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CONTENT

The Defence Against Terrorism Review (DATR) is calling for papers for coming issues. The DATR focuses on terrorism and counterterrorism. All of the articles sent to DATR undergo a peer-review process before publication. For further information please contact datr@coedat.nato.int

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Editor's Note

Dear Defence Against Terrorism Review (DATR) Readers,

The Centre of Excellence-Defence Against Terrorism (COE-DAT) encourages the sharing of expertise, information and best practices in countering terrorism, for allies within NATO and for partner nations. As an integral part of these efforts, COE-DAT proudly presents the 10th Volume of DATR. This issue of DATR features three research articles on varied aspects of terrorism and a policy paper on NATO's current CT strategy.

The issue begins with a policy paper on NATO's current CT strategy written by Federica Genna from the Counter Terrorism Section, Emerging Security Challenges Division (ESCD) in NATO HQ. For decades, NATO has been an active player in the international fight against terrorism. In May 2017, the Alliance approved an ambitious counter terrorism Action Plan, seeking to boost its efforts in this field. The approval of the Action Plan reflected a changed mindset in Allied nations. In her paper, entitled *"NATO's Enhanced Role in Counter Terrorism"*, Genna provides an overview of the progress made since the approval of the 2017 Action Plan; examines NATO's current CT strategy and details how NATO has established itself as a relevant player in the international fight against terrorism. She explores possible areas where NATO's implementation work should be prioritized, following the update of the Action Plan in December 2018. The author also makes some suggestions for possible future action and concludes that the current security environment requires continued momentum behind an enhanced CT role for NATO.

The first article of this issue by Matthew Phelps, an expert at the Criminological Research Institute of Lower Saxony (KFN), focuses on counter-radicalisation, a term often used in the discourse of terrorism. Scientific research on counter-radicalisation has grown exponentially in the past decade.. In his article entitled *"Breaking down perspectives on counter-radicalisation: A critical review of terminology"*, Phelps reviews certain terms encountered in counter-radicalisation and counter-terrorism research with the aim of strengthening a universal understanding. Rather than looking to propose new terminology, Phelps seeks to analyse how existing meanings could be redefined, based on different ongoing perspectives in the field. He discusses how additional information might be incorporated within terminology to ensure a full and accurate representation of the phenomena. In face of the growing importance of risk and vulnerability evaluations, Phelps describes these terms of *risk* and *vulnerability*, alongside *hazard* and *exposure* with a conceptual model indicating their interrelationship. For Phelps, risk can be understood as the sum value of the three core elements of radicalisation (vulnerability, hazard, and exposure) and radicalisation can only occur when these three elements are present. He continues by suggesting that the predicted risk of becoming radicalised varies based on the influence of these individual variables. Phelps concludes that a common terminology is needed to increase multinational collaborations and universal understandings.

In the second article of this issue by Joseph S. Tuman entitled *"Opposing DAESH in a Post-Syria/Iraq Conflict Environment: Stabilization and Creative Proactive Messaging"*. Tuman, a prominent expert on terrorism from San Francisco State University, claims that DAESH's unique characteristics—e.g., opportunistic military strategies, taking advantage of instability and chaos in failed states, the embrace and skillful use of social media platforms to attract and direct fighters in the middle east and throughout the world, as well for attracting and influencing news media coverage—have helped elevate their status relative to other terror groups for the last three years. Firstly, he tries to answer the question of "what marked DAESH as different?" and then explores DAESH's exit strategy by explaining the situations on the ground in Iraq and Syria. Tuman also examines messaging strategies that can mitigate DAESH recruitment of foreign fighters, asserting that losing ground in Syria and Iraq will hurt their claim of being a "transnational" (i.e.,ignoring boundaries

created by colonialists) organization—but asserting that the transnational nature of their existence is still enabled by their use of boundary-less social media, and their ongoing recruiting and directing of terror attacks from afar. Tuman concludes that while it is now quite likely DAESH will also be driven out of the last tracts of land it controlled in Syria, as it was in Iraq, the West should be careful about claiming victory and assuming this group no longer poses a threat. Tuman identifies an additional concern that DAESH could merge and combine resources with Al Qaeda. To discourage any possibility of rapprochement between DAESH and Al Qaeda, NATO members and other countries should flood DAESH targets on social media with news stories that document the split between Al Qaeda and DAESH.

Ret.Col. Muzaffer Aydemir and Col. Barış Ateş from Turkish Armed Forces, shed light on an 'Upper Echelon' approach, in the third article of this issue titled *"Employing Upper Echelon Approach to the Crisis Management Team Intervening in Terror Incidents and Regional Conflicts"*. The authors discuss new perspectives in crisis management, both at a national and international level and their impact in formulating new policies for the establishment of specialist, crisis management units to fight terrorism and to handle regional conflicts. Previously, academic studies have focused on the crisis itself as well as its consequences. However, scholars have not focused on the composition of crisis management teams, which intervene in, and manage terrorist incidents; the characteristics of the individual members of the team, and their impact on the resolution of the situation. Therefore, in their article, Aydemir and Ateş intend to introduce a new perspective to the field, making the case for the use of an 'Upper Echelon' approach for crisis management teams, responding to regional and global conflicts and contributing to the fight against terrorism. They believe that the implementation of the Upper Echelon approach to crisis management teams employed in response to terror attacks and related crises, could be of substantial value for future efforts in this area.

We would like to thank all authors and referees for the contributions they have made to this issue and encourage readers to send us comments and suggestions. DATR always welcomes and encourages contributions from across the military and civil community.

Sincerely yours,

Uğur GÜNGÖR, Assoc.Prof.
Editor-in-Chief

NATO's Enhanced Role in Counter Terrorism

Federica Genna [1]

Abstract: *For decades, NATO has been an active player in the international fight against terrorism, including through its Operations worldwide. In May 2017, the Alliance approved an ambitious counter terrorism Action Plan, seeking to boost its efforts in this field. The approval of the Action Plan reflected a changed mindset in Allied nations, who had previously been reluctant to increase NATO's CT footprint. This article provides an overview of the progress achieved since May 2017 and details how NATO has established itself as a relevant player in the international fight against terrorism. An update of the Action Plan was approved by Allied Foreign Ministers in December 2018, and the article explores possible areas where NATO's implementation work should be prioritized, concluding that the current security environment requires momentum behind an enhanced NATO CT role to be maintained.*

Keywords: *NATO, United Nations, Counter Terrorism, Action Plan, Capacity Building*

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[1] By Federica Genna, Officer, Counter Terrorism, NATO HQ, genna.federica@nato.hq.int. The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Organization.

Introduction

Seventeen years after the events of 9/11, terrorism remains a pressing global concern and a widespread threat[2]. In the last two decades, much progress has been made, not only in the consolidation of national strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism, but also in the structuring of a global framework to address this threat. In support of the effort led first and foremost by the United Nations (UN), international organizations have striven to find their place and relevance in a way that does not duplicate the work of national governments but provides added value and results in an overall coherent approach.

As a political-military organization with extensive experience in crisis management, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) should be considered an obvious player in the counter terrorism (CT) field. Whilst repeated in-depth discussions within NATO are essential to ensure the right mandate for the Organization, they may to some extent have slowed the creation of a robust framework to outline NATO's CT role. In the last few years, following the approval in 2012 of NATO CT Policy Guidelines and in 2017 of an ambitious Action Plan, the Alliance has, however, made considerable progress in this direction, carving out a role for itself in the global fight against terrorism, which it now looks to consolidate.

This paper will analyze progress made since the approval of the 2017 Action Plan[3], examine NATO's current CT strategy, and present recommendations for possible future action.

Background

The impact of the terrorist threat is well known to NATO, whose member nations decided to trigger Article 5 of its founding treaty – enshrining the principle of collective defense, i.e. an attack on one is an attack on all – only once in the history of the Alliance, in response to the 9/11 terror attacks against the United States. In 2002, a year after the attacks, the Alliance's Military Committee approved its first Military Concept for Defence against Terrorism, detailing NATO's role in the full spectrum of operations for defence against terrorism. The Military Concept was undoubtedly a solid document, but it suffered from having been "somewhat hurriedly drawn up"[4] in response to the unexpected triggering of Article 5, and lacked a corresponding policy document to complement it.

In 2012, the Alliance put in place Policy Guidelines setting out a more comprehensive approach to CT, and focusing NATO's efforts on its areas of expertise: maintaining 'awareness' of the terrorist threat; building Allies' 'capabilities' to counter it; and strengthening 'engagement' with

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[2] The 2018 Global Terrorism Index reports that, in 2017, 67 countries experienced at least one death from terrorism, and over 100 at least one terrorist incident. Source: Institute for Economics and Peace, "Global Terrorism Report 2018: Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism" (2018), p. 4; 48. Available at: http://visionofhumanity.org/app /uploads/2018/12/Global-Terrorism-Index-2018-1.pdf (accessed 10 January 2019).

[3] Previous progress has already been covered in other policy papers. For an overview, see Juliette Bird, "NATO's role in Counter-Terrorism", *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9(2) (2015), pp. 61-70. Available at http://www.terrorismanalysts.com /pt/index.php/pot/article/view/419 (accessed 10 January 2019); Claudia Bernasconi, "NATO's role in the Fight against Terrorism: Where Do We Stand?", *NATO Defence College* 66 (2011), pp. 1-8. Available at https://www.files.ethz.ch /isn/128562/rp_66.pdf (accessed 10 January 2019).

[4] Bird, "NATO's role in Counter-Terrorism", p. 62.

partners and international organizations[5]. An Action Plan detailing concrete measures to implement these guidelines followed in 2014.

The Action Plan was a relatively modest document, looking to achieve as much as possible within existing human and financial resources. Its limited scope can be attributed to the fact that, despite a fast-growing threat from terrorism[6], NATO "Allies [had] yet to express any increased ambition for NATO in the CT field", as was argued in a comprehensive assessment of the Alliance's role in CT in 2015[7]. Many member states appeared reluctant to relinquish control over an area traditionally seen as a national responsibility, concerned that the Alliance would overstep its boundaries. Allies at that time did not seek to inject additional resources into the CT effort at NATO.

The Military Concept for Defense against Terrorism was thoroughly reviewed at the end of 2015. The update of this crucial document[8], which now lists measures stemming directly from both the 2012 Policy Guidelines and the 2006 UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy, meant that NATO was slowly starting to work towards building a framework that would enable the Alliance to provide its contribution to the global fight against terrorism more coherently, effectively and efficiently.

Recent History

As work on the tasks stemming from the Policy Guidelines and the initial Action Plan continued to progress throughout 2016, NATO Heads of State and Government began to show signs of readiness to step up the Alliance's efforts in this area. In response to the evolving threat landscape, at their Warsaw Summit in July 2016, they publicly declared that:

> *"Terrorism […] 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. […] We are ready to do more to counter this threat, including by helping our partners provide for their own security, defend against terrorism, and build resilience against attack."* [9]

The concrete result of this political push was the approval, in May 2017, of a lengthy Action Plan to enhance NATO's role in the international community's fight against terrorism.

The negotiating process behind the agreement of the document was a long and difficult one, as many nations remained wary of increasing NATO's CT footprint. It was imperative to strike the right balance in order to produce a document that would, on the one hand, truly upgrade NATO's

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[5] "NATO's Policy Guidelines on Counter-Terrorism" (2012), NATO, at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_ texts_87905.htm (accessed 10 January 2019).

[6] In 2014-2015 the so-called Islamic State (IS), one the world's deadliest terrorist group of the past decade, was at the height of its power. Source: Willem Theo Oosterveld and Willem Bloem, "The Rise and Fall of ISIS", (Hague Center for Strategic Studies, 2017). Available at https://hcss.nl/sites/default/files/files/reports/The%20Rise%20and%20Fall%20 of%20ISIS.pdf (accessed 10 January 2019).

[7] Bird, "NATO's role in Counter-Terrorism", p. 68.

[8] "Military Committee Concept for Counter Terrorism" (2015), NATO, at https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/ assets/pdf/pdf_2016_01/20160817_160106-mc0472-1-final.pdf (accessed 10 January 2019).

[9] "Warsaw Summit Communiqué" (2016), NATO, para 5; 8, at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_ texts_133169. htm (accessed 10 January 2019).

efforts in CT and, on the other, fit with different national approaches. As a result, the Action Plan clearly states that nations retain primary responsibility for their domestic security and their own resilience, and sets out a number of detailed measures through which NATO could support Allies (but also partners) in a way that would provide added value and not duplicate either national or international efforts.

These measures were grouped in five different domains (Awareness and analysis; Preparedness and responsiveness; Capabilities; Capacity building and partnerships; and Operations), were in line with the three core areas of the Policy Guidelines and built on those lines of effort already identified in the 2014 Action Plan for Implementation. Attention was also given in the 2017 Action Plan to how the issue was to be handled internally and communicated to a broader external audience.

Achievements to Date

The 2017 Action Plan provides a formal framework through which to address all CT-related matters with both Allied and partner countries. By filling this framework with fresh and ambitious proposals, NATO showed itself to be a modern and adaptable Alliance – evolving in response to changes in the international security environment – and confirmed its position as a credible and relevant actor in the global effort against terrorism.

