materials and radioactive materials and their repository facilities, which may be targets of terrorist attack. Depleted uranium (DU) was also feared to have been the cause of widespread environmental contamination in the Balkans, especially in populated areas and border regions of our countries.

In fact, the perfect safety and security system does not exist, but Albanian authorities tend to be merely reactive, plugging exposed gaps in the system, while often neglecting other gaps. Lessons learned in other countries suggest a layered system approach that puts multiple barriers in place to lessen the likelihood of a radiological terror act. An integrated security system means that adequate layers of safety and security protect every stage of a high-risk radioactive source’s lifecycle “from cradle to grave”. In Albania, all the above-mentioned steps are strictly followed, in order to prevent any undesirable episode with nuclear/radioactive materials.

Key words: radioactive sources and waste, terrorist attack, dirty bomb, safety and security process.

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Introduction
Since 1998, a special centralized facility exists in Albania for radioactive waste management and temporary storage, situated inside the territory of the Institute of Applied Nuclear Physics (IANP), as well as a radiopharmaceutical laboratory that was established at the same time. Conditioned radioactive waste, with or without shielding, was successively placed in the drum until an activity of about 20 GigaBecquerel (GBq) was reached. The conditioning process consists of placing radioactive material into a safety and security package so that it does not pose a threat to occupational staff who work with this material, as well as not to contaminate the environment for a long period and thus endanger future generations. This conditioning process marks an important milestone for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other national and international radiation protection organizations. Using this established procedure, large amounts of radioactive material used in research, industry, medicine, and the military are stored in safety and security packages - after they are conditioned as low-level and intermediate-level radioactive waste - at the interim storage facility at the IANP.

The design of these facilities was intended for temporary storage of significantly smaller amounts of radioactive material, as well as Spent High Activity Radiation Sources (SHARS), which are usually used in tele-therapy devices, semi-industrial irradiators, and in radioisotope thermoelectric generators, such as $^{60}\text{Co}$, $^{137}\text{Cs}$ and $^{90}\text{Sr}$, reaching activity of several thousand GBq.

Factors determining the security risk of a type of radioactive source include prevalence of use, radioactivity content, portability, and dispersibility. Generally, the more prevalent, radioactive, portable, and dispersible a source, the greater the security risks it presents. For example, cesium chloride containing relatively large amounts of radioactive cesium-137 isotope ($^{137}\text{Cs}$), and consisting of an easily dispersible powder, would definitely be categorized as a high-security compound. If this material were also housed inside a portable container, a thief or terrorist could easily seize and transport the radioactive source if adequate security measures were absent. Terrorist groups have continuously expressed interest in unleashing radiological terrorism. A conventional attack on a nuclear facility, research reactor, nuclear power plant, or radioactivity disposal facility might be attempted by a terrorist group, resulting in the release of a large amount of radiation and the creation of psychological terror.

The radioisotopes of greatest security concern include those produced in reactors, such as americium-241, californium-252, cesium-137, cobalt-60, iridium-192, plutonium-238, and
strontium-90, as well as those that occur naturally, such as radium-226. These are the most dangerous materials for use in a radiological dispersal device (RDD), known colloquially as a “dirty bomb”. An RDD or “dirty bomb” is a hypothetical radiological weapon that combines radioactive material with conventional explosives. The purpose of such a device would be to contaminate the surrounding area (a city, for example) by means of a conventional explosion with radioactive material, serving primarily to create a no-go area for civilians. However, an RDD should not be confused with a nuclear explosion, like an atomic bomb, where the release of nuclear energy produces the blast. An RDD is designed to disperse radioactive material over a large area - a bomb that uses conventional explosives and produces a blast wave more lethal to people than the hazard posed by any radioactive material that might be mixed with the explosive.

Considering the most likely sources of radioactivity for a “dirty bomb”, the radiation levels created from the detonation of such a device would not be enough to cause severe illness or death. Depending on the sophistication of the bomb, wind conditions, and the speed with which the area of the attack was evacuated, the number of deaths and injuries from a dirty bomb explosion might not be substantially greater than from a conventional bomb explosion. However, the evacuation measures, coupled with widespread fear of radioactivity, could paralyze a city. Moreover, the area struck would be off-limits for at least several months or even years during cleanup efforts. This could, in turn, paralyze the local economy and reinforce public fears about being near a radioactive area. The decontamination of thousands of victims, as well as the affected area, might require considerable time and expense, rendering areas partly unusable and causing economic damage and impact.

All this raises serious concerns that nation states need to address with further research:

- *Is radiation always dangerous?*
- *How do we protect ourselves?*
- *Could terrorist groups unleash another Chernobyl or Fukushima catastrophe?*
- *Could nuclear waste dumps or power plants be transformed into atomic weapons by terrorists?*
- *Could terrorists make a “dirty bomb” capable of widespread contamination and cause the death of people from radiation?*
There have been several potential terrorist incidents worldwide that involved nuclear waste materials and radioactive materials and their repository facilities, which have been targeted by terrorists. During the Chechen conflict, for example, Russian soldiers may have pilfered radioactive material and sold it on the black market\(^2\) to terrorists planning to build a "dirty bomb" and who have demonstrated readiness to use such material against civilians in populated areas such as apartment buildings or social housing complexes. For instance, in December 1999, two 200-litre barrels containing radioactive sources and high-level waste were found in the region of Gudermans. Also, in April 2001, two strong, spent-radiation sources were found in the courtyard of a secondary school in Grozny. In Belgium, in March 2016, two workers at a nuclear power plant left for Syria to join DAESH/ISIL, leading to fears that DAESH/ISIL now has the knowledge to mount an attack on the plant, either to blow it up and cause a meltdown or to steal nuclear material.

**Establishing a layered and integrated safety and security system**

Perfect safety and security systems do not exist, but Albanian authorities tend to be merely reactive by plugging exposed gaps in the system while often neglecting other gaps. The establishment of a Layered and Integrated Safety and Security System is an important milestone for protection against terrorist attack. A layered system means that multiple barriers are put in place to lessen the likelihood of a radiological terror act. Added layers would frustrate terrorists’ attempts to break through the security system. An integrated security system means that adequate layers of safety and security protect every stage of a high-risk radioactive source’s lifecycle from cradle to grave. This lifecycle begins with radioisotope production in research reactors, accelerators or radiopharmaceutical laboratories, etc., as a first stage, continuing with their transport at end users in an application, such as food irradiation, medical instrument sterilization, cancer treatment at a hospital, industrial radiography, scientific research at a university, etc.

In our centralized facility at the IANP, some tenth-conditioned drums with radioactive sources and waste are stored. We have some pieces of \(^{137}\text{Cs}\), conditioned by hospitals, each with an initial activity of \(A_t= 0.55\text{ GBq}\). A manual brancytherapy device with five \(^{137}\text{Cs}\) of spent sources,

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with a total activity $\text{At}= 18.5 \text{ GBq}$, was also conditioned. A spent $^{60}\text{Co}$ tele-therapy source with $\text{At}= 92.5 \text{ TBq}$ was conditioned and stored in a repository facility in December 2006.

Today, the geopolitical situation in the region has changed drastically and some Cold War security stereotypes have been overcome. When we speak of fundamental issues such as the safety and security of critical infrastructure, including nuclear power plants (NPPs) or waste disposal facilities for radioactive waste (WSPs), intelligence collection is now focused on threats common to all countries of the Balkan region, as opposed to collecting intelligence on neighboring countries. In accordance with our national strategic orientation, Albania has taken a proactive role by supporting the EU, NATO, the IAEA, the U.S. Department of Energy, and other international organizations, in all issues pertaining to the challenges facing counter-terrorism, especially in the area of critical infrastructure protection (CIP), including nuclear and radioactive material facilities.

Albania’s centralized waste management facility that was built in 1998 at the IANP was based on the IAEA’s reference design for such components facilities. The Technical Cooperation with ALB/4/008 IAEA Project, entitled “Upgrading of Radioactive Waste Management in Albania”, was developed during the years 2003-2004. In this period, an IAEA mission identified the need for equipment designed to improve the waste management processes in that facility.

In our centralized radioactive waste management facility, all entries to the operations, storage and disposal areas of the building are protected with security locks, PIN codes, and magnetic panels. These areas also have alarm systems that are connected to the central alarm system at the main safeguard building. In the IANP, there is a fire brigade with radiation-protection training that is on duty during working hours. Outside of working hours, police are present on the site.

**Continuing Challenges**

1) The radioactive waste management Lab & Interim Storage Facility is the main centralized site/center for processing and storage of radioactive materials and wastes in the entire country. This facility needs to be integrated into a secure infrastructure and system;

2) The procedures to secure spent high-radiation sources, or indeed any other radioactive material stored in this facility, often requires the use of highly paid, specially trained staff. In the Albanian context, staff needs to be upgraded and training improved to ensure greater security;
3) The infrastructure at Albania’s borders for monitoring smuggling and illicit trafficking of radioactive material or spent-radiation sources from neighboring countries such as Kosovo, Montenegro or Macedonia is limited, but the threat of a terrorist attack is constant. The broader challenge of strengthening our borders in conformity with EU, NATO, and IAEA recommendations is increasingly related to this issue;

4) There is a need for a strengthened regional infrastructure, including Albanian territory, to help solve the problems associated with discarded or spent sealed radioactive sources that may arise during or after a terrorist attack. Implementation needs to involve all countries in the region.

A safety assessment for the IANP facility and for the planned waste storage operations was undertaken. The potential impacts of waste management at this facility on workers and the public was assessed. The safety assessment also addressed aspects of engineering, as well as what management regime was required for the safe operation of the facility.3 To perform this assessment the following topics were addressed:

- Assessment of whether the facility is in general suitable for safe waste management;
- Assessment of the potential hazards to workers and to the general public;
- Evaluation of the safety of the present system (building, characteristics, used material, etc.) and of the planned waste management operations, based on international specialized organization requirements and the identification of possible deficiencies.

Temporary Storage Facility for Radioactive Waste in the IANP

The dimensions of this building are 16 x 17 x 3.20 meters and it contains the following areas:

- waste reception area for checking the type of waste and their documentation;
- two decay-storage areas for solid waste and spend radioactive sources;
- operational area for the storage of the delivered waste prior to its conditioning;
- operating area for the conditioning of the waste;
- Manipulation and storage area for cement, gravel, sand, iron bars, water deposit.
The temporary storage area of conditioned radioactive waste, stored in 200-litre drums, has dimensions 16 x 7 x 3.20 meters. 200-litre standard conditioned drums are stored here and this area is foreseen to be fully filled in about 2030.

The facility has a solid concrete construction, with outside walls of a thickness between 20 and 40 cm. All main entrances to the facility are protected with double security locks. There exists an alarm system, which is monitored by cameras at the main entrance of the Center by a police guard. The three adjacent buildings are the neutron generator, which is 10 meters away, and the Van de Graf accelerator and the Food Irradiator 137Cs source, both of which are 20 meters away. These two latter buildings have reinforced concrete structures.

Behind the fences of the IANP is a residential area. The closest buildings are 60-80 meters away. The fence separating these buildings from the site has a height of two meters, but requires security improvements.

The seismicity of the IANP site as measured on the 12-level MSK-64 scale is VII (very strong), so that potential severe impacts from earthquakes can be avoided by an adequate design of the building structure. The waste management facility has been designed for the VIII\textsuperscript{th} degree of seismic intensity on the MSK-64 scale (damaging); therefore no detrimental impacts from earthquakes are to be expected. In addition, there are no faults close to the site and geotechnical conditions are appropriate. There are no major industries in the vicinity of the site that pose a risk of explosion. Railway lines are over 10 kilometres away, while the airport is more than 20 kilometres away, so there is sufficient distance from the transportation network.

Police guard the IANP site 24 hours per day, seven days a week (24/7) and visitors are checked and accompanied by the staff of the Centre. At night, two policemen are on duty. Exposures from incidents and accidents will be addressed in emergency response planning, ensuring that adequate responses are taken.

Security technologies and systems must be evaluated in terms of current and long-term impacts. Security technology has a very important role in creating more secure facilities and we need to invest precious resources in greater physical protection and better protection of our vital information system. Although these challenges appear daunting, prioritizing security improvements of high-risk radioactive sources will make great strides toward reducing the risk of an RDD attack by terrorists.
Recommendations

In addressing the safe operation of waste processing and storage, some recommendations for further development of the waste management concept are in order. These recommendations are derived from the assessment of the current situation and of the plans for further development of strategies and procedures:

a) Although a substantial degree of physical protection is provided in the current situation, improvements should be considered. An important step would be to install a new sound and light alarm system, which would notify the guards of any attempt to enter the waste storage building. The physical security of the waste storage building should also be integrated into the planned project to upgrade the physical protection of the IANP.

b) Appropriating the main facilities into the IANP territory should be included in the existing emergency plans of the Albanian government.

c) There should be effective global cooperation and information sharing regarding threats and risk assessments with, for example, NATO and regional safety and security organizations. This could be an efficient form of critical infrastructure protection, including the protection of nuclear power plants or waste storage facilities from a large-scale terrorist attack.

d) Through developing emergency plan procedures, gathering new knowledge, and better comprehension of new vulnerability assessment methodologies, effective countermeasures could reduce the likelihood of high-impact events and, in the case of actual incidents, reduce the level of harm. These include:

1. Intelligent, timely, and tested preventive actions to reduce the probability of a terrorist attack on a nuclear power plant (NPP) or waste storage facility (WSF);

2. Planned, prepared, tested and robust response protocols to mitigate adverse consequences of a terrorist attack on a critical infrastructure facility.

e) Strategic partnership with neighboring countries, international organizations, such as NATO, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the private sector will have a lasting impact on critical infrastructure protection, including NPPs or WSFs.

Bibliography

How Can Counter-terrorism Cooperation Contribute to NATO’s Strategic Relevance?

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Giray Sadık

Abstract
In the post-9/11 era, where ‘balance of power’ considerations have been increasingly replaced by ‘balance of threat’ concerns in Walt’s terms, terrorism has become the predominant threat to the security of NATO allies. In this period of growing hybrid threats, NATO has struggled to remain strategically relevant by adopting a ‘comprehensive approach’ against multi-faceted unconventional threats. These threats of hybrid nature posed by various combinations of state and non-state actors have mounted transnational challenges (e.g. terrorist infiltration, radicalization, mass refugee influx) on NATO allies’ borders stretching from Syria to Ukraine. Meanwhile, the last decade has witnessed terrorist attacks of unprecedented magnitude in the Allied heartlands of London, Madrid, Ankara, Paris, Brussels, and Istanbul most recently.

The ongoing rise in terrorist attacks on NATO allies highlights the need for timely discussion about the venues for effective Transatlantic counter-terrorism cooperation. Above all, such cooperation is essential for the security of NATO member states and their citizens. An alliance that fails to contribute to the security of its members is bound to head the way of strategic irrelevance for its members, and thus ceases to be considered as a serious global actor.

This article contends that effective Transatlantic counter-terrorism cooperation among the Allies is the key to maintaining NATO as a strategically relevant organization for their security, and this is more a question of ‘how’ than ‘if’. To untangle this puzzle (i.e. How to achieve effective counter-terrorism cooperation in NATO?) this article provides a critical assessment of existing NATO counter-terrorism efforts, and offers policy recommendations on how to improve NATO counter-terrorism cooperation with the Allies and partners.

Preliminary findings suggest that devising strategies on these major issues is a necessary, but not sufficient, step toward maintaining the strategic relevance of NATO.

Keywords: Transatlantic Counter-terrorism Cooperation, NATO Counter-terrorism Strategy, NATO’s Strategic Relevance, Alliance Cohesion and Survival, Security of Citizens

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3 NATO Wales Summit Declaration, 5 Sep 2014, para 13
The very essence of leadership is that you have to have a vision. You cannot blow an uncertain trumpet.

Theodore M. Hesburgh

A little knowledge that acts is worth infinitely more than much knowledge that is idle!

Khalil Gibran

Introduction

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, it has become ever more manifest that terrorism is a threat to the Transatlantic Alliance. This transnational threat necessitated international counter-terrorism cooperation for NATO, if not as a vision at first, then more so as a reaction. The Lisbon Summit introduced the New Strategic Concept in 2010, which elevated emerging security challenges such as terrorism “from the periphery to the center of the Alliance agenda”. However, “until the agreement by NATO Heads of State and Government on the new policy guidelines on counter-terrorism on May 20, 2012, NATO did not have an agreed policy to define its role and mandate in countering terrorism”. Even after the adoption of the policy guidelines, the extent of their effectiveness in supporting Allied counter-terrorism efforts have been a source of ongoing debates...

Recent terrorist attacks in the Allied heartlands of Paris, Ankara, Brussels, and Istanbul have demonstrated that NATO needs to do more to remain strategically relevant in protecting the Allies and their citizens from terrorism. Accordingly, the core argument of this article is that effective Transatlantic counter-terrorism cooperation is key to maintaining the strategic relevance of NATO for its members, and thus as a credible global actor in world politics. This article argues that this is more a question of ‘how’ than ‘if’. For that reason, this article aims to offer insights about how to achieve effective counter-terrorism cooperation that contributes to Allied security, and therefore to NATO’s strategic relevance.