Since May 2017, there have been elements of progress across all five domains that are worthy of highlighting, including:

a. Awareness and Analysis

A Terrorism Intelligence Cell (TIC) was set up within the newly established Joint Intelligence and Security Division (JISD), reinforcing the 'awareness' pillar of NATO's CT approach by providing enhanced monitoring and strategic assessments on the evolution of terrorist threats.

The creation of a Regional Hub for the South, while not a CT initiative *per se,* also feeds into the 'awareness' pillar. Strategically located at Joint Force Command Naples, the Hub is expected to contribute to the collection and sharing of information on threats and opportunities coming from the South, and help coordinate NATO's activities in the area and its outreach to partners. Full capability of the Hub was reached only in July 2018, making it too early to fully assess its contribution. However, from a CT standpoint, it is clear that the Hub has the potential to enhance the Alliance's understanding of the terrorist threat and better inform its decision making.

In response to the tasks stemming from the Action Plan, NATO Allies agreed in 2018 a landmark biometric data policy, which – abiding by the relevant national and international laws and requirements – would increase their "ability to identify returning foreign terrorist fighters and other threat actors, and to comply with UNSCR 2396 [on foreign terrorist fighters]"[10]. With recent research estimating that at least 40,000 people travelled to Iraq and Syria to join ISIS since 2013[11], the approval of the policy represents a major success not only for bringing together Allies on the particularly sensitive

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[10] "Brussels Summit Declaration" (2018)*,* NATO, para 11, at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624. htm (accessed 10 January 2019).

[11] "Global Terrorism Report 2018: Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism", p. 5.

subject of data sharing, but also for stepping up efforts to curb the flow of foreign fighters, one of the main current challenges in the fight against terrorism.

b. Preparedness and Responsiveness

Relevant work was conducted to contribute to Allies' efforts to enhance their resilience and consequence management measures in the event of a terrorist attack. In particular, in consultation with national subject matter experts, NATO has been working towards the development of non-binding guidelines for increased civil-military cooperation in response to large scale Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) terrorist attacks. Initiatives undertaken within the framework of the Action Plan have also ensured that CT elements are taken into account when conducting exercises.

c. Capabilities

The Defense against Terrorism Program of Work (DAT POW) continued to support projects to improve Allied nations' capabilities to respond to terrorist threats. In light of the evolving trend of terrorist misuse of technology, in particular Unmanned Aerial Systems[12] (UAS, i.e. drones), DAT POW supported work exploring non-lethal capabilities to counter terrorist use of drones with minimum collateral damage. Capabilities to increase interoperability and help Allies implement the new biometric data policy are currently being developed under this framework, along with other initiatives related to terrorist use of CBRN material, Countering Improvised Explosive Devices (C-IED), Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), route clearance and harbor protection.

d. Capacity Building and Partnerships

Helping partners build their own capacity to fight terrorism themselves is an integral part of NATO's approach to CT, and the Action Plan placed emphasis on improving delivery of training and advice to partners, and providing support in CT-related areas. Such support was offered to requesting partner countries through existing partnership frameworks such as the Defense and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative (DCBI). Examples include the work taken forward under the DCBI in Jordan in the areas of C-IED, border security and military exercises, or that conducted in Iraq on C-IED and Security Sector Reform (SSR) through the NATO Training and Capacity Building Activity in Iraq (NTCB-I).

Under the umbrella of the Science for Peace and Security Program (SPS), NATO is also delivering concrete assistance to partner countries in CT-relevant areas such as C-IED and CBRN defense, in particular through follow-on work on its flagship Stand-off Detection of Explosives (STANDEX) project[13]. A special SPS Call for Proposals to provide technological solutions but also ideas to address the human and social aspects of terrorism was issued in 2017, with selected projects commencing in mid-2018.

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[12] See Atul Pant "Drones: An Emerging Terror Tool", *Journal of Defence Studies* 12(1) (2018), pp. 61-75. Available at https://idsa.in/jds/jds-12-1-2018-drones-emerging-terror-tool (accessed 10 January 2019).

[13] Launched in 2013, STANDEX aimed at devising technology that would help identify potential suicide bombers in crowded places. For more information, please see "The NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme: Annual Report 2017" (NATO, 2017), p. 39; 51. Available at https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_11/20181126_SPS-Annual-Report-2017.pdf (accessed 10 January 2019).

The Action Plan also prioritized cooperation efforts with relevant international and regional organizations. Coordination with the UN continued to progress steadily, in particular after the Organization restructured its approach to CT with the establishment in June 2017 of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. A number of joint initiatives are ongoing. Cooperation with the European Union (EU) also received fresh impetus in the Action Plan. On the occasion of the NATO Warsaw Summit in July 2016, the Alliance's Secretary General and the Presidents of the EU Commission and the EU Council signed a Joint Declaration to enhance cooperation between the two organizations[14], and a common set of proposals for implementation followed five months later[15]. Building on these elements, 34 new measures were added by the two Councils in December 2017, among which CT was identified as an area where the relationship between the two organizations should be enhanced[16]. Since then, staff to staff dialogue on CT-related matters has increased significantly, as has coordination when conducting capacity building activities in partner countries. The Action Plan also recognized the importance of interacting with regional organizations. With the African Union (AU), in particular through the African Centre for the Study & Research on Terrorism in Algiers, NATO is successfully boosting cooperation under the framework of the SPS Program on C-IED and other CT-related areas.

e. Operations

The Action Plan also reflected NATO's visible commitment to the fight against terrorism on the ground, beginning with the work the Alliance does in Afghanistan through its Resolute Support Mission (RSM). Established in 2015 as a follow-on from the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), RSM is a non-combat mission which seeks to train and advise the country's security forces and strengthen its security institutions so as to ensure that Afghanistan does not again become "a safe haven for terrorists"[17]. Through the 2017 Action Plan, NATO committed to continue exploring possible ways to build further capacity of Afghan security forces in CT-relevant areas, based on periodic reviews of the mission.

Last but not least, the Action Plan marked the beginning of NATO's official participation in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS/Da'esh. To some extent, participation was a mere formality because all NATO members were already part of the Coalition, and the Alliance itself had been providing input from surveillance aircraft (Airborne Warning and Control System, i.e. AWACS) since 2016. Nevertheless, this was not an easy decision as a number of nations needed reassurance

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[14] "Joint Declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization" (8 July 2016) at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/ 21481/nato-eu-declaration-8-july-en-final.pdf (accessed 10 January 2019).

[15] "Council Conclusions on the Implementation of the Joint Declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization", (6 December 2016) at http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15283-2016-INIT/en/pdf (accessed 10 January 2019).

[16] "Council Conclusions on Implementation of the Joint Declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization" (5 December 2017) at https://www.consilium.europa.eu//media/31947/st14802en17.pdf (accessed 10 January 2019).

[17] "Warsaw Summit Communiqué" (2016), NATO, para 87, at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169. htm (accessed 15 January 2019).

that NATO would not take on a combat role[18]. Participation in the Coalition provided visible confirmation of a solid Alliance, united against the terrorist threat, and gave NATO a seat at the decision table, alongside other relevant international players. The Coalition provided a platform for information-sharing on counter-terrorism related matters, and ensured increased awareness of the situation in Iraq and Syria. Under its various working groups, it also offered an opportunity for increased consultation and de-confliction of activities with other international organizations, including in particular the EU.

The Brussels Summit and an Updated Action Plan

The momentum of political support behind an enhanced NATO role in CT persisted as the Action Plan started to be implemented, and the tangible progress achieved in a relatively short time prompted nations to push for an update of the document, to capitalize on the results obtained and continue to adapt to the changing threat landscape.

In July 2018, NATO Heads of State and Government gathered in Brussels for their first Summit in the Alliance's new Headquarters. The Summit offered an opportunity to voice continued commitment to the global counter terrorism effort and announce a decision to update the Action Plan[19].

The updated Action Plan was negotiated throughout November 2018, and endorsed in December by NATO's Foreign Ministers. The relative ease with which Allied nations negotiated and approved the second iteration of the Action Plan is testament to NATO's accepted place in the international fight against terrorism. Nations have acknowledged the added value that stems from the Alliance's unique civil-military structure, its assets and capabilities, and were able to act by consensus to put in place new CT measures.

In the 2018 document, core elements of NATO's CT approach, such as intelligence sharing and awareness, the DAT POW, education and training of Allies and partners, and capacity building in partner nations, are all given fresh impetus with proposals that build on the results achieved from 2017 and seek to consolidate NATO's contribution to the global fight against terrorism.

Seeking to stay on top of a fast changing security environment, new measures were also added to look at how to integrate relevant technological contributions in CT capabilities, and how to find adequate ways to counter terrorist misuse of technology.

What is Next?

Considering it took a decade after the events of 9/11 to put in place the first NATO Policy Guidelines on CT, the speed of progress and the results achieved in the past couple of years are significant. With overall agreement amongst NATO Allies that CT represents a long term effort and investment for the Alliance, there is an opportunity to consider which are the key initiatives NATO should prioritize whilst implementing the 2018 Action Plan.

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[18] "Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of NATO Heads of State and/or Government in Brussels on 25 May" (25 May 2017), NATO, at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_144098.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed 10 January 2019).

[19] "Brussels Summit Declaration" (2018), NATO, para 10-11, at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.htm (accessed 10 January 2019).

Supporting a broader CT approach

While all NATO Allies acknowledge the "need to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism"[20], countering violent extremism (CVE) and preventing violent extremism (PVE) are areas traditionally considered outside the Alliance's mandate. There is, however, an element which NATO can contribute to these efforts and provide added value.

Research shows that high levels of political terror (including abuse by the military and the police), poor governance structures and lack of trust in government institutions are among the most significant drivers of terrorism[21]. This is why the promotion of good governance (i.e. accountable, transparent institutions, respectful of human rights and the rule of law), including in security and defense institutions, is a fundamental aspect of combatting terrorism.

Within frameworks such as Building Integrity (BI) and the DCBI, NATO provides support to partner countries in defense institution building and security sector reform. The Alliance's work in this area can help address structural issues in the security sector that not only hamper national governments in their efforts to counter terrorism, but also create a fertile ground for the emergence of conditions that are conducive to its spread.

As part of its efforts to build capacity in partner nations, NATO should continue to promote this broader approach to CT, as it can help partner countries tackle the underlying causes conducive to terrorism without overstepping the Alliance's mandate and whilst making use of its existing strengths. All cooperation with partner nations will continue to be dependent on their requests for support and tailored to them.

As an example, NATO is already taking forward this approach with work in Iraq. The new NATO Mission Iraq (NMI) launched in July 2018 at the request of the Iraqi Prime Minister, should support Iraq by training and advising relevant officials and professional military instructors, with the final goal of reinforcing the country's security institutions. This effort will capitalize on the work on SSR previously conducted under the DCBI framework and the previous NTCB-I mission.

Keeping pace with emerging trends

The initiatives outlined in the December Action Plan portray a forward-thinking Alliance that adapts its strategies to a changing threat landscape. The particular focus placed on linking new technologies and CT reflects an emerging trend also identifiable in the national CT strategies of individual Allies[22]. There is increased concern about potential terrorist misuse of technology – be

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[20] "Brussels Summit Declaration" (2018), NATO, para 10, at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624. htm 9 (accessed 10 January 2019).

[21] "Global Terrorism Report 2018: Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism", p. 65. For further examples of the link between terrorism and poor governance, see Edward Newman, "Weak States, State Failure, and Terrorism", *Terrorism and Political Violence,* 19(4) (2007), pp. 463-488. Available at https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09546550701590636 (accessed 10 January 2019).

[22] For example, see the "National Strategy for Countering Terrorism of the United States of America" (October 2018), at https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/NSCT.pdf (accessed 10 January 2019); or "CONTEST: The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism" (June 2018), at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/716907/140618_CCS207_CCS0218929798-1_CONTEST_3.0_WEB.pdf (accessed 10 January 2019).

it the exploitation of commercial drones in combat[23] or the use of cyber for terrorist purposes, ranging from recruitment to financial support[24]. The new items in the Action Plan represent a step in the right direction in terms of keeping on top of these challenges. However, if the Alliance wants to remain on this path, it might usefully enhance its engagement with industry and technology think tanks, to ensure its CT effort fully incorporates their expertise as well.

Furthermore, over the next year, NATO will implement a recent internal Functional Review which will see the Alliance devote, among other things, increased focus to cyber defense and the reinforcement of its counter-hybrid warfare posture. Linking these elements to NATO's CT should ensure that the Alliance has a comprehensive threat picture and is well prepared to respond to emerging challenges.

Maintaining high standards

NATO should strive for continuous improvement in areas where it already has solid expertise. One of these areas is military education and training. There is room to enhance the delivery of CT-related training, education and advice to partner nations. NATO must ensure that a clear, coherent, training offer is provided to partners, so that they can be best equipped to address and combat the terrorist threat themselves. This could include reinforced cooperation with relevant Centers of Excellence (COE) as the updated Action Plan directs. COEs such as the Defense against Terrorism COE in Ankara, the C-IED COE in Madrid and the Joint CBRN Defense COE in Vyskov, among others, have for years strengthened NATO's CT effort by providing valued subject matter expertise. NATO's approach to COEs should ensure optimized use of their contributions, in particular on education and training.