To address the above questions, this article begins with a critical assessment of NATO policy guidelines on counter-terrorism, which can be categorized as awareness, capability, and engagement. These policy guidelines will be analyzed in light of their inception at the 2012 NATO Summit and the most recent 2016 Warsaw Summit declarations. After a comprehensive analysis of the promise and pitfalls of these guidelines, the article concentrates on the policy implications of Transatlantic counter-terrorism cooperation for the

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Allies’ security and world politics. In this section, policy recommendations are offered based on existing NATO doctrines and Allied practices. Evidently, this article aims to be comprehensive rather than conclusive. The evolving nature of global terrorism makes it difficult to reach clear-cut conclusions on a comprehensive NATO counter-terrorism strategy. Nevertheless, this should not prevent academics, military experts, and policymakers from their relentless search for effective counter-terrorism strategies. This, which is essential for the Allies’ security and NATO’s strategic relevance, and hence this article is a step towards furthering a NATO vision for counter-terrorism.

NATO Policy Guidelines on Counter Terrorism: A Critical Assessment

In this section, NATO’s role in counter-terrorism will be analyzed in light of the NATO policy guidelines on counter-terrorism, NATO Warsaw Summit Declaration 2016, and evolving terrorist threats particularly around NATO’s southern borders. “NATO's contribution to the global approach to Counter Terrorism was expressed publicly in the NATO Policy Guidelines on Counter Terrorism endorsed at the 2012 NATO summit”.6 In substance, “the new policy guidelines focus on NATO’s strengths, such as intelligence-sharing, capacity-building, special operations forces, training, and technology and capabilities”.7 In practice, Allies have been challenged to translate these NATO advantages to effective counter-terrorism cooperation. For this reason, instead of being another detailed summary of NATO activities, this section will critically examine the promise and pitfalls of NATO counter-terrorism policies with the aim of setting the stage for the pertinent policy recommendations in the next section. As this article concentrates on the analysis of NATO’s role in counter-terrorism, it makes sense to use NATO’s definition of the term. Accordingly, NATO defines counter-terrorism as, “All preventive, defensive and offensive measures taken to reduce the vulnerability of forces, individuals and property against terrorist threats and/or acts, to respond to terrorist acts. In the frame of the NATO Comprehensive Approach, this can be combined with or followed by measures enabling recovery after terrorist acts”8. This definition essentially reflects the comprehensive approach of NATO to counter-terrorism, which is further developed with the New Strategic Concept adopted at the Lisbon Summit in 2010, and with added counter-terrorism policy guidelines in the 2012 NATO Summit. In theory, these were steps in the right direction that have aimed to achieve comprehensive counter-terrorism cooperation with NATO allies and partners, which is intuitive considering the multi-faceted threats such as terrorism.

8 NATO MC 0472-1, 21 Dec 2015
In practice, these measures rendered NATO’s role in counter-terrorism to the one of ‘support’ rather than the one of ‘leadership’. As the former Head of NATO-HQ Counter-terrorism Section, Dr. Juliette Bird outlined the three pillars of NATO counter-terrorism policy:

**Awareness**: ensuring shared awareness of the terrorist threat and vulnerabilities (achieved through consultations (at NATO but also through outreach to experts), enhanced intelligence and information sharing, analysis and assessment).

**Capabilities**: striving for adequate Alliance capabilities to prevent, protect against and respond to terrorist threats (in accordance with NATO’s level of ambition as defined in Political Guidance).

**Engagement**: continuing to engage with partner countries and other international actors to promote common understanding of the terrorist threat through enhanced consultations and practical cooperation through existing mechanisms. Emphasis is placed on raising awareness, capacity building, civil emergency planning and crisis management.  

As Bird highlights, “these pillars could be summarized as: ensuring that Allies (and where possible partners too) share a common view of the threat of terrorism and agree on how to address it.”  

Bird continues: “Allies concluded the Guidelines with a paragraph on implications for potential future operations: ‘NATO will maintain flexibility as to how to counter terrorism, playing a leading or supporting role as required. Allies’ capabilities represent an essential component of a potential response to terrorism. Collective defense remains subject to decision by the North Atlantic Council’”.

However important and necessary, NATO’s supportive roles in counter-terrorism have raised more questions than reassurance among the Allies. The recent terrorist attacks of Paris, Ankara, Brussels, and Istanbul, in particular, have raised concerns about the effectiveness of NATO’s counter-terrorism policies in protecting Allied citizens from terrorists.

Most recently, in the aftermath of terrorist attacks in Nice, retired French Army General Jean-Bernard Pinatel emphasized that “the spate of attacks in Europe has clearly demonstrated to the French, and to other NATO members, that the US-led alliance is

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9Bird, “NATO’s Role in Counter-Terrorism”, p.4.
10Ibid.
helpless in the struggle against the terrorist threat”.\textsuperscript{12} Considering the rise of terrorist attacks by PKK and DAESH/ISIL in Turkey, and terrorist attacks in the Brussels airport and train attacks in Germany, one can see that terrorism has become a growing threat to an increasing number of Allies. Evidently, NATO’s current counter-terrorism policy, which focuses on three main areas, awareness, capabilities, engagement, is far from being able to address adequately the security needs of the Allies in response to growing terrorist threats.

In the years following the 9/11 attacks on the United States, “NATO has opted for a pragmatic approach to the fight against terrorism and succeeded in identifying its added value. The result has been a series of substantial counter-terrorism activities. Their impact, however, has been mitigated by the lack of an agreed policy defining NATO’s rightful place among international counter-terrorism actors”.\textsuperscript{13} This challenge remains today, and keeps hampering effective Allied counter-terrorism cooperation even in the aftermath of the Warsaw Summit in 2016. In part, the rise of terrorist attacks throughout the Allied territories can be attributed to the lack of a NATO vision for Allied counter-terrorism cooperation. Having this vision is not only essential for the security of the Allies and their citizens, but also for NATO’s survival as a strategically relevant actor for Allies’ security, and in world politics. To this end, this article aims to put forward some policy recommendations in the next section to present a ground for an effective NATO counter-terrorism vision and practice.

Policy Recommendations for Effective NATO Counter-terrorism Cooperation

Despite the fact that NATO needs to improve the counter-terrorism cooperation among the Allies, there is still no other international organization or military alliance to look to for lessons in this regard. International initiatives, such as the Global Counter-terrorism Forum (GCTF) and the Alliance of Civilizations, are important pioneering steps, but as of yet are far from establishing the institutional infrastructure akin to NATO, which is key when countering multi-faceted threats such as terrorism. For this reason, one needs to deliver the pioneering role that NATO has played in global counter-terrorism cooperation since 9/11, and especially after the 2012 Summit. At the same time, there is also a need for sober insight, taking into account that all of the previous doctrinal and practical efforts failed to protect the Allies from growing terrorist attacks. Therefore, it is time to move beyond debates about if counter-terrorism is NATO’s role or not. Today, the pressing


challenge is more a question of ‘how’ than ‘if’. Effective counter-terrorism cooperation is essential for the Alliance cohesion and survival, as well as to maintain NATO as a strategically relevant actor in world politics. An alliance that fails to provide the security of its members and their citizens is bound to open to debate its very existence. As highlighted in the Communiqué of the 2016 Warsaw Summit, “Allies confront a wide range of terrorist challenges that pose a direct threat to the security of our populations, and to international stability and prosperity more broadly”. Therefore, if terrorism has become the predominant threat to the Allies, then it is time to put counter-terrorism among the core NATO tasks in vision and in practice.

The policy recommendations introduced in this article aim to contribute to Allied counter-terrorism cooperation by offering insights under the following three categories:

I. Overarching Policy: The Security of the Allies’ Citizens Above All
II. Allies First Policy (when cooperating with partners such as PfP, anti-ISIL coalition, etc.)
III. NATO First Policy (when cooperating with IOs such as UN, EU, etc.)

Evidently, these are not areas that are completely overlooked. Nevertheless, the current level of attention and practices are far from being able to adequately addressing the security needs of the Allies against terrorists. For this reason, each category starts with an analysis of the state-of-the-art for NATO, and ends with policy recommendations to improve Allied cooperation in that realm, so as to make it actively contributing to NATO counter-terrorism cooperation.

Overarching Policy: The Security of the Allies’ Citizens above All

Terrorism targets growing numbers of civilians for political purposes, and thus it has become a threat that actually harms the Allies via killing and instilling fear in their citizens. This immediate terrorist threat was recognized at NATO’s 2016 Warsaw Summit:

The greatest responsibility of the Alliance is to protect and defend our territory and our populations against attack ... Terrorism, particularly as perpetrated by the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)/Da’esh, has risen to an unprecedented level of intensity, reaches into all of Allied territory, and now represents an immediate and direct threat to our nations and the international community.¹⁵

Once again, the Allies reiterated their commitment to protect their citizens and territories together. This is important, though not new. What is new is that, for the first time, NATO names a terrorist organization, ISIL, which poses a “direct and immediate” threat to the Allies. This is also important, but not without critical questions such as: What about other terrorist organizations like the PKK that have also increased their attacks, against NATO member Turkey, and thus have become direct and immediate threats as well? A lack of Allied consensus on the importance of terrorist organizations is neither new, nor peculiar to Turkey. As Anthony Cordesman observed some years ago:

> The United Kingdom places far more emphasis on terrorist activities in Northern Ireland than the US during the Catholic-Protestant struggles in the country, and Turkey has seen the struggle against the PKK as highly international in character – forcing Turkey to put decisive military pressure on Syria – while many outside counts have dealt with the PKK as domestic, rather than international activity.  

These challenges highlight the fact that, when the very security of the citizens of the Allies have been threatened by terrorists, then the name of the terrorist organization should not hamper effective counter-terrorism cooperation. For this reason, the Allies can handle this issue more constructively in two ways:

1) Either by not naming a terrorist organization at all, as this has been the case until the 2016 Warsaw Summit;

2) Alternatively, the Allies should work on the designated terrorist organizations lists akin to the ones of the EU and the USA, with agreed criteria for designation, and certain NATO policies to be unanimously implemented by all Allies to enforce NATO counter-terrorism policies.

Evidently, the second one is more difficult to realize in vision and in practice. Yet it may be the more necessary one, if NATO is to become an effective counter-terrorism actor. Alliances can be regarded as insurance policies for states, thus their value is put to a real test in times of trouble. So, what are the options for the Allies when faced with terrorist threats?

Despite the high profile of terrorism at present and the commission of recent terrorist acts on the territory of NATO Allies (e.g., France, Denmark) with plots foiled in many others (e.g., Italy, UK, Spain) it is, to date, only Turkey that has turned to NATO for terrorism-related assistance. NATO has provided protection against missiles at the

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16 The PKK is on the lists of designated terrorist organizations of both the EU and the USA. For US details see: http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm, or EU details see: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32015D2430&qid=1457362568874&from=EN (both accessed 22 September 2016)

Turkish-Syrian border given the threat from ISIL and other groups as well as the capabilities of the Assad regime. NATO’s crisis response clearinghouse (the Euro Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre) is available to Allies and partners should a major attack occur and Articles 4 (Consultation) and 5 (Collective Defence) remain options for the Allies.\textsuperscript{18}

As summarized, NATO’s existing structures were of very limited practical use to the Allies when their citizens were faced with a terrorist attack. In part, this could be among the reasons why other Allies have not turned to NATO for “terrorism-related assistance”. Another reason could be what they have witnessed in recent years after Turkey turned to NATO, only to see increasing terrorism and decreasing Allied support. This is not necessarily to blame NATO for increasing terrorism, which is evidently multi-causal, yet to underline the need that NATO must do more to protect the security of the citizens of the Allies, if it is to remain strategically relevant for their security. The fact that terrorism is multi-causal does more harm than help when it comes to NATO’s contribution to counter-terrorism efforts of its Allies, as NATO is an alliance that was designed for the Cold War. Instead, NATO’s counter-terrorism efforts are more likely to be effective when they focus on deterring the state sponsors of terrorism via Allied resolve and joint operations, and via strengthening intra-alliance cooperation by establishing and maintaining mechanisms for effective intelligence sharing and inter-agency cooperation (including civilian and military) among the Allies.

The Warsaw Summit communique stresses that “the global threat of terrorism knows no border, nationality, or religion”.\textsuperscript{19} When it comes to counter-terrorism cooperation, therefore, the Allies need to base their discussion on ‘indivisibility of security’ and ‘Alliance cohesion’ rather than on Eurocentrism and Islamophobia, which are not only politically incorrect, but also counterproductive for effective NATO counter-terrorism.

Recently, when asked to comment on the then Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump’s NATO remarks, retired U.S. Navy Admiral James Stavridis asserted:

> You know, NATO has had that counter-terrorism division forever. What really was lacking in the speech [Trump’s NATO speech] is anything about how the inter-agency of the government, would work together, how we’d use intelligence, how we’d use cyber, private/public communication, strategic communication. The only strategic communication I heard was, ‘I hate Muslims!’\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{18}Bird, “NATO’s Role in Counter-Terrorism”.
Considering the international military, academic, and policy experience of Stavridis, one needs to think seriously about his remarks beyond the replies to Trump’s mishaps, but more significantly as a critique of current NATO counter-terrorism policies. More specifically, NATO counter-terrorism efforts since 9/11 almost exclusively have concentrated on countering the violence perpetrated by fundamentalist Islamists. Considering the growing Al-Qaeda (AQ) presence and the recent rise of the so-called Islamic State (IS/Daesh/ISIL/ISIS) this is understandable. Yet, albeit important, this is only part of the story when it comes to defending the Allies against terrorism.

For example, the PKK has been the prominent threat to the NATO ally Turkey, which has lost more than 40,000 of its citizens in its decades-long struggle with this terrorist organization. In this case, an alliance that fails to address such a vital problem of Turkey, and then claims to conduct counter-terrorism operations in the horn of Africa or Afghanistan, is doomed to become ever more strategically irrelevant for the security of Turkish citizens, and therefore this is likely to be reflected in the discourse and actions of its leaders. Recently, for example, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan warned the European members of NATO, in particular, when he was speaking at the 62nd session of NATO’s Parliamentary Assembly in Istanbul on November 21, 2016. Erdoğan said that “Turkey, as a victim of terrorism, could not tolerate how groups like the PKK -- an illegal organization in the EU -- could be ‘comfortable’ in European countries”.21 When it comes to Turkey, the PKK and its affiliates in Syria, such as the PYD/YPG, are among the key bones of contention that will test the Allied commitment to counter-terrorism cooperation, and thus the strategic relevance of NATO for Turkey. As President Erdoğan emphasizes:

… and we have all of these weapons, even their serial numbers. We know them ... Some say: ‘These are weapons given in the old days.’ Others say: ‘We do not accept the PYD and YPG as terrorist organizations, because they were fighting Daesh’… Al-Nusra is fighting against Daesh as well. Can you say that a terrorist is good because it is fighting against another terrorist? 22

It would be an understatement to say that such problems are confined to NATO-Turkey relations. As a matter of fact, international counter-terrorism cooperation has been hampered by conflicting national interests, which have prevented states from reaching a consensus on a universal definition of terrorism for years. Being a NATO member does not make the Allies immune to these problems. On the contrary, the disagreements over the definition of

22 Ibid.
terrorism and the identification of terrorist organizations threaten the very essence of the Alliance cohesion. This in turn fuels distrust of NATO among the Allies’ citizens and policymakers, and as a result undermines NATO’s international strategic relevance. To keep NATO strategically relevant and to protect the Allies from terrorism, this article proposes that the need for Allied counter-terrorism cooperation is more a question of ‘how’ than ‘if’. For this reason, Allies need to work on the details of counter-terrorism cooperation in the areas referred to by Admiral (ret.) Stavridis: strategic communication, intelligence sharing, and inter-agency cooperation.

The following policy recommendations aim to offer insights regarding counter-terrorism cooperation among NATO Allies, partners, and other international organizations.

**Allies First Policy and NATO First Policy**

When it comes to NATO counter-terrorism cooperation, it is important to make clear that there are essentially two major categories: the Allies and the others. This does not imply that all others are similar or less important. Instead, this should be interpreted as a key signal NATO can send to the Allies and other partners. As these two policy recommendations - Allies First and NATO First - are interrelated, they will be analyzed together. Essentially, they are based on the same core premise that above all “NATO necessarily exists for the benefit of its members”. Juliette Bird summarizes this underlying principle and the current NATO engagements with partners as follows:

> As an Alliance, NATO necessarily exists for the benefit of its members. However engagement with partners, both individual nations and international organizations, has become more important over time and is a key way to ensure mutual benefit. NATO’s 2012 CT Policy Guidelines focus on a shared threat awareness and possession of relevant capabilities for Allies, but also focuses equally on engagement with partners to push back the threat boundary and enlarge the like-minded community facing it jointly. Progress over the past two years on the tasks cascading from the Policy Guidelines has been satisfactory but more remains to be done in adjusting policy (crucially the Military Concept for Defence Against Terrorism) so that the NATO CT approach is coherent.23

As highlighted in the above overview, it is possible to categorize NATO partners under two main groups: individual nations (e.g. Partnership for Peace-PfP, anti-ISIL coalition partners) and international organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), and the European Union (EU). In line with this categorization, the policy recommendations in this article propose:

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23Bird, “NATO’s Role in Counter-Terrorism”, p. 6.
1) An Allies First Policy (when cooperating with partners such as PfP, anti-ISIL coalition, etc.);

2) A NATO First Policy (when cooperating with IOs such as UN, EU, etc.).

Most recently, the 2016 Warsaw Summit Communique once again underlined that “based on solidarity, Alliance cohesion, and the indivisibility of our security, NATO remains the transatlantic framework for strong collective defense and the essential forum for security consultations and decisions among Allies.” Clearly, with this Communique, NATO sent the message to Allies that it is determined to remain as their main platform for the Allies’ security. Today, one cannot take this seriously without adequate NATO counter-terrorism cooperation in practice.