There is also room to do more with NATO Special Operation Forces (SOF), leveraging their expertise to train and assist their equivalents in partner countries.

The Alliance should also ensure that its capacity building activities do not overlap with assistance already provided either on a bilateral basis or by other international players. At the Brussels Summit, Heads of State and Government stated that "Mapping of counter-terrorism capacity building activities in partner countries, in cooperation with the partner country concerned, would help NATO to better determine where it can best add value."[25] This is a field where further NATO work should be explored. Mapping exercises can be valuable tools to ensure NATO does not duplicate effort or waste its resources, and may also provide an opportunity for increased cooperation with regional and international organizations on the ground. Selected partner countries in NATO's South – where the Regional Hub would also have a role to play – might have particular value as first recipients of such an approach.

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[23] See Alyssa Sims, "The Rising Drone Threat from Terrorists", *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 19 (2018), pp. 97-107. Available at https://muse.jhu.edu/ (accessed 8 January 2019).

[24] See Claudio Augusto Payá-Santos and Juan José Delgado-Morán (2017) "Use of Cyberspace for Terrorist Purposes", in *Cyberspace. Advanced Sciences and Technologies for Security Applications* (J. Martín Ramírez and Luís A. García-Segura, eds, Springer, Cham 2007), pp. 197-209. Available at https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-54975-0_12#CR22 (accessed 10 January 2019).

[25] "Brussels Summit Declaration" (2018)*,* NATO, para 11, at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.htm 9 (accessed 10 January 2019).

Finally, the global counter terrorism effort will become ever more efficient if the strategies of the international organizations involved can be linked together in a coherent framework, to ensure that action is coordinated and there is no duplication of effort. For this reason, it is imperative to continue to improve cooperation and interaction with the UN, the EU but also the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Interpol and Europol, and, importantly, regional stakeholders. With practice, consultation with relevant counterparts should become an automatic reflex.

Conclusion

Since the 2012 Policy Guidelines, through the 2017 Action Plan and now with the 2018 update, NATO has successfully carved out a role for itself in the international community's fight against terrorism in a way that does not duplicate existing efforts, overstretch the Alliance beyond its competences or trespass on national responsibilities. Milestones achieved in the past two years include: formal participation in the Global Coalition; establishment of the Terrorism Intelligence Cell; setting up of a Regional Hub for the South; approval of a biometric data policy; and a number of ongoing successful capacity building activities within partner countries including Jordan, Tunisia and Iraq. NATO has recognized CT as a valuable contribution to the Alliance's 'deterrence and defense' and 'projecting stability' approaches. Efforts continue to be made to bring together related work strands and operate in this field in full coherence and respect of other relevant internal frameworks.

Full implementation of the updated Action Plan is now the main priority, and there is much to look forward to, both in terms of challenges and opportunities. The full potential of the Regional Hub for the South has yet to be achieved, but a positive trajectory is expected as it starts to deliver on its key functions. More can be done in the way education and training is structured for partner countries, and NATO SOF may yet take a greater role in CT. Momentum behind increased data sharing must be maintained: the approval of a biometric data policy was a landmark moment for data sharing within the Alliance, but needs to be followed up with concrete activities. Lastly, cooperation with international and regional organizations should continue to be cultivated through systematic dialogue and joint activities.

The results of the past two years show that nations have recognized that NATO can provide added value in the global fight against terrorism, and acknowledge its rightful role. This may be regarded as an important change in Allies' approach to the international CT field and a major shift from the views of the 1990s.

NATO's approach to countering terrorism must remain focused on the added value it can provide and on those areas where its strengths lie – awareness, capabilities, engagement – but, in the current security environment, Allies cannot afford to reduce their level of ambition. As the threat landscape continues to evolve, NATO must rise to the challenge, and continue pursuing an enhanced counter terrorism effort.

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Breaking down perspectives on counter-radicalisation: A critical review of terminology

Matthew Phelps[1]

Abstract: *Terminology in counter-radicalisation literature has been the subject of much debate, most notably surrounding how radicalisation and terrorism is defined. This paper explores those terms that have not received as much attention or have not been specified to the area of counter-radicalisation. The issue of language borrowing is raised as terms from specific academic disciplines are incorporated into counter-radicalisation discourses without any adaptation. In face of the growing importance of risk and vulnerability evaluations, both risk and vulnerability are discussed with a conceptual model indicating their interrelationship. It is argued in particular that radicalisation requires universal definitions in order to facilitate multinational collaborations and international research. Therefore, new meanings for traditional terms will be explored to see if they can better reflect current understandings in the field.*

Keywords: *Counter-Radicalisation, Returnees, Terminology, Vulnerability, Risk*

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Introduction

Scientific research on counter-radicalisation has grown exponentially in the past decade. Entering the word *radicalisation* alone in Google Scholar reveals in excess of 60,000 matches for articles, reports and academic texts. Although new aspects of radicalisation and terrorism have resulted in the development of advanced prevention technologies and methods, the phenomena themselves are old issues in civil society. This is why it is surprising to see that there continues to be a lack of consensus in the use of key terms. Developing universally accepted definitions is clearly desirable not only for consistency but also to facilitate international research[2]. The importance of multi-agency and multi-sectoral cooperation is a popular recommendation in the area of counter-radicalisation and counter-terrorism, which has resulted in contributions from a diverse range of societal actors with backgrounds from criminology to psychology and from history to politics[3]. The integration of perspectives from different academic disciplines has likely contributed to the challenge of cooperative engagement in the field of counter-radicalisation in regards to how research is conceptualised, conducted and reviewed. Diversified collaborations create further semantical obstacles as words are borrowed from other disciplines and integrated into counter-radicalisation contexts without proper reflection of their meaning within the field, which might, for instance, be either too specific or too general.

How certain terminologies are used, or not used, in the broader discussion of counter-radicalisation presents another point for consideration. The newsworthiness of terrorism and radicalisation has meant that the latest terror attacks and ongoing investigations are covered extensively by the news media and in other communications channels. Naturally, if a term lacks a universal definition in academic literature then no expectation can be had as to how aspects of terrorism and radicalisation will be portrayed in the media[4], not to mention the reality that not all news coverage is based on fair and accurate assessment of the facts in favour of sensationalist, misleading or biased opinion. How certain groups are labelled in the media in relation to terrorism and radicalisation carries clear political overtones with little or no consideration of the potential sway it could have on public perceptions of terrorist threats[5]. The ethical difficulties of reporting acts of terrorism or violent incidents seem in part to be the by-product of the disagreements in scientific terminology. Avoiding describing a situation as an act of terrorism to be politically correct is one of many potential quandaries that could be retrogressive for scientific research. This paper will review certain terms encountered in counter-radicalisation and counter-terrorism research with the aim of strengthening a universal understanding. Rather than looking to propose new terminology, this paper seeks to

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[2] Sadeq Rahimi, Raissa Graumans, "Reconsidering the relationship between integration and radicalization", *Journal for Deradicalization* (5) (2015).

[3] Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), "RAN issue paper: Multi-agency working and preventing violent extremism I" (2018), available at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_aware-ness_network/ran-papers/docs/multi-agency-working-preventing-violent-extremism-042018_en.pdf

[4] Kimberly Powell, "Framing Islam: An analysis of US media coverage of terrorism since 9/11", *Communication Studies* 62(1) (2011).

[5] Zizi Papacharissi, Maria de Fatima Oliveira, "News frames terrorism: A comparative analysis of frames employed in terrorism coverage in US and UK newspapers", *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 13(1) (2008); Michelle Slone, Anat Shoshani, "Evaluation of preparatory measures for coping with anxiety raised by media coverage of terrorism", *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 53(4) (2006).

analyse how existing meanings could be redefined with ongoing perspectives in the field. This paper discusses how additional information might be incorporated in terminology to ensure a full and accurate representation of the phenomena. How current terminology used in counter-radicalisation could be more specific to prevention in practice will also be discussed.

The Double Meaning of Counter-Radicalisation

One of the first terms under review in this paper is *counter-radicalisation*, a term often used in the discourse of terrorism. Counter-radicalisation is broadly understood in this paper as being those measures that contribute to the development of norms, values, attitudes, and behaviours that are viewed positively by mainstream society. However, a number of competing definitions exist that each clarify counter-radicalisation differently[6]. The main criticism highlighted here is that its meaning has become inexact as a result of its use by researchers and practitioners to label a wide range of counter-terrorism contexts. It is not uncommon to find counter-radicalisation being used interchangeably with other terminology such as anti-radicalisation, anti-polarisation, counter-extremism, countering violent extremism, countering violent radicalisation, and countering radicalisation to violence. What is more, these examples indicate the large number of similarly worded noun phrases, which creates the difficulty in selecting and strictly applying one term. Seen from a prevention perspective, the overlap that these terms share, such as the promotion of social competencies and interactions, adds further confusion to the mix.

Indeed, what a counter-radicalisation strategy might include differs between countries and governments. In certain cases, a country's counter-radicalisation strategy is a holistic representation of approaches to prevent both (violent) extremism and radicalism. For example, the national security strategy of Hungary uses the phrase *countering extremism and radicalisation* to mean prevention activities that tackle anti-democratic attitudes and challenge the position of extremist groups. In comparison, the counter-terrorism strategy of the Netherlands typically refers to *countering radicalisation to violence*, placing a special emphasis upon those behaviours that are violent. The strategy proceeds by discussing how violent extremism will be addressed but under the heading of counter-radicalisation, which gives rise to a blurring between the two fields of radicalisation and extremism. The different use of keywords between the approaches demonstrates how a strategy can be explicit in what exactly it wishes to prevent, but can also be generic by using one phrase to refer to all forms of radicalisation and extremism. Another example is the Swedish counter-terrorism strategy, which gives specific reference to the *prevention of radicalisation, violence extremism and terrorism*. The listing of each of these social phenomenon indicates a clear distinction between the different social processes leading to terrorism and thereby an awareness that prevention activities are required for all forms of terrorism.

Numerous counter-radicalisation-related nouns are used in research and policy documents. Although there is a convergence with some terms, counter-radicalisation has been used, confusingly,

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6   Riazat Butt, Henry Tuck, "European counter-radicalisation and de-radicalisation – A comparative evaluation of approaches in the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Germany" *(Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2014)*; Alex Schmid, "Radicalisation, de-radicalisation, counter-radicalisation: A conceptual discussion and literature review" (The Hague: ICCT, 2013).

as a heading for distinct social phenomena, which likely implies a sense of mutual exclusiveness. A body of general noun phrases of this term has developed over time as new research and projects are produced in the field of counter-radicalisation. It is quite common to come across the word counter-radicalisation as part of general noun phrases such as *counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation* and *countering terrorism and violent radicalisation*, used contextually to refer to an exhaustive list of prevention activities. The popularity of this research field and its multidisciplinary roots (from an assorted number of public and civil society stakeholders) has affected the notion of what it means to counter radicalisation. If it is believed that radicalism and extremism are interwoven in that one does not occur without the other, then little value can be gained from comparing fragmented terms. Yet, if the premise of preventing extremism is fundamentally different to preventing radicalisation then counter-radicalisation should not be interpreted to mean radicalism, extremism and those forms that are violent and non-violent. Instead, consensus is required in literature and policy that utilises these terms to describe separate concepts.

Evaluations – A Complex Science

A common criticism in counter-radicalisation literature is the lack of evaluations being performed on counter-radicalisation programmes and projects and on counter-radicalisation tools[7]. In a research field saturated with theoretical assumptions, a significant area of knowledge remains unexplored in regard to evidencing what really decreases the risk of an individual becoming a terrorist or violent extremist. This is an ongoing challenge in Europe as counter-radicalisation technologies produced within EU funded-projects are not always being used by end users (and are sometimes even being rejected) because of a lack of test validity; this produces a significant waste of research time and EU financial resources[8]. It is suggested here that the issue is not only how prevention concepts and outputs are rigorously tested, but also the lack of recognition by funding bodies on what it means to conduct an evaluation in the social sciences.

Seen from a social science perspective, evaluations are complex and resource-intensive processes. The expectation that projects and programmes should incorporate an internal evaluation therefore disregards the level of technicality involved. This is evidenced within the EU, where projects funded by main financial instruments such as Horizon 2020 and Seventh Framework (FP7) Programme, are restricted in time (typically up to three years) and funding. Herein lies a fundament issue because the acquisition of EU funding has a notoriously low success rate. With competition so high, the small number of projects that are awarded grants are usually forced to overpromise in order to secure funding. For example, project and programme evaluations within counter-radicalisation existed either as one of many objectives of a project or not at all. To ensure the production of quality evaluations, funding agencies and research organisations are encouraged to offer proposals whose sole aim is to evaluate counter-radicalisation approaches.