The major step to ensure that it is to be taken seriously is to ensure Allied cooperation via an ‘Allies First Policy’ when cooperating with other partners. In addition to the fact that the Alliance was established for the Allies (i.e. members-only), as envisaged in the Washington Treaty and reiterated in the following summits, including the most recent one in Warsaw, the Allies are the ones who make NATO work with their military and financial commitments. Therefore, when it comes to conflicting priorities in counter-terrorism, Allies ought to be reassured that, under any circumstances, their security shall not be sacrificed for short-term coalitions with partners. One way to clarify this could be when it comes to counter-terrorism cooperation with partners NATO should restrict its role to one of support, such as partner capacity-building. Juliette Bird provides examples of such “cooperative projects to improve partner capacity…. These include more work with Iraq; joint efforts with Jordan and through other ‘Enhanced Operational Partnerships’; CT relevant support to Afghanistan under NATO’s Enduring Partnership; and progress in UN-agreed projects in Libya when conditions permit.”

This could be a step in the right direction for NATO’s partners, provided that it first takes the security concerns of the Allies into account, i.e. Allies First. Recently, this has become a particular concern for Turkey, when the US decided to support the PYD/YPG in northern Syria against ISIL. It is important to remember that Turkey is an important part of the anti-ISIL coalition and, more significantly, the only NATO member with land bordering Syria. In view of increasing PKK terrorist infiltration from northern Iraq in the last decade, Turkey has been concerned about a similar scenario in northern Syria via the PYD, which Turkey regards as an offshoot organization of the terrorist PKK. Therefore, both geopolitics and Alliance solidarity necessitate that an ‘Allies First Policy’ be taken seriously, both in vision and in practice, for effective NATO counter-terrorism cooperation.

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A ‘NATO First Policy’ needs to be considered in a similar vein when contemplating NATO counter-terrorism cooperation with other international organizations. In practice, this means that “NATO must retain its ability to respond to crises beyond its borders, and remain actively engaged in projecting stability and enhancing international security through working with partners and other international organizations”. Accordingly, NATO ought to preserve its core assets for its members and, when cooperating with other partners (e.g. non/state, international organizations), it is better to retain its supportive role without endangering the security of its Allies or risking Alliance cohesion. Allied capabilities, such as strategic communications, intelligence gathering and joint operations, ought to be at the disposal of the Allies first and foremost. Only after consensus is achieved among Allies can such capabilities be shared with NATO partners. For example, NATO training missions to partner countries can be considered as a step forward in international counter-terrorism cooperation, yet core assets ought to be reserved for members first, as it is NATO members who are treaty-bound to defend one another.

In the wake of the recent terrorist attacks in France and Belgium, calls for EU-wide counter-terrorism intelligence sharing have increased. Most recently, retired French Army General Pinatel suggested that “the alliance [NATO] be liquidated or ‘Europeanized’, and [called for] the creation of a European-Russian alliance against terror”. Albeit on the fringes of mainstream security policy, these arguments have been increasingly becoming widespread in EU policy circles. One of the main reasons for such arguments gaining recent prominence is the growing perception among Europeans that NATO can no longer maintain their security. For some, it is because of its old-fashioned Cold-War-design; for others, American reluctance to shoulder European security. Whatever the reason, recently NATO has become increasingly more of a scapegoat than a credible Alliance to look after the security of its members against terrorism. In light of growing calls for an EU-army, preludes to EU-rapprochement with Russia, and most of the EU-member NATO-allies’ defense spending under NATO-guidelines, one can conclude that an alliance that is not strategically relevant for its own members is very unlikely, if not impossible, to be strategically relevant at all. This is why the Allies should, above all else, make NATO work effectively for themselves first.

Since terrorists attack military and civilian targets, counter-terrorism cooperation needs to

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place immediate priority on increasing and retaining whatever is left of public support for the Alliance.

It is important to note that although most EU countries are NATO members, more EU does not necessarily mean enhanced NATO counter-terrorism cooperation, but increasingly quite the opposite. While NATO remains the main security platform for most EU countries, there are growing sentiments suggesting that it is not the only one. Instead of debating the viability of such suggestions, they need to be considered as warning signals, in case NATO fails to maintain the security of the Allies and their citizens against growing threats from terrorism. Addressing these concerns requires not only to put ‘NATO First Policy’ in doctrine, but also and more critically, this necessitates using NATO’s existing assets, such as intelligence sharing and joint operations, more effectively and flexibly in counter-terrorism practice.

According to Juliette Bird, the adoption of more comprehensive CT policies, such as partnering with the UN, would “require a change in Allies’ ambition for the use of NATO in Counter Terrorism and hence a change in mandate. ... Allies have yet to express any increased ambition for NATO in the counter terrorism field”.  

This article acknowledges Bird’s observation, and recognizes that a lack of Allied ambition in counter-terrorism may constitute a problem for some. Nevertheless, by proposing an Allies First and a NATO First policy, this article argues that effective counter-terrorism cooperation ought to be by the Allies and for the Allies. Partnering with international organizations such as the UN and EU can be a useful complement to NATO’s comprehensive approach, which aims to employ non-military approaches to CT as well as military ones. Yet this should not be interpreted as NATO outsourcing its core task of security provision to broader, and thus looser, international organizations.

Another issue with respect to a comprehensive approach and international counter-terrorism cooperation is the downplaying of a military role in counter-terrorism. The claim that military approaches alone cannot solve terrorism is intuitive, yet this should not lead NATO to delay the transformation required to counter modern-day terrorism. As Dr. Warren Chin notes, “NATO will have an important role in both defending and deterring terrorist attacks, but needs to exploit its comparative advantage, which lies in the more effective use of its military assets”.  

To this end, the effective use of NATO military assets in counter-terrorism first requires political determination and Allied commitment, which can be assured by prioritizing Allies and NATO in international counter-terrorism cooperation. Allies ought to keep in mind that “NATO has untapped potential which, given the scope of the terrorist threat, it would be

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30 Bird, “NATO’s Role in Counter-Terrorism”, pp. 1, 5.
wise of Allies to use better, and more often”. The later Allies decide to use their capabilities in counter-terrorism, the less likely they are to use them effectively. Ultimately, this delay can risk the strategic relevance of NATO, and thus may lead member states to search for alternatives, which can be detrimental for their security and Alliance survival.

This search for alternatives can be exemplified by Turkish President Erdoğan recent declaration that he “mulls over joining the SCO [Shanghai Cooperation Organization], led by Russia and China”. Although, the SCO remains composed mainly of the former Central Asian republics of the Soviet Union, under a Russian and Chinese initiative, such a search for an alternative by a NATO ally, Turkey, needs to be taken seriously. The recent Turkish-Russian rapprochement in Syria, and Turkey’s growing willingness to consider Russian and Chinese defense systems indicate that cracks in the Alliance cohesion due to a lack of counter-terrorism cooperation are likely to pave the way for deeper security and foreign policy fractures.

In Search of Conclusions

Considering the evolving nature of terrorist threats, it is difficult, if not impossible, to devise clear-cut conclusions about NATO’s role in counter-terrorism. Still, there is a need to identify key policies, which can guide the Allies to further improve their counter-terrorism cooperation. As this article argues, this is not only important for the security of the Allies, but also key for the strategic relevance of NATO for its members and partners.

While both NATO members and partners are important in dealing with multi-faceted threats such as terrorism, there is a need for a sobering reminder that the security of the citizens of the Allies ought to come above all. As the Allies’ security is NATO’s core task, when it comes to protecting Allies from terrorist threats, NATO therefore needs to provide more than mere support, such as expressions of solidarity in the face of terrorist attacks or anti-missile defenses on the Syrian border with Turkey. NATO’s supportive roles to partners are important, and are likely to remain this way. Nevertheless, while NATO may keep capacity-building and training as ‘carrots’ for ad-hoc partners, for the Allies, NATO needs to have a vision and leadership in practice to remain a strategically relevant platform for the security needs of all Allies.

Instead of seeking strict conclusions, this article aims to offer insights for the improvement of NATO counter-terrorism cooperation, which is essential for Allied security, and for the Alliance’s cohesion and survival. Thus, indeed, it is more a search for conclusions, which aims to contribute to the Transatlantic debate on counter-terrorism, in light of the critical

assessment of existing NATO counter-terrorism efforts. While these debates are necessary, the greater challenge remains, which is to put them into practice together as Allies. Only this effective practice can speak meaningfully to counter-terrorism cooperation, which has become a *sine qua non* for NATO’s strategic relevance.

**Bibliography**

Information sharing as a comprehensive approach to countering terrorism

Nicole Alexander, April Moore, and Ashley Sogge

Abstract

What does a comprehensive approach to countering and responding to terrorism in an ambiguous conflict environment look like? Potentially, the approach looks like integration of interagency efforts through unclassified information sharing, which can illuminate existing knowledge, programs and data points across government agencies and partners. This chapter will focus on the role of information sharing and interagency collaboration in countering and responding to terrorism. With over a combined 2 years of implementation, the authors will provide anecdotes and examples of putting those concepts to use in the Syrian crisis.

The article identifies critical areas of overlap between military initiatives and government departments and agencies that may have the lead in a Complex Political Emergency, such as the Syrian conflict. For example, the U.S. Government’s support to humanitarian operations, civil society, and governance institutions in Syria began in 2012, at the commencement of hostilities. These efforts predated the military’s overt Train and Equip Program by almost three years. Most importantly, many of these non-governmental and humanitarian organizations had a depth and breadth of knowledge about security and governance institutions that traditionally remains untapped due to a lack of information sharing protocols and procedures. This imperfect response framework is unlikely to fade in future conflicts and as such reinforces the value of early and effective interagency collaboration.

Keywords: Civil Information Management, Interagency Interoperability, Information Sharing, Cross-Organizational Literacy, Counter-terrorism

Introduction

As armed conflict trends toward complexity and ambiguity, a comprehensive counter-terrorism approach is needed to expand partner-government collaboration and enhance operational efficacy. The past decade of armed conflict and geopolitical complexity reinforces the necessity of a transparent and multilateral approach to counter-terrorism at

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both the political and practitioner levels across government and non-governmental sectors. A counter-terrorism approach that integrates intergovernmental efforts through unclassified information sharing has the potential to illuminate existing organizational knowledge and programmatic details across government agencies and partner nations. The institutional knowledge gained in this process is critical to developing an accurate and timely comprehensive view of the problem-set for leaders in defense, diplomatic, and governmental organizations. This article will focus on the role of information sharing and interagency collaboration in countering and responding to terrorism. With over two years of experience supporting the U.S. Government’s (USG) intergovernmental humanitarian and development response in Syria, the authors will use examples from this experience to demonstrate how these techniques transcend U.S. interagency cooperation and apply in a multilateral counter-terrorism environment.

Now more than ever, international counter-terrorism efforts require multinational support and intergovernmental cooperation. Interagency transparency and collaboration are imperative to effectively address operational and programmatic gaps in a comprehensive response to Complex Political Emergencies, such as the Syrian Crisis. However, a whole-of-government effort to counter and respond to terrorism is difficult to achieve in an ambiguous conflict environment. In such a complex environment, there is a far greater risk that information about pre-existing civil society networks will be lost or go unnoticed. This information is key to understanding the human domain and the organic centers of opposition against violent extremist organizations.

Transparency is the cornerstone of effective information sharing in a joint, interagency, and international environment, especially at the unclassified level. Unfortunately, humanitarian, development, and defense efforts at the practitioner and tactical levels often do not share information fast enough to affect each other’s operations in a significant or substantial way. This article outlines several techniques and new tools that enabled cross-functional and organizational dialogue to support the U.S. Department of Defense’s (DoD) Train and Equip Program and civilian interagency development and humanitarian programming in Syria. Through experience, the authors identified critical areas of overlap between military initiatives and other government departments and agencies that may have the lead in a Complex Political Emergency, such as the Syrian conflict. The U.S. Government’s support to humanitarian operations, civil society and governance institutions in Syria began in 2012, at the commencement of hostilities. These efforts predated the overt Train and Equip Program by almost three years. This response framework is unlikely to fade in future complex political conflicts and, as such, reinforces the value of early and effective interagency collaboration.
After providing an overview of how interagency reporting and programmatic data is collated and shared to develop an accurate and timely civil common operating picture, this article will discuss the role of a U.S. Military unit in interagency interoperability, and extrapolate lessons learned in the Syrian conflict for the way ahead. The demand for unclassified interagency information sharing is likely to increase as conflicts in complex political environments expand around the world - particularly when civilian interagency programs predate overt military operations. Early and effective collaboration is critical to building a common operating picture of the civilian dynamics in the area. This common operating picture must include input from all organizations that work within the population of that area. It can also help illuminate terrorist networks and their logistical and political supporters.

**Part I: Civil Information and the Importance of Interagency Information Sharing**

Civil information includes data regarding civilian areas, structures, capabilities, organizations, people, and events. This data can include leaders, businesses, government entities, infrastructure, media organizations, civil society organizations, and even cultural networks within a population. Civil information includes the data and means to identify uncommitted middle populations that have the potential to evolve into an auxiliary for terrorist organizations such as DAESH/ISIL. Understanding the population that makes up an auxiliary can also assist with identifying if they are true sympathizers or if they were taken by force or because they had no other options. The criticality of civil information cannot be understated in modern conflict as the civilian population serves as a potential recruitment pool for terrorist organizations. Terrorists can recruit sympathizers to serve not just in a military role, but also to serve in positions of power and influence over the population. There are a variety of methods used to gather civil information and understand the human domain. One of these methods used by the U.S. Syrian Transition Assistance Response Knowledge Management Team is the analysis of programmatic data, field reports, and feedback from the U.S. Department of State (DoS) and U.S. Agency for international development (USAID). Effective and transparent information sharing protocols are critical to a whole-of-government comprehension of the civil environment.

For the United States, since the events of 9/11, the importance of interagency dialogue, synchronization, and intelligence sharing has been at the forefront of thought for U.S. policy makers. There are laws, executive directives, fusions cells and interagency intelligence centers focused on interagency intelligence sharing and collaboration. Internationally, many nations joining the U.S. War on Terror increased the communication between nations.
regarding transnational terrorist threats. The synchronization and sharing of intelligence are intended to prevent terrorist attacks and more broadly support the War on Terror. A parallel effort to synchronize and share civil information across development, diplomatic, defense and humanitarian assistance initiatives will not only support long-term national security objectives in the steady state and pre-crisis, but also in the current fight against terrorist organizations such as DAESH/ISIL.

The 2015 U.S. national security strategy recommits the United States to “advance democracy, human rights and building and sustaining coalitions to combat corruption and to support open societies.” In meeting those objectives, the data about the individual programs and operations that are being conducted daily by organizations such as the DoS, USAID, and the Department of Defense (DoD) is not considered intelligence, but simply civil information and programmatic data that can help practitioners working amongst the population to understand who may be targets for support to terrorist organizations. There are currently no policies or agencies in the United States requiring and emphasizing the sharing of civil information and programmatic data to foster interagency collaboration and synchronization for meeting long-term national strategic security objectives. The same is even truer for international sharing of civil information.

Foreign assistance programs implemented by agencies such as DoS and USAID are a form of long-term security for the United States. If basic human needs are met while democratic principles and social change are instituted abroad, then our nation will be more secure and have more opportunities to prosper. Through the implementation of programs such as establishing civil society organizations, teaching about democracy and human rights, and in Syria in particular, establishing local governance organizations that provide essential services, there has been an immense effort towards supporting national security objectives. The civil information from the reports and data from these programs supports the visualization of the Human Domain that can support counter terrorism efforts. In the 2009 GAO report on Interagency Collaboration, the GAO repeatedly cites the importance of not just sharing terrorism-related information and intelligence, but also information related to reconstruction, capacity building, and disaster response, both nationally and internationally. Civil Information sharing promotes better collaboration and synchronization, and enables analytical efforts by leaders and policy-makers to enhance a civil common operating picture. Policy-makers and leaders require a wide variety of information to make the best decisions to support counter-terrorism objectives. Intelligence itself is just a subset of information, so

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leaders cannot simply rely on intelligence. Understanding the goals, objectives and members of a civil society organization or local council can help leaders, both at the strategic and tactical level, to decide if they are vulnerable to exploitation by terrorist organizations or if they can help the larger community resist terrorism. Knowing that there are existing trusted networks and organizations in a country means that government agencies new to the country, or even the battlefield, do not have to establish new links to the civilian population, or re-learn the make-up of that society. There are trusted networks and organic interconnections already established and supported by U.S. and international agencies. These trusted networks are the recipients of continued international aid and support and should therefore be relied on to support counterterrorist goals and objectives. Understanding and internalizing the importance of cataloging and sharing information on civilian-focused programs, organizations, and populations not only supports security objectives in the steady-state, but becomes paramount for decision-making against terrorists seeking to take advantage of a Complex Political Emergency.

Part II: Knowledge Management and Information Sharing
Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, the United States has provided non-lethal, development, and humanitarian assistance to the Syrian population from both Turkey and Jordan. In an effort to synchronize the assistance across the U.S. Government (USG), the Syria Transition Assistance Response Team (START) was established. START is an interagency coordination mechanism based out of Embassy Ankara that is comprised of six offices and bureaus from the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development that provide assistance primarily into northern Syria. The Southern Syria Assistance Platform (SSAP) is an interagency team based out of Embassy Amman that coordinates the provision of assistance to the southern governorates of Syria. Without U.S. diplomatic representation in Damascus, the START and SSAP platforms are responsible for coordinating and synchronizing U.S. foreign assistance efforts in Syria. These platforms work with international organizations, NGOs, the Governments of Turkey and Jordan, and the moderate Syrian opposition to ensure that assistance effectively addresses the needs of the Syrian people and meets U.S. policy objectives.