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7   Allard Feddes, Marcello Gallucci, "A literature review on methodology used in evaluating effects of preventive and de-radicalisation interventions", *Journal for Deradicalization* (5) (2015); Amy-Jane Gielen, "Supporting families of foreign fighters. A realistic approach for measuring the effectiveness", *Journal for Deradicalization* (2) (2015).

8   Dominic Kudlacek et al., "Criteria Analysis Report – Using interviews with professionals from the field of prevention" (*Kriminologisches Forschungsinstitut Niedersachsen, 2018*).

The complexity of evaluations is offered here as a potential reason for the limited amount that has been achieved so far. The general difficulties of an evaluation are the formulation of specific evaluation goals and hypotheses, the expertise required for the analysis and interpretation of evaluation data, and the choice of evaluation methodology whether by goal attainment, cost-effectiveness or end user suitability[9]. Specific difficulties in conducting evaluations of counter-radicalisation measures are related to the collection of data. Although this can be obtained from a range of different sources, information in a counter-radicalisation context stems mainly from personal responses. For example, an evaluation on the suitability of counter-radicalisation tools would be typically based on an end user's perceptions of and experience with the tool. Similarly, evaluating the impact of a terrorist rehabilitation programme would be measured by the observations of the therapist or by testimony from the participants. Although conducting research with end users may be relatively straightforward, gaining access to vulnerable populations, such as terrorists or violent extremists, can be considerably more difficult owing to lengthy ethical approval processes. Likewise, recruiting and managing participants for rehabilitation programmes provide similar barriers on account of the stigma surrounding individual confidentiality and privacy, access to rehabilitation programmes, and removal of environmental influences that could influence the participant.

One classical research challenge affecting data collection in evaluations is the size of the sample. The lack of quantitative research in the field of counter-radicalisation is a recurring theme and implies a clear need for large sample sizes to be used. As the theories underpinning several core research topics are often generalised in terms of radicalisation factors and processes, a similar expectation has emerged for prevention concepts and tools in order to aid in the exchange of effective methods. For this to be theoretically possible, an extremely large and representative population is required to accommodate for the high variation in populations (individual risk factors, vulnerability, environmental influences). However, as evaluations are often conducted under time and budget constraints, prevention concepts and anti-radicalisation tools are often based on a limited sample size, which raises the possibility that an evaluation of prevention concepts would produce different results if applied on different populations. Further dangers of using too small a sample when evaluating a de-radicalisation programme include claiming success when it is not known if the prevention concept would be effective in the larger population (type I error), or when a smaller sample size could lead to a poor evaluation of a prevention concept if a low success rate is determined in the test population, which could be a false judgement as the concept might prove successful if applied to a larger population (type II error).

A further challenge to the evaluation of de-radicalisation and rehabilitation programmes is the measurement of success. Questions raised here include whether an individual is able to de-radicalise successfully if released back into an environment where radicalising factors potentially exist and, if so, what criteria should be used to indicate a successful treatment. The general process of measuring success in therapy represents the monitoring of attitudes and / or behaviours of an individual over the course of their treatment to see if progress has been made towards the treatment's goals and objectives, inherently lengthy and costly processes. This can be achieved using a mixture of self-administered questionnaires delivered at certain intervals and progress reports from the therapist.

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9 Emil Posavac, *Program evaluation: Methods and case studies* (Routledge, 2015).

One measurement of success has been the use of recidivism i.e. whether an individual has resorted back to extremist attitudes and behaviours, or in serious cases, to violent acts[10]. Although measuring recidivism is problematic because of its arbitrariness (a binary question with two possible answers, yes or no) and its emphasis on the actions and behaviours of the individual itself. There is also no consideration of possible changes in the individual's environment such as new or starker influence from social, political, or cultural factors. Furthermore, if recidivism is to be measured by a previous radical or extremist attitude or behaviour resurfacing in an individual, then the question has to be raised as to how radical or extreme is defined, and how the views of the individual compare with those of the wider society and those of his or hers social background.

Is it "Vulnerable to" or "Risk of"?

A core element of counter-radicalisation programmes and projects is the identification and assessment of individuals and societal groups for cases of radicalisation. Numerous risk assessment tools have been designed to measure the level of radicalisation (ERG22+, IR46, and HCR-20 to name but a few) by calculating the cumulative effect of certain indicators that can raise or lower the individual's risk of engaging in violently extreme behaviours[11]. The terminology underpinning the majority of risk assessment tools concerns the word *risk*, though research on vulnerability is also gaining traction. The dominance of the word risk as a concept in counter-radicalisation litera-ture has developed an unclear distinction that has led to both terms being used interchangeably or the use of risk to mean vulnerability and vice versa. Before going into the distinction between the two terms, the implications of their usage must first be first examined.
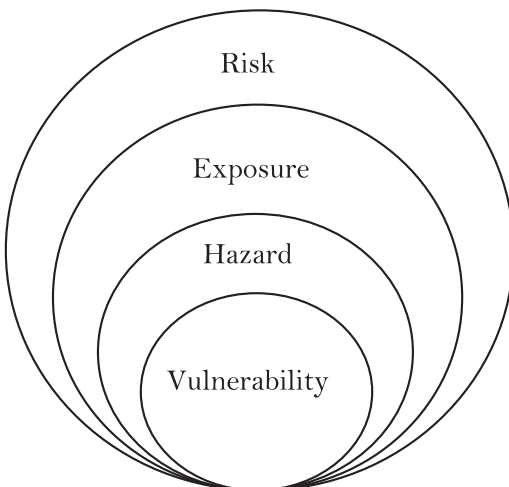

Figure 1. Conceptual model of vulnerability terminology

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[10] Stefanie Mitchell, "Deradicalization: Using Triggers for the Development of a US Program", *Journal for Deradicalization* (9) (2016).

[11] Geoff Dean, Graeme Pettet, "The 3 R's of risk assessment for violent extremism", *Journal of Forensic Practice* 19(2) (2017).

Using Figure 1, risk is understood in this paper to mean an advanced state of pre-radicalisation where all the core elements needed for radicalisation to occur are present: individual vulnerability, hazard (radicalising factor), and exposure to the radicalising factor. Therefore, if an individual or population is identified as presenting a risk, one is essentially implying that all factors are observable to a varying degree. The stigma of being seen as a risk is created when other social groups are not associated with any of the aforementioned elements. If the term is misused, the consequences could lead to the alienation of individuals or a devaluation of those individuals by other social groups.

Comparatively, using the word *vulnerability* conjures up a different implication. Vulnerability is assumed here to be at the beginning of pre-radicalisation, signifying that radicalisation is unable to develop without first possessing a vulnerability to a radicalising factor. If used in an unsuitable context, the word vulnerability could downplay the assessment of a situation if a risk were in fact present. This would also radically change the type of prevention to be implemented as cases of vulnerability are typically addressed by broad programmes that strengthen life skills and resilience, whereas a more focused and individualised approach is perhaps required for individuals who present a more advanced case of pre-radicalisation.

The model shown in Figure 1 has been developed to show the proposed distinctions and relationships between the various terminologies encountered in risk and vulnerability assessments. The first term begins with arguably the most important element of counter-radicalisation, the vulnerability of a person, which can be understood as being the characteristics of an individual that increase the probability of adopting radical or extremist behaviours and attitudes. Vulnerabilities are believed to manifest as a result of undesirable life experiences, such as poor child-rearing practices, peer rejection, and delinquent behaviour, and represent similar strains as described by strain theory[12].

The second term concerns the *hazard* itself (what is trying to be avoided) and signifies the types of social phenomena that are perceived as being negative by society (for example intolerance, violent extremism, or terrorism). Whereas the ultimate goal of prevention might be the elimination of a hazard, this is practically speaking impractical because of the complete control required over criminal behaviour.

The third term, *exposure,* represents the means by which a vulnerable person encounters a hazard. In counter-radicalisation literature, it is the social ties of a person, family members and the Internet that are believed to be the most influential mediums[13].

The final term *risk*, unlike the previous three elements, no longer represents a human component or feature but rather a mathematical likelihood of an individual becoming a violent extremist or terrorist (the hazard). Therefore, risk can be understood as the sum value of the three core elements

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[12] Robert Agnew, "Building on the foundation of general strain theory: Specifying the types of strain most likely to lead to crime and delinquency", *Journal of research in crime and delinquency* 38(4) (2001).

[13] Anneli Botha, Mahdi Abdile, "Radicalisation and al-Shabaab recruitment in Somalia" (*Institute for Security Studies Papers, 2014*); Daniel Koehler, "The radical online: Individual radicalization processes and the role of the Internet", *Journal for Deradicalization* (1) (2014).

of radicalisation (vulnerability, hazard, and exposure). It is assumed here that radicalisation can only occur when these three elements are present and the predicted risk of becoming radicalised varies based on the influence of these individual variables.

Prevention in a counter-radicalisation context usually involves addressing individual and group vulnerabilities and how individuals are exposed to the hazard[14]. However, to reduce the overall level of risk would require a holistic strategy that deals with vulnerability, hazard, and exposure. For example, measures that improve democratic values and resilience might decrease an individual's vulnerability to extremist messages, but this would only have an effect on the individuals radicalising and not on those already radicalised. In contrast, a strategic focus on de-radicalising individuals might reduce the overall number of radicals or extremists but the susceptibility to forms of deviant behaviour might remain, as individual vulnerabilities have not been addressed. Eliminating the overall risk would prove just as difficult as removing the hazard itself, which is why prevention often takes the form of two strategies: risk management and risk reduction. Efforts to manage the risk have a distinct aim of securitising measures such as identifying risk groups or ongoing monitoring to establish if the level of risk has changed[15]. A fundamental part of these strategies is the use of risk assessment instruments to highlight those societal groups for preventive consideration.

As research has grown on the root causes of radicalisation, a greater appreciation of the social environment has been integrated into prevention measures with aims of improving education and societal participation[16]. These risk reduction measures have the objective of addressing underlying causes, which essentially represent the vulnerabilities present in an individual that could predispose them to radical and extremist content. Vulnerabilities can be viewed as a destabilizing phenomenon manifesting in environmental pressures exerted on an individual, whether social, political, or economic. Exposure to negative social processes suggests a detrimental effect on emotions, values and behaviour and is thought to lead to a stronger affiliation to radical thoughts. As with the term risk, vulnerability also carries a certain stigmatisation as this represents a negative evaluation of one's physical, social, and psychological norms[17]. Moreover, the interpretation of vulnerability is rather broad given the sheer quantity of potential factors inducing this state[18]. A scientific uncertainty exists about which factors cause an individual to become vulnerable to radical and extremist behaviour owing to the limited quantitative evidence at hand.

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[14] Ronald Crelinsten, "Perspectives on counterterrorism: From stovepipes to a comprehensive approach", *Perspectives on Terrorism* 8(1) (2014).

[15] Charlotte Heath-Kelly, "Counter-terrorism and the counterfactual: Producing the 'radicalisation' discourse and the UK PREVENT strategy", *The British journal of politics and international relations* 15(3) (2013); Aislinn O'Donnell, "Securitisation, counterterrorism and the silencing of dissent: The educational implications of prevent", *British Journal of Educational Studies* 64(1) (2016).

[16] Ratna Ghosh et al., "Can education counter violent religious extremism?", *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 23(2) (2017).

[17] Aislinn O'Donnell, "Contagious ideas: vulnerability, epistemic injustice and counter-terrorism in education", *Educational Philosophy and theory* 50(10) (2018).

[18] Vicki Coppock, Mark McGovern, "'Dangerous Minds'? Deconstructing Counter_Terrorism Discourse, Radicalisation and the 'Psychological Vulnerability' of Muslim Children and Young People in Britain", *Children & Society* 28(3) (2014).

Engaging with Stakeholders and Target Groups

The development of a prevention strategy, irrespective of whether it is characterised by counter-radicalisation, de-radicalisation, or disengagement, is based almost entirely upon the needs of the individual or the group of individuals it wishes to target. When it comes to the implementation of prevention interventions, cooperation with other organisations brings important benefits in view of an improved capacity to deliver the intervention, greater visibility, and the provision of additional technical assistance[19]. Here, we speak of the two terms *stakeholder* and *target group*. The term stakeholder is unofficially understood in a counter-radicalisation and de-radicalisation context to simply mean the organisations that are involved directly or indirectly with preventive activities. Despite it being an important concept, there is no formal definition of the term. Instead, there appears to be a general acceptance of its meaning from the area of business and management, wherein there is no coherent definition of the term stakeholder and what constitutes one[20]. For the purpose of clarification, stakeholder, in the context of counter-radicalisation, is understood in this paper as:

> *An entity, in whichever form this might be, who has a formal responsibility to aid in the prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism, and who has the expertise to contribute to the design and implementation of prevention activities or be ready to apply new perspectives and concepts of prevention.*

Two fundamental elements can be identified from the description above. First, a stakeholder should share the common goal of preventing radicalisation and violent extremism as defined by their professional interests. This would not include organisations or individuals with a private interest in prevention but no official responsibility. The importance of selecting stakeholders based on their official function, regardless of whether it is a direct or indirect role, is to maintain professionalism and to avoid moving towards 'stakeholder security' where public/state actors possess an ancillary security function[21]. There is an expectation that the stakeholder should possess specialised knowledge and undertake reasonable measures to contribute to prevention. The PREVENT Strategy of the United Kingdom provides an example of the debate surrounding stakeholder involvement because of the obligation it places on the public sector (schools, universities and medical institutions) to identify individuals who are vulnerable to or at risk of radicalisation. This has received heavy criticism from different stakeholders due to the increased workload involved, additional responsibilities that, arguably, do not fall within the remit of their core function, and new pressures of accountability should negligence and malpractice claims emerge if a breach in duty of care or a misidentification of extremist behaviour were to occur. As Summerfield[22] points out, ordering medical practitioners

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[19] Melissa Finn et al., "Youth evaluations of CVE/PVE programming in Kenya in context", *Journal for Deradicalization* (7) (2016).