In 2013, the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey recognized the need for a knowledge management capability within START, due to the abundance of reporting and lack of formal information-sharing protocols between different branches of government and coalition partners. The knowledge management positions were staffed by U.S. Army Civil Affairs officers because they are specifically trained in Civil Information Management and analyzing the human
domain. This was a new and non-doctrinal team entitled the Knowledge Management Team (KMT). The KMT consolidated reporting from over seven DoS agencies, USAID departments, U.S.-Government-contracted implementers, and international organizations. The KMT established the Protected Internet Exchange (PIX) - Syria as the universal data repository and information-sharing platform for the Syrian Crisis. The KMT generated civil information products to illuminate the human networks within the Syrian Opposition governing bodies, security councils, and other civil society organizations, which START had identified and had been supporting since the beginning of the Syrian Crisis.

The KMTs systematic collation of unclassified information generated by all of START and USG organizations supporting the civilian population was the first step in what the U.S. Army identifies as civil information management (CIM). The KMT consolidated and processed DoS weekly, monthly, and annual diplomatic cables, weekly situation reports, analytical papers, field surveys, implementer reports, daily cross-border delivery updates, readouts of training and equipment provided to the Syrian moderate opposition, and educational articles from USAID, DoS, implementers, and other international organizations. These various reports include, but are not limited to, information on how START's assistance efforts are being distributed to the Syrians, to whom, and what populations these assistance initiatives affected and supported, and the situational perspectives of various Syrian populations who are being controlled and affected by the warring factions within Syria (Regime forces, DAESH/ISIL, Al Nusra etc.).

Next, the KMT conducted data mining through the various reports, with a particular focus on identifying the resilient human networks within the Syrian Opposition. KMT identified early on the need to share and coordinate this information with not only other interested DoS partners, but also the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) and U.S. European Command (EUCOM) DoD elements with focus and concern in this region. Since the KMT established PIX (see above) as the primary data repository system for START reporting, this became the unclassified information-sharing platform for the collective USG effort. PIX is a Wikipedia-structured, interactive, searchable, repository presented at the Unclassified level. The KMT identified PIX as the preferred data repository for sharing START reporting for several reasons:

- PIX is accessible by web access, utilizing a login and pin, ensuring all users can access the information as long as they have access to the internet.
- Using PIX ensures information can be easily accessed and shared by all stakeholders and interested parties.
Finally, PIX content managers understand that in a complex environment, information is constantly changing. These content managers are responsible for overlaying START information with other forms of relevant open-source information—conducting a continual process of updating and changing information as rapidly as the information in the environment changes.

The KMT designed and produced several products from START reporting and cables. Perhaps one of the most widely disseminated products across the Interagency community is the Syria Border Crossing Update. The information compiled in this product is derived from START implementers, such as local NGOs and contractors on the ground in Syria and Turkey, who frequently travel across Syrian border crossings to deliver assistance into Syria. The Border Crossing Product provides the most comprehensive and current assessment of border control authorities, openings and closures along the border, and the type of traffic utilizing the border crossing. The KMT Border Crossing Update also contains general information, satellite imagery, and a historical timeline of significant events concerning the border, dating back to the beginning of the conflict. The KMT updates this border-crossing product as events occur to the digital, collaborative, interactive, border-crossing product site hosted on PIX.

The KMT also creates ad hoc products in response to a specific request for information from various stakeholders. One such example is the combined Civil Defense Map for Northern Syria. This map features an overview of the scope, location, and country providing support, for all civil defense initiatives from USG, coalition partners, and NGOs to Syrian civil defense assets in Northern Syria. The U.S. provides robust support to Syrian civil society through an array of activities to bolster their organizational and technical capacity, foster linkages between civil society groups and local and national governance institutions, and enable them to effectively provide services to their local communities. Syrian Civil Defense Units are inherently neutral, impartial and humanitarian in nature. Their relief work predominantly consists of search and rescue, and debris removal in the wake of DAESH/ISIL destruction and Syrian Regime barrel bombs and indirect fire in urban centers. The USG coordinates assistance specifically for civil defense units and the local councils that support them with stipends, heavy and light equipment, and supplies.

Before consolidating various civil defense initiatives on one map, the USG and other partners had little to no knowledge of each other's civil defense initiatives or areas of concentration in Northern Syria. The KMT's Civil Defense Map of Northern Syria provided the common operating picture that facilitated necessary discussion among all stakeholders.
for combining, leveraging, and de-conflicting efforts where civil defense initiatives were succeeding, failing, or in areas where the programs declined due to DAESH/ISIL or Jabhat al-Nusra involvement. The collation of Civil Defense initiatives represents the KMT’s unique capability to provide civil information fusion and analysis, as the conduit of information flow, and fulfills the information-sharing requirement needed to close the capability gap among interagency and foreign partners.

**Part III: Department of Defense Interoperability: A Paradigm Shift for Syria**

While the overall concept of closing civil information gaps remains constant, the approach is slightly modified and enhanced by the unique placement of a Civil Affairs element in a civilian assistance platform. Whereas military efforts are usually the first and main effort in a crisis of this proportion, with civilian programming efforts commencing only after security and order is established, the Syrian Crisis is a unique paradigm shift. This shift is characterized by civilian efforts initially leading the response and postured to continue providing assistance until the realization of a stable and secure political solution. In the case of Syria, civilian assistance programming for humanitarian and political transition assistance predates military involvement by almost four years. Hence, the State Department and USAID program officers initiated and developed Syrian political and opposition networks through non-governmental implementing organizations. A critical factor in interagency interoperability in this case was the effective institutional transfer of information and knowledge of these networks. This transfer transcends mere information management, requiring instead an interagency relationship that is based on trust, transparency and cross-organizational literacy. Trust and transparency go hand in hand to ensure civilian counterparts are confident that DoD planners and engagement teams understand and respect the proprietary nature of their relationships with Syrian opposition activists, fighters, and humanitarian contacts. Moreover, DoD planners are dependent on the transfer of lessons-learned and institutional knowledge that civilian counterparts have accrued after nearly five years of work in response to the Syrian crisis. Effective cross-organizational literacy is dependent on a trusting and transparent relationship between organizations to effectively communicate mission intent, goals, and end state. This communication is more nuanced and specific because it requires individuals to break down institutional barriers, as well as stereotypes about how the other organizations solve problems. A true understanding of the components and capabilities of each organization is a crucial first step and can only be widely and deeply achieved through high-level support and integration.

In 2014, as the U.S. strategy for Syria evolved from a purely civilian-led response to a shared partnership with the Department of Defense, the KMT was intimately involved, both
forward deployed in Turkey and in the U.S, in facilitating the civil information exchange and the relationship between START and the broader Train and Equip enterprise. This exchange began at the tactical level, between DoD engagement teams in Turkey, and included routine coordination with civil-military planning efforts at the headquarters responsible for the Train and Equip program: Combined Joint Interagency Task Force - Syria. Tactical-level information sharing is most recently and relevantly illustrated by the KMT’s efforts to provide context and initially streamline information-sharing protocols to support the development of a No Strike List for Northern Syria. The KMT was a natural choice to conduct the initial consolidation of USG humanitarian and governance assistance activities, in a geospatially-referenced document. The KMT’s status as a member of START ensured the security and privacy of the information that DoS and USAID program officers provided. This security protocol was critical in ensuring that program officers shared current and reliable data with military planners, while maintaining the assurance that the information would be safeguarded. These protocols laid the groundwork for future information exchanges that ensured military planners were aware of civilian efforts on an ever increasingly complex and dynamic battlefield. Additionally, products such as the previously mentioned Civil Defense Map, Border Crossing Update, and the reporting repository PIX, illuminated Syrian civil networks, as well as political leadership, organizational and non-standard logistical networks, for military opposition groups. The relationships and information exchange facilitated by the Civil Affairs Soldiers in Turkey, in support of military efforts, encouraged others to duplicate the KMT concept.