[20] Jennifer Griffin, "Tracing stakeholder terminology then and now: Convergence and new pathways", *Business Ethics: A European Review* 26(4) (2017).

[21] Lee Jarvis, Michael Lister, "Stakeholder security: the new western way of counter-terrorism?", *Contemporary Politics* 16(2) (2010).

[22] Derek Summerfield, "Mandating doctors to attend counter-terrorism workshops is medically unethical", *BJPsych Bulletin* 40(2) (2016).

to assess the risk of radicalisation of patients would go beyond the patient's agreement to their doctor's visit and seriously threatens the doctor-patient relationship should information then be passed onwards. These consequences underline the importance of identifying those organisations whose duties have a preventative role in counter-radicalisation.

The second element of the term stakeholder is the capacity to influence or be influenced by current prevention activities. Stakeholder participation in a prevention strategy should represent an ongoing, two-way dialogue through which the experiences and knowledge of both a stakeholder and counter-radicalisation organisation are exchanged. Integrating the knowledge and needs of stakeholders into the design and implementation of prevention activities would maximise its potential impact due to an advanced understanding of both theory and practice. However, a balance should be sought in addressing the aims of the prevention strategy and those of the individual stakeholder. The interests of the stakeholder be imposed on a prevention strategy, nor should the stakeholder be dominated by the prevention programme or intervention; a strategic, mutually beneficial relationship should exist. A clear understanding of which stakeholder groups should be involved in counter-radicalisation activities makes for a greater impact on the counter-radicalisation strategy as stakeholders are included who can best contribute. This has been the subject of many issue and policy papers wherein recommendations are suggested regarding the importance in using different stakeholders for the differing views and expert knowledge they could bring[23].

The term target group has similar roots in business and management terminology and, as with stakeholder, been indiscriminately adopted into counter-radicalisation research. Importantly, target group has not been defined specifically for use in a counter-radicalisation context, which again raises the issues of misapplication and confusion as to its use. This paper defines a target group as:

> *Any group of individuals to whom prevention activities are targeted and who can influence or be influenced by the prevention measure.*

The definition shares common ground with the term stakeholder. The first common factor is that a target group can be an exhaustive list of individuals. For example, an information centre on radicalisation might target families who are concerned about a relative who is radicalising, but could also target individuals who are trying to escape extremism. Frontline workers provide an example that could be classified as a target group, if they are the end user of a counter-radicalisation tool, but could also be a stakeholder if they have an official responsibility to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism and have the expertise to do so. The deciding factor is whether the group is on the receiving end of the prevention or is in the position to implement the prevention concept themselves.

Defining the objectives of a prevention strategy will enable the selection of an appropriate target group to achieve these objectives. If the strategy of a project aims to develop measures that strengthen the resilience of religious populations, the group with a special interest in being addressed by this measure could, for example, be religious leaders or institutions. Nevertheless,

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[23] Basia Spalek et al., "Impact of Counter-Terrorism on Communities: Methodology Report", Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2013.

stakeholder identification should not simply *target* groups as this gives the appearance of a group being selected as a consumer or recipient of a prevention concept. Developing a prevention measure involves a more interactive process of gathering in-depth knowledge of an individual's situation and needs in order to develop a tailored made solution. To achieve this work, a two-way communication process that is ongoing and monitored is needed to ensure that a concept is designed that is of value to the target group. In this sense, the term *end user* might be more useful as it indicates that an understanding of the user is needed in terms of their needs and desires. However, the use of the word *end* inaccurately visualises the target group at the end of the process once a final concept has been developed and not during its design stages. Generating an operational definition is needed to convey the understanding that engaging with the users of a prevention measure is important for building a successful prevention strategy, which ought to take place at the early stages of the design process and not just to validate a final concept.

If *Returnees* then *Departees*?

One group of individuals that has received significant attention in counter-radicalisation discourse are *Foreign Terrorist Fighters*, the vocabulary of which appears to be reflected inconsistently in research. The origin of the term r*eturnees* is disputable and perhaps exists either as a term in its own right or as a truncated version of *Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters*. However, the common use of this term is perhaps related to it being straightforward to read and impactful. For example, using *Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters* multiple times in a sentence would seem wordy and would not be as stylistically effective in a heading. Yet, the popular use of returnee is criticised here for sounding too trivial and for not expressing core elements of its meaning. If returnees is a generally accepted term, then why are individuals who leave their country to fight in armed conflicts abroad not called departees?

The first issue with the term returnee is the diverse nature of its interpretation. When viewed objectively, the term can be taken to imply a whole range of different groups. In the context of terrorism, this would bring together individuals who have potentially very distinct characteristics, such as those returning with real combat experiences, those who are extremists but who have not committed any terrorist acts, and family members or friends who were simply brought along. As these groups of individuals are not homogenous in their level of vulnerability to participating in terrorist activities, potentially different integration strategies are required[24]. This level of insight is lost with the term returnee. Treating these groups as a collective is also antithetical to research efforts that distinguish between extremists, violent extremists, and terrorists. Looking closely at the composition of the term returnee, the word *return* is an important element of its meaning, as in those individuals returning to their country of residence after being involved in radicalism, extremism or terrorism in a destination country. Focusing on the individuals who are returning to their homeland, however, overlooks other potential groups of individuals entering a country. An example would be

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[24] Daniel Peddell et al., "Influences and vulnerabilities in radicalised lone-actor terrorists: UK practitioner perspectives", *International Journal of Police Science & Management* 18(2) (2016).

those individuals born aboard whom have become radicalised, or involved in terrorist acts, but decide to flee their country for a better life, among other reasons. Should these individuals then be classified as migrants despite possessing a higher security risk? Surely, it is irrelevant for a host country if an incoming population of violent extremists are either natural born citizens or immigrating citizens. Given the many possible migration flows, perhaps it would be more suitable to develop a more generic term that refers to arriving radicals and extremists as a migration group regardless of whether it is emigration, immigration or internal migration.

Another term encountered in literature is *Returning Foreign Fighters*. This alternative immediately appears more accurate as several key elements are referred to that gives the reader a fuller impression of the individual. However, it would be premature to choose this term without consideration of its limitations. Notably, Schmid[25] highlighted the problematical nature of the word *foreign* in *foreigner fighters*, arguing that it places too much emphasis on the origin of an individual. For example, religious fighting draws its power from the unification of individuals across the globe and not by dividing its individual members by their birthplace. In this view, an individual fighting for a cause goes beyond his or her personal characteristics; a Christian fighting for a Christian cause would arguably not be foreign, nor would a Muslim fighting for an Islamic cause. Similarly, the use of the word *fighter* in foreign fighter as well as *terrorist* in *Foreign Terrorist Fighter* implies that an individual has left a country to engage in some violent act of extremism or terrorism[26]. Although this is one possible motivation, there are also other explanations including the wish to further radicalise, be physically associated with terrorist groups, or to accompany a friend or family member. The specificity of the term foreign fighter and lack of specificity of the term returnee suggests a fundamental issue with how the phenomenon is defined. At the very minimum, the discrepancies between both words appears readily fixable. Viewed logically, if an individual leaving their home country for an extremist purpose is called a foreign fighter, then the term *Returning Foreign Fighter* should be used for those who return.

Conclusion

By looking deeper into the use of terminology in counter-radicalisation literature one is able to identify a range of terms that have been either borrowed from other academic disciplines or are defined in a way that inappropriately represents the phenomenon. The unfeasibility of agreeing on certain terms is highlighted as a repercussion of the many perspectives introduced from different practitioners, disciplines and elements of society. Although generic definitions may be an oversimplification that would potentially leave out major elements of its meaning, it is important to recognise that a term can only be defined based on the available knowledge and experience of a topic at one point in time. As knowledge is constantly evolving and time is constantly progressing, a greater concern is the continuing use of terms that no longer provide an accurate description.

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[25] Alex Schmid, "Foreign (Terrorist) Fighter Estimates: Conceptual and Data Issues" (The Hague: ICCT, 2015).
[26] Ibid.

The need for a common terminology is underlined by the need to increase multinational collaborations and universal understandings. The idea of using a heuristic approach when defining terms is supported here as a constructive solution. From a practical standpoint, it might be more viable to create a flexible and broad definition that signifies the core elements of a term as opposed to creating overly complicated definitions that attempt to cover all possible interpretations. Because processes of radicalisation leading to terrorism are complex, there is unlikely to be a definition or interpretation that is wholly complete and being overly factual in the absence of facts is an encumbrance to reaching semantic universality.

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Opposing DAESH in a Post-Syria/Iraq Conflict Environment: Stabilization and Creative Proactive Messaging

Joseph S. Tuman[1]

Abstract: *While it is now quite likely DAESH will also be driven out of the last tracts of land it controlled in Syria, as it was in Iraq, we should be careful about claiming victory and assuming this group no longer poses a threat. Indeed, DAESH's unique characteristics—e.g., opportunistic military strategies, taking advantage of instability and chaos in failed states, the embrace and skillful use of social media platforms to attract and direct fighters in the middle east and throughout the world, as well for attracting and influencing news media coverage—have helped elevate their status relative to other terror groups for the last three years. Losing ground in Syria and Iraq will no doubt hurt their messaging about being a "transnational" (i.e., ignoring boundaries created by colonialists) organization—but the transnational nature of their existence is still enabled by their use of boundary-less social media, and their ongoing recruiting and directing from afar of terror attacks. Because so much of their success owes to the low cost and efficient use of computer mediated communication, NATO members and other countries would do well to invest in developing strategies for technology and messaging that proactively challenge the terror organization and blunt its effect for reaching young Muslim males to join their cause, serve as fighters, and/or be directed by DAESH to lead foreign attacks. It is also clear that all countries must be more focused upon effective governance of their people and land. The easiest path for DAESH back into Syria, Iraq— or for that matter, a new path into Libya or Afghanistan, is the presence of instability and a government that cannot govern or provide basic services.*

Keywords: *ISIS/DAESH, Transnational Terror Group, Stabilization, Proactive Messaging*

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Introduction

Ongoing news coverage and commentary has begun to refer to the Islamic State (henceforth DAESH) in the past tense, suggesting a patina made up literally of yesterday's news.[2] In this contemporary discourse DAESH seems destined to be consigned to the dustbin of all failed and defeated terrorist organizations—all of them, not coincidentally, also identified as *dissent terrorism* or *terrorism from below,*[3] owing to their status as non-state actors. Such a perspective, however, misses several important characteristics that distinguish the Islamic *State* from other groups like al Qaeda that came before it. Ignoring these characteristics and thinking of a territorially defeated DAESH in the past tense is not only mistaken, it is also dangerous.

What Marked DAESH As Different?

That DAESH was from the very first day a different terrorist organization could be seen in the following ways. From the beginning, DAESH[4] openly self-identified as a transnational[5] group; its messaging and narrative strands derived first and foremost from this self-identification; its continuous occupation and control of land in Syria and Iraq created a literal, not just symbolic, meaning and reinforcement for their narratives; DAESH held and controlled land in Syria and Iraq for more than one thousand days—a considerable achievement. [6] DAESH followed the example of other terror groups—notably its parent, al Qaeda—embracing the use of media to propagate messages for multiple large audiences, doing so in ways that embraced social media and traditional media in a digital age.

In 2015, this author argued at a NATO COE DAT conference[7] that the possession and continuous occupation by DAESH of land in two different countries with boundaries drawn by other, previous colonial occupiers undergirded and supported the terrorist group's claim to be transnational; this in turn provided a logical basis for what was an otherwise quixotic message communicated through a variety of social media platforms in order to threaten Middle Eastern Muslims who disagreed with DAESH, and also globally to recruit foreign fighters to come and assist in defending the occupied territories in Iraq and Syria. The key to changing all of this was in denying the Islamic State this land; for this author, this divided into strategies to deny financial capital to run their operations, as

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[2] Indeed, on September 28, 2018 U.S. President Donald Trump declared "We have defeated ISIS, essentially, in the Middle East," during a speech at the United Nations. For video of his comments, see: https://www.cnbc.com/video/2018/09/26/we-have-defeated-isis-essentially-in-the-middle-east-trump.html.

[3] Joseph Tuman, *Communicating Terror: The Rhetorical Dimensions of Terrorism, 2nd ed* (Sage Pub., 2010) p. 8.