As the U.S. response to the Syrian Crisis approaches its seventh year, and with the initiation and expansion of the Defense Department’s response to the Syrian and DAESH/ISIL crisis, the DoS- and USAID-embedded liaisons with the DoD Train and Equip headquarters ensure effective coordination between civilian and military efforts. The initial intent of embedding civilian program liaisons in a military headquarters was to ensure that the military command understood the fundamental concept and approach of U.S. civilian assistance programming and support in Syria. These liaisons collaborated closely with the KMT as the Train and Equip program expanded, to ensure mutual understanding and effective cooperation between all echelons of the Train and Equip Program. Embedding interagency liaisons in a military command is not necessarily a new concept for military organizations, as we have all seen political advisors and USAID reps at combatant commands and commands across Afghanistan. The distinguishing feature of the interagency liaisons in the military headquarters for Syrian operations (the Combined Joint Interagency Task Force-Syria or CJIATF-S) and START construct is the empowerment of the liaisons and their close information exchange facilitated through the Civil Affairs-resourced KMT.
Part IV: The Way Ahead

As nations continue to focus on counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts, civil information represents a crucial linkage at the strategic, and even more importantly, at the tactical and operational levels of interagency information sharing and civil-military cooperation. The demand for conducting targeted civil information sharing to provide a common understanding of the Human Domain should only continue to grow as terrorist organizations continue to exploit and work amongst the population. In the case of Syria, our interagency partners were conducting assistance initiatives from the onset of the Syrian opposition uprising in early 2013. This situation is similar to many places around the world where population-centric government agencies and NGOs are implementing assistance programs.

The KMT concept of purposeful civil information sharing, and the results that come from it, provide proof of the crucial role that civil information can have in counter-terrorism efforts. Additionally, the team’s capability to provide this support without being in the conflict zone is particularly critical for planning efforts for counter-terrorism programs. The KMT's management of civil information and program data effectively fills an interagency capability gap that is not addressed through the intelligence sharing community, and is uniquely positioned to provide military and civilian components the degree of continuity that is necessary to understanding the Human Domain prior to an escalation of the conflict, as well as post conflict. Through the disparate reporting channels, dynamic information requirements, and various competing end-states predominant throughout the multiple agencies involved, the KMT functions as the neutral broker, mining the data on the human networks and supporting stakeholders with timely information in order to make decisions. Synchronizing and sharing civil information from diplomacy, development, and humanitarian assistance programming between START and the military, through the KMT, underscores and continues to demonstrate the crucial role of civil information sharing in achieving a unified approach to national security objectives.

The interagency information-sharing best practices and lessons learned outlined in this article should be replicated to support NATO’s counter-terrorism efforts, capacity building, and disaster management protocols. Although U.S. military personnel spearheaded the KMT efforts in this example, civilians or military from any government or organization can replicate the task. Knowledge management should be a comprehensive effort to understand the human domain and share a common operating picture. To ensure data points are useful, they must be transparently shared with all agencies and partners invested in a given
problem set. Understanding and sharing civil information should no longer be an afterthought or something conducted in haste when hostilities begin. The reality is that civil information and knowledge should be maintained in steady-state environments because civil information is gathered the moment a government and its partners interact with foreign governments and populations. In order to effectively counter terrorism and the instability that fuels and recruits violent extremism, information about the civilian population must be shared across a variety of stakeholders. In doing so, NATO responses to terrorism and violent extremism will be far more effective because they are formulated from a common understanding of the civilian population and they are specifically designed to address root causes of instability before they grow into unmanageable situations. While the proposed changes in this article are easier to say than do, it is the shift in organizational trust and perspective that will fundamentally change interagency and intergovernmental cooperation for the better.
Closing remarks by TEC 2016’s Director:

“War upon rebellion is messy and slow, like eating soup with a knife.”
Thomas Edward Lawrence

‘Lawrence of Arabia’s’ above quote has been cited often in the context of counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism. While the word -war- could be interpreted to mean that the threat of violent rebellion (which could also be called terrorism) can be fought primarily by military means, many of the TEC 2016 papers clearly state, that this would be either short-sighted, unwise or both. Implementing solutions for many of the root causes of terrorism, like technological and economical disconnection, lack of perspective or religious radicalism might fall outside of the scope of NATO’s direct action as an alliance. Nevertheless the necessity to address these root causes and promote raised awareness on them fulfils one of the core principles of NATO’s policy guidelines on counter-terrorism.

As Ronald Crelinsten underlines in his introduction into the basic framework for understanding the comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism, it is essential to raise public awareness of the terrorism threat without stoking insecurity or creating apathy, intolerance or hate at worst. In pursuit of this goal, COE-DAT - through its future activities and publications - will continue to contribute to the proposed way of inclusion of actors and practitioners on all levels: locally and globally; tactically and strategically; politically and economically; publicly and privately; institutionally and individually; offensively and defensively.

Examining Medinat Abdulazeez’s conclusions on the inadequacies of military action, it might be questionable whether NATO would be a credible actor in selecting moderate clerics or advising on management of the displacement situation and reintegration. Nonetheless, although the proposals derived from her study might not be directly “actionable” by NATO, these proposals will provide approaches and possible solutions for other actors and practitioners within the comprehensive approach.

The same limitation with regard to direct action by NATO might apply to two (economy and development aid) of the four factors of state power which Troels Henningsen proposes be synchronized in a comprehensive approach. However, his advice to NATO member states on thinking of military engagement in a wider scale by including the training of border patrols or gendarmerie units is acknowledged (albeit keeping the initial thoughts on the benefits of a “low footprint” in mind as well). The requirements of a detailed intelligence picture in support of a counter-terrorism strategy based on local self-interest, as proposed by Henningsen, will be something COE-DAT will perhaps examine more closely, in coordination with experts and practitioners from NATO member states.
Gerta Zaimi’s paper on religious radicalization in the Balkans puts a spotlight on a special root cause for terrorism and the internal and external factors fueling it. It makes clear that there is an obvious link between how a religion is interpreted, e.g., how progressiveness that interpretation is, and the kind of education provided to those clerics (imams) who address believers in their sermons. As mentioned here as well, NATO might not be a credible actor in the face of the target audience attracted by fundamentalism, but can be a valuable promoter of understanding this phenomenon and as such can support and enable other national and international actors in developing an appropriate choice of counter-measures. The current Albanian initiative of establishing a Centre of Excellence dealing with the foreign fighter issues can be viewed as an important building block regarding the strategic need within the Balkan area.

In the same geographical area, Luan Qafmolla looks from a more technical angle at lessons learned and best practices regarding critical (nuclear) infrastructure protection. The layered system approach presented and the derived recommendations (improvement of physical protection, update and development of emergency plans with a special focus on INAP facilities and most important increased cooperation and information sharing in the sense of strategic partnerships) will surely help to ensure and improve safe operation of (nuclear) waste processing and storage.

Giray Sadik praises the value of counter-terrorism cooperation as well, with a special focus on how it can enhance NATO’s strategic relevance. In his critical assessment of NATO’s policy guidelines on counter-terrorism he promotes a more proactive or –leading- and less -supportive- role of the Alliance, arguing the current structures and policies might have kept Allies from turning to NATO for -terrorism-related assistance-. The proposed approach of -Allies First / NATO First- regarding cooperating partners is well worth consideration. As he explains, Turkey is carrying a great burden of the existing threats at NATO’s southern flank; however, as COE-DAT’s framework nation, Turkey is also a major stakeholder within NATO’s counter-terrorism realm and can therefore act as a promoter of potential changes in NATO’s approach to counter-terrorism. Work like this should help to maintain the strategic relevance of NATO as the main security platform for its members and partners, given the suggested implications of other cooperation opportunities.

Last but not least, Nicole Alexander, April Moore, and Ashley Sogge share their experiences of responding to terrorism in the ambiguous Syrian conflict environment with the main focus on the part played by civilian information sharing and interagency collaboration plays. They emphasize that data regarding areas, structures, capabilities, organizations, people, and events is generally available and in many cases predates military involvement. They difficulty lies in -mining- this data and making it available to build a common operating
picture of the dynamics in the area, which would help to illuminate terrorist networks and supporters. The inter-agency and civil-military cooperation they describe are essentials parts of a long-term strategy to stabilize regions at risk and provide a more secure environment, which at the same time will help other social developments to prosper. The experiences of the setup of a universal data repository and information-sharing platform, actively maintained by a Knowledge Management Team, are worth a closer look by NATO. NATO should pursue the definition of NATO wide content and format standards on (automated) information exchange, as also referenced in the recent revision of the military concept to counter-terrorism MC 0472-1. Although the approach they recommend might need a further building of trust, transparency and cross-organizational literacy, the paradigm shift has been initiated and the way ahead looks promising.

I hope, that with this publication, COE-DAT has also contributed to a promising way ahead on shaping and improving the way terrorism can be countered in a comprehensive manner. We will continue our mission to strive for realistic solutions to terrorism and counterterrorism challenges, in order to transform NATO and Nations of interest to meet potential and future security challenges.

We would be happy to include you, the reader, in this process. Having drawn your attention to COE-DAT’s annual Terrorism Experts Conference through this booklet, we would like to underline once more that you are welcome to join us during TEC 2017 on 24 to 25 October 2017 in Ankara. There is a high probability that you would meet and be able to exchange views with the contributing authors of this booklet, in addition to making a lot of other new contacts with experts and practitioners working on the comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism.

Looking forward to seeing you next October, kind regards

Alexander Brand
TEC 2016 Director