[4] Islamic State, also known as Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, or Islamic State in al-Sham, or Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

[5] This derived both from the ability to recruit fighters from other countries and to wage battle in the Middle East and direct it in other countries—but most fundamentally, the transnational identity derived from the occupation of land in different countries under the newly proclaimed Caliphate. See Martha Crenshaw, "Transnational Jihadism and Civil Wars," *Dædalus, the Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Science,* 146 (4) Fall 2017 pp.59-70, p.61 "[T]he independent Islamic State…declared a caliphate under its governance in Iraq and Syria in 2014. Its seizure of substantial areas of both countries changed the stakes for both jihadists and their adversaries and altered the course of the civil war in Syria."

[6] Charlie Winter, "How ISIS Survives the Fall of Mosul: Long after the city is back in the hands of the Iraqi government, it will continue to be a prop for the Islamic State—although altogether a different one," *The Atlantic,* (3 July 2017). Available online at https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/07/mosul-isis-propaganda/532533/

[7] Joseph Tuman, "New Media, News Media, Convergence: Specific Strategies for Counter-Messaging Daesh." NATO COE/DAT Conference on Terrorism and Media, (2015).

well denying them the ability to provide core services of a municipal government.[8] Without money to pay fighters, and unable to provide expected government services—this author suggested that DAESH would become vulnerable to defeat by US, Turkish and Russian backed forces in Iraq and Syria. And indeed, that is exactly what has happened. The Islamic State that declared itself a government could not in the end…govern.

It is worth observing, however, that the victory over DAESH at this point may be temporary. DAESH did control the land *in both countries* for *more than one thousand days*. Not one of the other so-called jihadist terror groups fighting for media relevance today has ever accomplished anything like that before. Perhaps more importantly, we should recognize that there were various factors present in Iraq and Syria that created a void that DAESH was only too happy to fill.

As we point to the defeat of this organization, are we so sure those same factors might not resurface once more? No doubt, DAESH was aided early on in the battlefield by the inclusion of so many ex-Baathist party Iraqi military officers (some trained by the United States and then later imprisoned) whose tactical knowledge and training were decisive in leading otherwise novice troops to quick victories.[9] But what made it possible for them to not only achieve victories militarily, but also to move into and occupy entire large cities at the time was the omnipresent threat of widespread instability in both countries. For Syria, instability was the product of a revolution against a corrupt dictatorship—that eventually developed into an ongoing civil war, complicated by the participation of other ethnic groups, as well other world powers including the United States and Russia. Iraq, a country struggling after a second war with the United States, found that a new Democracy and rebuilt infrastructure might provide stability inside the capital, but ongoing sectarian violence, the Kurdish push for independence in the north, and the ever present conflict between Sunnis and Shiites (fanned as well by Iran) created massive instability for the rest of the country. In both Syria and Iraq, instability created opportunity for DAESH.

Having lost most of its territory in Iraq, and already facing some lost territory in Syria, it is appropriate to ask what is being done to assure that the same instability which created their opportunity before, won't reappear, inviting DAESH to openly engage each country at some point in the future?

DAESH's Exit Strategy in Iraq-Torch the City, Scorch the Earth;

DAESH Strategy for Syria-Enabling Instability to Invite a Return

For its part, DAESH approached the impending exit of most cities it controlled by destroying and damaging as much of the infrastructure in these locations as possible—either by their own device, or simply by fighting to the bitter end and inviting airstrikes from the United States or the Iraqi Air Force in Iraq, or the Russians in Syria. Buildings that provided housing and/or office

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[8] E.g., waste treatment, clean water, electricity, etc.

[9] One example of this would be a former Saddam-era army major, Saud Mohsen Hassan, known by the pseudonyms Abu Mutazz and Abu Muslim al-Turkmani. See Hamza Hendawi, and Qassim Abdul-Zahra, "ISIS Top Brass is Iraqi Army's Former Best and Brightest," *Haaretz News ,8* August, 2015, available online at: https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.670177

space for businesses or the government will have to be rebuilt. Likewise for roads and bridges that have been destroyed.[10] The loss of housing and the destruction of business space means that people displaced in such conflict not only had no homes to return to, they also frequently had no jobs to go back to. In Iraq*, several million* people have been displaced because of DAESH. Who will pay to rebuild their homes? What jobs will there be for them? How will they survive? If they are forced to relocate to other parts of Iraq—or to other countries—who will take care of them?

The Situation on the Ground in Iraq:

DAESH fighters in Iraq began setting fires to oil wells in both 2016 and continued in 2017. In some instances, this might have been done as a military tactic, using the smoke from the fire to "obscure the vision of coalition and Iraqi warplanes."[11] But the other impact of this was to make the land near and around these fires completely uninhabitable—with thick, toxic smoke making for difficult breathing, as well leaving a residue of soot on people's belongings, housing, etc. While the presence of fumes and sulfur has to an extent subsided after an initial 18 months, it could have a longer lasting impact on plant and animal life—diminishing the prospects for those who farm in these areas.[12] The fires have had another impact as well: initially, in large numbers, they impacted oil production and refining capacity. One fire set near Al Qayyra took 30 days to extinguish, and burned the equivalent of 5,000 barrels of oil/day—or in just this one instance, 150,000 barrels over that space of time.[13] The diminished production also cost people jobs and lost wages.

Anxiety about housing, as well concern over being unemployed and/or unable to take care of a family is exactly the sort of condition which creates internal instability—and in turn an opportunity for groups like DAESH.

A 2017 RAND report[14] classified approximately three million Iraqis as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) because of DAESH—one million of whom were because of the battle to retake Mosul alone. Like other IDPs in Iraq—and soon to in larger numbers in Syria—these individuals suffered from from food insecurity, destruction of water supplies, ongoing combat fighting, security barriers to provision of aid, shortage of healthcare, and general displacement.[15]

That same report recommended (somewhat optimistically) that the national Iraqi government and the international community must act immediately to address acute food, water and medical shortages, regularize screening and freedom of movement for IDP's, create and implement a safe IDP return policy, expand coverage and pace of explosive hazard removal and mitigation, insuring

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[10] Examples might include the ancient Syrian city of Palmyra, or the ancient Assyrian city of Nimrud in Iraq.

[11] Ben Wedeman, and Hamdi Alkhshali, "Life under ISIS: Iraqis choke as sabotaged oil wells blaze," CNN, 13 October, 2016. Available online at: http://www.cnn.com/2016/10/12/world/burning-oil-wells-isis-iraq/index.html

[12] Erika Solomon, "ISIS sets fire to oil wells near Mosul to unleash lasting revenge," *Irish Times*, 24 October, 2016. Available online at https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/middle-east/isis-sets-fire-to-oil-wells-near-mosul-to-unleash-lasting-revenge-1.2841355

[13] Ibid.

[14] Shelly Culbertson and Linda Robinson, "Making Victory Count After Defeating ISIS: Stabilization Challenges in Mosul and Beyond," (Rand Reports, 2017) p.4. Available online at https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2076.html

[15] Ibid. p. x.

there will be an adequate number of troops in the large contested cities (e.g., 60K troops for Mosul) to hold the peace, providing enough training of new police officers to have them ready to assume responsibility for law and order within 9 months, restoring all public services, establishing a process to resolve property disputes once DAESH was driven out, decentralizing power from the national government, and empowering local/regional governments to administer laws, improving public finance and public management, growing and expanding local reconciliation projects, jump-starting national reconciliation projects, accelerating stabilization finding and building/tracking of donor funding.[16]

As suggested above, the eventual winding down of DAESH control of large cities in Iraq created a brief optical moment of celebratory victory over the terror organization—albeit with the attendant risks of DAESH reasserting itself in the area if sizable steps towards stability were not to be realized. One year later, the challenges in Iraq alone (Syria's issue will be addressed below) are substantial.

While the number of IDP's in Iraq is now (as of July, 2018) down to just under 2 million people, an additional 3.92 million Iraqi IDPs have returned to their places of origin, or to other locations inside the country where they have elected to relocate for the time.[17] According to data gleaned from surveys of individuals and families of IDPs still in camps and/or returning IDPs (the combination of which totals nearly six million people), the primary obstacles to regaining their lives include: a lack of housing (because of housing intentionally destroyed by DAESH or during military battles with Iraqi special forces or other allies); the loss of jobs, equating with an inability to provide for livelihood and support a family; and a real/perceived lack of security, local or national, in the areas they had formally called home.[18] These are some, but not all, of the core services that any government must provide.

Consider for a moment the various categories required at a minimum to provide basic government service to a population of citizens. These might include: some sort of *social delivery program or social welfare-net* to support the poor, or those suffering from the effects of war or a natural disaster; *maintenance, operational effectiveness and delivery of electrical power* for all*; maintenance and support of a transportation infrastructure*, including roads, bridges, ports, airports and railways; *collection, stockpiling and delivery of clean water* for personal use, as well for sanitary purposes and waste treatment; access to effective *public health systems,* supporting all the cities—including some kind of public health infrastructure; *support for public education* in the creation of a school system akin to a K-12, and possibilities for college or university study; perhaps most critical, especially for IDP's, access to housing, public or private; and also very essential—provision of security, both by local police as well by government military.[19] To this list should be added some level of *government investment in new housing* development, including affordable and subsidized housing for the very poor.

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[16] Ibid., pp. xiv to xvi.

[17] USAID, "Iraq-Complex Emergency," Fact Sheet #9, Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, available online at: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/iraq_ce_fs09_07-20-2018.pdf

[18] Ibid.

[19] For a comprehensive summary and review of Iraqi government success and failure with provision of core government services, see Roz Price, "Iraqi State Capabilities," K4D Helpdesk Reports (United Kingdom, Institute of Development Studies) 18 May 2018. available online at https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/13806/Iraqi_state_capabilities.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

A 2017 study by the World Bank Group concluded: "Iraqis are very dissatisfied with their access to these basic services. Just 30 percent of the population is satisfied with the available education services, satisfaction with health services is under 20 percent, and less than 15 percent of the population is content with local security."[20]

To develop this analysis, consider just one necessary basic government service: Electricity Supply and Reliability.

Given Iraq's troubled history going back several decades, electricity supply has been a contentious issue with the public. In 2015, power outages in southern Iraq, combined with public distrust of the way public utilities had been managed, led to large protests that eventually spread to Baghdad.[21] These very same kinds of protests continued as recently as July of 2018.[22] It is an understatement to observe that the Iraqi public has very little confidence in the government's ability to manage electrical power. Those living in the southern part of Iraq are most outraged by this considering that the vast majority of Iraq's oil wealth is concentrated in their geographic area.

Before addressing the impact of DAESH occupation of Iraqi cities on electricity generation and distribution, consider the inherent, systemic problems that make for large inefficiencies in the availability and distribution of electrical power, independent of anything having to do with DAESH. A British report on Iraqi state capabilities noted:

> *"Iraq's electricity sector suffers from a series of simultaneous and compounding challenges, which makes it unable to generate adequate revenue to sustain itself or to improve services for consumers. Years of neglect have led to a dilapidated grid infrastructure with low operational efficiency and high levels of losses. The sector depends on government direct budgetary support, implicit fuel subsides and guarantees to undertake capital investments and finance its operational expenditure. Technical losses, poor collection and tariffs below costs have made energy production a costly and increasing liability for the Government of Iraq (GoI). The 2014 World Bank poverty assessment (cited in World Bank Group, 2018 assessment) shows that Iraqi households and consumers receive an average of 14.6 hours of electricity per day, of which only 7.6 hours per day is provided by the electricity grid, leaving Iraqis having to rely on expensive and polluting diesel generators for power."[23]*

Complicating the issue of electrical power distribution in Iraq is the damage wrought by DAESH in the battles to take Iraqi territory, and worse, from the damage done in the valiant conflicts to retake these territories back from DAESH. While as recently as 2015, the Iraqi government established an entity called the Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS) to promote post-conflict recovery, including restoration of electrical grids in as many as 23 liberated towns in Anbar, Ninevah, Salah al-Din, and Kirkuk governorates, this work has been slowed by the fact DAESH

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[20] World Bank. (2017). Iraq - Systematic Country Diagnostic (English). Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. Available online at: http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/542811487277729890/Iraq-Systematic-Country-Diagnostic.

[21] Ibid., p. 21.

[22] See Benedict Robin-D'Cruz "As Protests Sweep Iraq, Are the Country's Political Elites Running Out of Options?" *LSE Middle East Centre Blog*, 18 July 2018,available online at http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2018/07/18/as-protests-sweep-iraq-are-the-countrys-political-elites-running-out-of-options/.

[23] K4D Helpdesk Report, p.5.

fighters were instructed to plant numerous kinds of explosives to destroy infrastructure. These include mines, improvised explosive devices (IED's), and unexploded ordinances. Restoration of electrical power in cities and towns previously held by DAESH is slowed by the possibility of undiscovered, unexploded mines, IED's and ordinance. Worse, there appears to be a direct relationship between the amount of time DAESH occupied any of these territories and the extent of disruption or destruction of normal infrastructure and services: the longer the occupation, the worse and more difficult to repair the damage.

Within the main cities occupied by DAESH, the reality of planted mines, IED's and unexploded ordinance has created challenges for the Iraqi government and military. Although demining operations have been in play since the recapture of these cities, progress is slow—and that reality decelerates the rate of return for IDP's, as well the repairs to critical infrastructure of the many kinds mentioned above. The United States and other countries, along with various non-government organizations (NGOs) have contributed much to the program of demining, but even officials representing the United States (the largest financial contributor in these efforts) in Iraq has admitted: "Even with ten times current resources of now, we couldn't demine the country" [24]

The Situation on the Ground in Syria

Meanwhile, in Syria a different scenario with different players may very well lead to DAESH being driven out of the land it controls there as well—but once again, the risk of renewed instability may make displacing DAESH a tall if not impossible order if cooperation between different groups fails, and the result is again instability. It should come as no surprise that the factors contributing to DAESH activity in Syria were similar to what obtained in Iraq—making way for instability and chaos. The aforementioned civil war in Syria was the byproduct of protests occurring as early 2011 against the authoritarian regime controlled by Bashir al-Assad, whose government stomped down on protestors—inviting protest that turned violent. Soon, disparate groups from around the country joined rebellion that would grow into a modern civil war, with participation from democrats, so-called jihadist, Islamists, so-called non-jihadists, Kurds and others with a score to settle.[25] In the chaotic vacuum created by this civil war, DAESH moved quickly to occupy space and declare its Caliphate.

While the combined efforts of Syria, Turkey, the United States and allied countries have helped to drive DAESH out of large Syrian cities like Raqqa[26] as recently as this last Fall—the larger focus going forward will be on its control of an eastern region in Syria, on its border with Iraq, known as the governate of Deir Azzour. This area is a little over three hundred miles (500 kilometers) from Damascus, and covers more than twenty thousand square miles (a little more than thirty-three thousand square kilometers). The Euphrates River cuts across the governate, running from Raqqa and into Iraq.

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[24] Culbertson & Robinson, (2017), Ibid., p. 32

[25] Martha Crenshaw, "Transnational Jihadism and Civil Wars," *Daedus, the Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 146(4), (Fall, 2017) pp.59-70, at p.66.

[26] Ann Barnard, and Hwaida Saad, "Raqqa, ISIS 'Capital,' Is Captured, U.S.-Backed Forces Say," *New York Times,* 17 October 2017. Available online at: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/17/world/middleeast/isis-syria-raqqa.html

It should not escape notice that another feature of this governate is that it is also the location for the largest oil reserves in Syria. Controlling this territory means control of eight large oil fields.

A sizable population of tribal groups live in Deir Azzour; the largest confederacy of these groups is known as *Egaidat*—an alliance of tribal groups that migrated to this area of the Euphrates in the Syrian Desert long ago.[27] Within this group are several larger, significant tribes, including Bu Hasssan, Qaraan, Bu Kamal, the Shuwayt, Shaytat, Bakir, Mashahda, Bu Khabour and Bu Kamil. Larger tribes like these are actually their own political authority within the villages their tribes occupy.[28]

The Islamic State moved to occupy the governate of Deir Azzour—and especially the large city of Deir Azzour in the summer of 2014, and from then until this past summer has for the most part maintained control of the region and city, even as it lost/loses ground in Iraq and in other parts of Syria. DAESH's tactics in Deir Azzour involved a shrewd assessment of the tribal involvement regionally, or even at the micro level of village life and politics—combining the threat and eventual use of brute force along with an offer to be a de-facto state, providing administration of public services, and doling out of financial resources. Early on, they presented as a wealthy and stable alternative to the chaos that was the Syrian civil war. Many tribal leaders and tribal members, sensing no better alternatives, went along with the new Caliphate.[29]

Before the DAESH occupation of this governate, there were approximately 1.7 million residents of Deir Azzour. That number is considerably less today, both because of the violent rule of the Islamic State, as well the deterioration of the local economies, and the rapidly growing displacement of residents (IDP's) from so many villages.[30]

Bashir al Assad, with the support of Russia, as well Iran's trained militia fighters, has managed to reassert himself in more parts of Syria—although he is slowly driving DAESH out of the governate of Deir Azzour with assistance by the United States. There now are other militia fighters, along with—as in Iraq—Kurdish fighters, who for a time had control over much of the territory where the oil fields are located. Ironically, the largest actor on this stage—the United States— appears to have been relegated to a smaller role, outside strategic alliances with some of the tribal groups, as well their participation in these final attempts to drive DAESH out. The Kurds in Syria may be looking to offer Assad access and control of the oil fields in exchange for increased self-rule or self-determination in their own land, if independence and statehood continues to be off the table.

The larger city of Raqqa has been liberated since October of 2017—but the word "liberated" should be used with a degree of caution. Raqqa will be addressed in more detail below.

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[27] Nicholas Heras., Bassam Barabandi, and Nidal Betare "Deir Azzour: Tribal Mapping Project," *Middle East Security* (September 2017), at 3.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Tom O'Connor, "How the US Lost the War in Syria to Russia and Iran," *Newsweek*, 11 October 2017. Available online at: http://www.newsweek.com/us-lost-war-syria-iran-russia-winning-final-battle-674833

[30] Nicholas Heras, et. al., Ibid, p.2.

As in Iraq, so in Syria: DAESH control of the land for the Caliphate has come to an end. While DAESH has not been completely defeated and driven out of Syria, some estimates suggesting DAESH collectively still occupies about five percent of the country in spaces such as the Al Ragad Valley in the southwest, Al Badia in the As-Sweida governate, also off and on in Al Hasakeh in the Deir Azzour governate (from Hajin to Abu Kamel), and importantly, the Al-Boleel desert on the west bank of the Euphrates River, parts of the eastern countryside of Deir Azzour along the border with Iraq, and the portion of the Hajin area on the east bank of the Euphrates.[31] But it also just as certain that the Islamic State may dig in or simply return if instability in Syria continues. A report by the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) in Fall of 2017 made several recommendations for the Deir Azzour region that were necessary requirements if stability was to return to the area. Notice how similar they appear to the Rand Corporation's recommendations for a post-DAESH Iraq, mentioned above.

The (CNAS) report suggests: "The force that displaces ISIS from Deir Azzour governorate, and seeks to stabilize it and prevent the return of ISIS or al Qaeda, should pursue the following courses of action:

1. Establish a security force for each municipality that is liberated from ISIS, preferably mobilized from the people of the area.

2. Establish local councils proportionate to the population in each area liberated from ISIS and ensure that they are representative of the population, without privileging armed groups or tribes with overrepresentation in any council.

3. Establish an independent judiciary body, not connected to any one local militia or tribal group, to oversee the investigation into crimes committed by ISIS in the governorate and the prosecution of those crimes under provincial law established by local councils, and not under tribal law or Sharia.

4. Establish a rehabilitation (deradicalization) program for local youths who were targeted by ISIS to prevent them from becoming potential sleeper agents for its attempts to re-establish itself in Deir Azzour.

5. Establish organizations that hire local people to provide services that have been disrupted by more than a half-decade of conflict, most immediately agricultural, oil, water, and transportation infrastructure.

6. Establish a border security force to seal the border with Iraq and reduce the flow of fighters from the western Iraqi desert into Deir Azzour, in order to support the new governance and security forces seeking to stabilize the governorate." [32]

Now consider this question: given all the moving parts in both Syria and as described before in Iraq, how likely is it that all or even most of those recommendations will find funding and/or

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[31] See "Syria Crisis: Northeast Syria Situation Report No, 26 (15 June 2018- 15 July 2018), UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 15 July 2018. Available online at https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syria-crisis-northeast-syria-situation-report-no-26-15-june-2018-15-july.

[32] Heras, Ibid., p 14.

domestic/international political sponsorship? And even with such sponsorship—given the internal dynamics of sectarian conflict, ethnic differences, Kurdish interest in statehood, and an ongoing arms-length/difficult relationship with Iran, or the involvement of Russia and the Assad regime in Syria, how much of this will actually be realized? It is not an impossible task, so much as problematic. Into such future potential outcomes, one finds the possibilities of instability's return. Which is to say, the door could swing open for DAESH again.

Preventing that from happening involves the aforementioned recommendations for stabilizing Iraq, and later more for Syria—but it also involves how and why and to whom we communicate what we are doing. Messaging strategy is a large part of this equation.

Messaging Strategies to Diminish DAESH's Return to Iraq And Syria

Three conclusions initially can be drawn from the previous discussion. These include:

DAESH thrived in atmospheres of extreme instability, especially in locations perceived as failed states; even with mounting losses in the battlefields of Syria and Iraq, DAESH remains active and adept at manipulation of both news and social media to publicize its actual deeds, claim credit for foreign attacks it may or may not have been involved with, recruit foreign fighters and direct foreign attacks in other countries around the world, threaten other countries, and distinguish itself from other so-called jihadist terror groups generally; DAESH must be challenged with equal force and effort, and strategic communication to counter its use of both forms of media.

The question is: how should these messages be constructed, and by what strategies do we employ them?

Deriving Meaning from "Stability:" A Tale of Two Cities—Mosul and Raqqa

As indicated before, multiple *structural* changes are required for both Syria and Iraq to assure stability for now. In point of fact, it should be clear to all interested parties that the best way to send a message to DAESH or its supporters that they will not be allowed to seize territory in countries like Syria or Iraq again is for these countries—as well the other countries (e.g., USA, Russia, Saudi Arabia) with a vested interest in their outcomes, to actually commit to investing resources necessary to create stability, and prevent the return of instability.

What is meant by terms like "stability" and "instability,"" and how do we measure these for the purposes of evaluating the effectiveness of any related message? Much of what has been addressed above deals with stability (the delivery of core government services) or instability (the absence of some or all such services) at the national level in both Iraq and Syria. NATO is not, however, in the business of nation-building, and the same is true for large countries like the United States. Syria's problems of instability, worse but not fundamentally different than those in Iraq, will not be fixed overnight. But that doesn't necessarily mean these problems cannot be addressed; rather, one of the lessons this author (who has been involved in local politics in a big city) learned to appreciate was how cities—rather than states or countries—could become testing places to challenge vexing social problems at a smaller, localized level to determine the effectiveness of solutions, which

could then be applied more broadly. To be clear, when local city government investigates and explores solutions to problems that undermine the aforementioned core services a government should provide, they often create examples and templates for what will—*and what may not* –work in other cities. We all learn from one other. The same is true when addressing the challenges of instability in spaces previously occupied by DAESH. As of the time of this writing, Syria is still engaged in a civil war, and DAESH is believed to still control some five percent of the country. By most estimates, the mere reality of a civil war is enough to qualify Syria as a failed state. Iraq is in slightly better shape given that there is no civil war there—but otherwise, the real security and stability in Iraq exists within (but not outside) Baghdad. For that reason, Iraq can also be regarded as a failed state—albeit one that for the time relies upon the support of other countries to provide a core service such as security. Fixing the problems in both Syria and Iraq at the national level will require massive financial investment, competent, ethical (not corrupt) and reliable management and oversight, and patience. No one transforms an entire country (let alone two countries) overnight. The more realistic transformation, in my judgment, is achievable at the city level. One starts with the city level and uses the lessons learned there to rebuild at the regional and national level. The investment locally in terms of money, labor and most importantly patience will be considerably more doable and effective at the city level.

The recommendation here is that NATO and other interested groups and countries encourage and contribute to the rebuilding and restoration of core services in both Mosul, Iraq, and Raqqa, Syria. Why these two cities? To begin with, both cities had enjoyed multiple transportation infrastructures before that have tragically been sabotaged by DAESH efforts to leave explosives in both cities, as well as by airstrikes from sympathetic countries like the United States, intended to destroy DAESH positions but which also destroyed buildings and housing, as well streets and bridges in the process. It will not take a grand new vision to restore what was there before—thus rebuilding infrastructure for these, or restoration of electrical power grids, etc., will simply require clearing away the rubble and rebuilding. As IDPs have already begun moving back to these two cities, it would be wise to prioritize water, electricity, hospitals and clinics, and transportation infrastructure to start. Access to food supplies (in most cases for both cities, reintroduction of bakeries) and some temporary government welfare assistance should follow. But these are only suggestions; local governments might want to hold some kind of election to establish priorities for what services to reestablish first.

The focus should be exclusively upon these two cities because both suffer from similar problems in terms of the core functions mentioned before. Lessons learned for Raqqa may be instructive for Mosul, and vice versa. Equally significant is the fact that both cities were components in DAESH's bid to claim a Caliphate. Both were also the last major, large cities held by DAESH. The terrorist fighters who fled both cities have not left Iraq or Syria.

By separate estimates, both the United States Department of Defense (DoD) and the United Nations have reported their belief that in excess of 30,000 DAESH fighters are still in Syria and Iraq, and hiding. In its *Lead Inspector General*, *Report to the United States Congress: Overseas Contingency Operations* for the period April 1 to June 30, 2018, the report concluded: "The DoD estimated that 13,100 to 14,500 ISIS fighters remained in Syria, but cautioned that due to continual clearing operations, these numbers were likely in flux. The DoD estimated that 4,000-6,000 of them

remained in the U.S. military's areas of operation in northeastern Syria.[33] The same report estimated DAESH fighter numbers hiding in Iraq at between 15,500 and 17,100. That places the estimated total of DAESH fighters still in Syria and Iraq at approximately 30,000 fighters—a number independently confirmed by the United Nations through a 2018 report issued by the UN's Analytical Support and Monitoring Team, which declared:

> *"By January 2018, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) had been defeated in Iraq and was confined to small pockets of territory in the Syrian Arab Republic. During the reporting period, Syrian government forces made progress against ISIL strongholds in the Damascus area. Nevertheless, ISIL showed greater resilience in the east of the Syrian Arab Republic, and even slightly recovered the initiative. Several Member States attributed this to a reduced contribution by the mainly Kurdish People's Protection Units contingent of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) to the campaign in the east in early 2018. As the Syrian Democratic Forces increased its military activity once more, the momentum of the fighting appeared to be turning against ISIL again by June 2018. Many ISIL fighters, planners and senior doctrinal, security and military commanders have been killed in the fighting, and many fighters and other personnel have left the immediate conflict zone. Many, however, remain in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, some still fully engaged militarily and others hiding out in sympathetic communities and urban areas. Some Member States estimate the total current ISIL membership in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic to be between 20,000 and 30,000 individuals, roughly equally distributed between the two countries. Among these is still a significant component of the many thousands of active foreign terrorist fighters." [34]*

These same fighters have not necessarily sat by idly, biding their time. The same DoD report noted that in Iraq alone for this last quarter under review a total of 689 people killed across 200 DAESH sponsored attacks in the Kirkuk province, Diyala Province, Baghdad Province and the Salah Ad Din Province.[35]

Other NATO sponsored qualitative analysis has established via personal interviews with former DAESH fighters that those individual remaining in hiding in both Syria and Iraq have not left because they expect to continue fighting—likely to the death[36]—in the hopes of retaking territory lost in the last year and half. For them, the decision to attempt retaking a recently liberated city, town or village is very much tied to the question of whether such a location comes with a local or regional government that can no longer provide core services.

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[33] Glenn A. Fine, Steve A. Linick, Ann C. Barr, "Operation Inherent Resolve, Operation Pacific-Eagle Philippines" *Lead Inspector General Report to the United States Congress* (1 April 2018 to 30 June 2018) at p. 42. Available online at https://media.defense.gov/2018/Aug/06/2001950941/-1/-1/1/FY2018_LIG_OCO_OIR3_JUN2018_508.PDF.

[34] See Twenty-second report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2368 (2017) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entitities," as reported in Letter dated 16 July 2018 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council, (July 2018) at p. 5. Available online at http://undocs.org/S/2018/705.

[35] Fine et.al., "Operation Inherent Resolve, Operation Pacific-Eagle Philippines" Ibid., at p. 21.

[36] See Vera Mironova, "Can ISIS regroup? Lessons from interviews with ex-ISIS fighters," *NATO Review*, 8 September 2018, available online at: https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2018/Also-in-2018/can-isis-regroup-lessons-from-interviews-with-ex-isis-fighters-syria/EN/index.htm

This is precisely the justification for prioritizing stabilization—and being realistic about creating successful scenarios for this at the city level, especially symbolic if both cities are former components of DAESH's now failed effort at holding Raqqa and Mosul. Provision of core services will enhance the likelihood of IDP's returning to their original places of residence. This message will also implicitly emphasize that DAESH's bold move to establish a Caliphate, acting as a transnational entity, resulted in failure.

Going forward, it is well to remember that multiple forces from different groups—often coming from different places and with differing or competing agendas—combined in Iraq, and so far in Syria to drive DAESH from territories in both countries. In Iraq, this included the continued military assistance, training and financial support of the United States, the participation and leadership of US trained Iraqi special forces and the regular Iraqi Army, along with strong military presence of Kurdish fighters in Iraq, and (not to be forgotten) an odd alliance—or perhaps tolerance—of Shiite militia, sponsored by Iran, who in this instance were there to also oppose DAESH. In Syria, by contrast, a similar pattern of unconventional alliances has joined to hasten the demise of DAESH in Raqqa, and perhaps soon in Deir Azzour as well. These have included at different points, operations undertaken by the Syrian Army independent of external support, then with Russian backing, along with "a mostly kurds alliance of mostly Arabs and ethnic minorities that's taken the place of rebels as the U.S.'s main ally in Syria." [37]

One notes that the list of players in both countries are remarkably similar with the exception of the Russian presence in Syria. Otherwise, both countries have U.S. backed fighters—either trained regular army or special forces (Iraq) or an alliance with Kurds, Arabs and ethnic minorities (Syria), both have kurds looking in the long run for autonomy or the possibility of a state/homeland, and most especially—in both countries, Iran plays a vital role through the alliance it creates with its Shiite militia fighters and the other groups fighting DAESH. It is difficult to know if any of these groups (save perhaps some minorities or rebels) are fighting for purely altruistic reasons.

Russia under Vladimir Putin opportunistically has employed *soft power[38]* to recapture some of the grandiosity of influence and scale of size of the former Soviet Union[39]—in ways that counter and check the influence of the United States and all other countries constituting the NATO. Indeed, juxtaposing Russia's blatant use of hard power—in this case, overwhelming military force—to take—or 'annex' Crimea from Ukraine in early 2014, we see the deployment of Russian military in Syria ostensibly as hard power which was in point of fact also an exercise in soft power. By arguing,

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[37] O'Connor, *Ibid* p. 4.

[38] See Anna Popkova, " 'Putin is playing chess and I think we are playing marbles,' Vladimir Putin's 'soft power' and the American Right," *The International Communication Gazette* 79 (5), (2017) , pp. 437- 458 at p. 438: " 'Soft power' is defined as the ability to make others want to do what you want based on the power of your attraction.'"

[39] Michael Slobodchikoff, and Doug Davis, "Roots of Russian Soft Power: Rethinking Russian National Identity," *Comparative Politics, Russia* 8 (2) (2017), 19-36 at p. 20 and p. 22: One major factor essential to the use of soft power "was Russian President Putin's foreign policy reorientation that prioritized relations with the former Soviet states. He focused on building relationships with these countries, and while Russia was the regional hegemon, it did not have the power to force other regional states to comply with its wishes. Instead, Moscow had to build relationships and work to develop regional trust." Perhaps equally important "[t]he collapse of the Soviet Union dealt a huge blow to the Russian sense of self-respect. Russia believed that even though it was no longer a superpower, it still deserved to be consulted about major policies that affected the world at large. It believed that because of its history and nuclear capabilities, that it maintained its international prestige and deserved the respect that is due to great powers."

not unreasonably, that the removal of the Assad regime would only create a larger problem for Syria (the country was used to a strong leader, and there were no viable replacements for Assad), Russia not only insinuated itself into a theater for possible influence that heretofore had been a place for waning American interest, it also gave support to Assad, allowing his military to reassert itself in the civil war, and later against DAESH. And what is Russia's reward for asserting its influence here? In 2016, Russia and Syria inked a new agreement to extend Russia's use of the Syrian naval port at Tartus, this time allowing Russia to move some of her nuclear ships there.[40] But in a larger sense, acting as a broker in the Syrian civil war allows Russia to start presenting itself as a globally influential player, an image designed to suggest a return to the global reach of the former USSR.

By contrast, as mentioned above, kurds in both countries have pegged their fight against the Islamic State to hopes for statehood or some form of autonomy and self-governance. In Syria, the Kurds still retain control of access to a large and rich oil fields in the governate of Deir Azzour. It is their bargaining chip—ostensibly to play with Assad in hope for support for some form of autonomy/self- governance. In Iraq, Kurds had until recently occupied the Iraqi cities of Kirkuk and Sinjar—part of a larger area rich with oil. As in Syria, and fresh from a recent referendum for an independent Kurdish state, separate from Iraq, Kurdish leaders hoped to leverage their control of this territory to buy some Iraqi acceptance of their demand for independence. Into these spaces, Iraqi forces assisted by some Shiite militia fighters, quickly took back control of these areas, reasserting Baghdad's power in this territory.

And whither Iran in both Syria and Iraq? Without question they have had a common enemy in DAESH—by itself enough to justify their involvement to defeat the terror group and its so-called Caliphate. But it is also believed that by assisting Assad in Syria, Iran is hoping to open a land route/corridor for foot traffic or vehicles, allowing Iran's assets to flow freely between Iran, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.

Given this mixed stew of shifting and temporary alliances and agendas, it is quite remarkable that all sides—especially Iran—were willing to work with one another towards a common goal of defeating DAESH. Consider that last point about Iran for a moment: who would or could believe that Iraqi soldiers—some old enough to remember the horrible eight year war with Iran that resulted in the deaths of millions—would ever agree to work in alliance with Shiite militia sponsored by a country once regarded as Iraq's existential threat? Who would believe that Kurds in Iraq or Syria would trust the central governments that had long (and still) denied their dream to independence? Likewise, who would have believed that these same national governments would trust the Kurds enough to work with them to defeat DAESH? And even though the relationship between the United States and Russia has recently soured (with questions about the 2016 US Presidential election), who could have imagined the United States and Russia would at least appear to begrudgingly occupy the same country and be working toward the goal of defeating DAESH?

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[40] Sam Lagrone, "Russia, Syria Agree on Mediterranean Naval Base Expansion, Refit of Syrian Ships," *USNI News*, 20 January 2017. Available online at: https://news.usni.org/2017/01/20/russia-syria-agree-tartus-naval-base-expansion-refit-syrian-ships

The fact is, these strategic relationships—which, like all things political are only really temporary, mutually beneficial alliances—worked because they required a unifying commitment to a common goal. It was and is a *unity of purpose* that created the possibility of defeating and driving out DAESH from cities in Iraq, and soon in Syria. Nothing so much makes partners of adversaries as identification of a common enemy.

Because of the different interests and expectations of so many players (outside of DAESH) in both countries, Iraq and Syria are vulnerable to continued instability, and therefore also vulnerable to a return engagement with DAESH. In such an environment how do these countries insulate themselves? Military security, economic development, housing and infrastructure building, and policies allowing the return of millions of IDP's can certainly help. But remember that DAESH built its global brand not just by brute force and the recruitment of thousands of foreign fighters; it also relied upon messaging and sophisticated use of news and social media to advance its interests.

In that spirit, the challenge for both countries is to engage DAESH in the messaging front as well. The suggestion here is to construct messaging built around the aforementioned theme of "unity of purpose."

Traditional Media and Joint Communiques re: "Unity of Purpose"

A first messaging strategy should begin by making use of traditional news media—television, radio, newspapers and magazines—with content therein also disseminated through various online portals to reach a larger audience, accustomed to reading/finding news through their cell phones. In Iraq as in Syria, the central national governments would do well to issue joint statements in coordination with the other allied groups (For Syria— the central government plus Russia, kurds, allied Arab and other smaller Syrian resistance groups, by name, the United States, Iran backed Shiite militia fighters, and of course Turkey; and for Iraq—the central government plus Kurdish Peshmerga fighters, Iran backed Shiite militia fighters and the United States) stressing that while these disparate groups may seek different long term goals or outcomes, they were *and can be again* of *one mind* in rejecting DAESH. To make the point more forcefully, here it should be argued that a reoccurrence of DAESH in either Syria or Iraq is the precise spark that would reignite these groups into union once more, in opposition to DAESH.

In Syria that might well mean for the time being that the Assad government remains the central authority, backed by the presence of Russia and its new arrangement for the naval installation at Tartus. No doubt Assad is a vicious dictator who has used chemical weapons on his own people— but in the current environment, the realpolitik of this situation is that post-DAESH Syria will require a strong leader of the central government to help stabilize his country. It also means that the United States will either live with the arrangement and/or use the end of DAESH control of land there as an excuse for the Trump administration's desire to exit from Syria. Arab and other ethnicity resistance fighters will likely return to their homes, but tribal leaders in Deir Azzour will likely need to be folded into this discussion—and offered some assurances about security in the new environment. It is worth observing that some tribal leaders/members do not trust Iran's motives in

being involved with fighting DAESH in Syria, and will require some assurances from Assad to that end. The two more problematic members of this discussion for the purposes of issuing a joint communication are Kurdish fighters—and Iran, as well its Shiite militia fighters. The Kurds will likely return control of the 8 oil fields in the governate of Deir Azzour back to the Assad regime and the regular Syrian military—but they will expect something in return for that, as well in appreciation for their efforts in fighting DAESH. No doubt they want independence or some form of self-rule and autonomy. This is a non-starter for the United States, which strongly recommends against this, as well Russia, most assuredly Turkey, and in all likelihood for Assad in Syria as well. For its part, Iran has said its objective was to defeat DAESH—but it is believed and suspected by the United States that the real objective is permission from Assad to establish a land route connecting Iran, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. This is where advice from Russia and the United States could be key to helping Assad reach an agreement that preserves the peace, but avoids expanding Iran's sphere of influence. Equally, Assad must be careful about disappointing the Kurds or conversely doing too much and angering Turkey, which opposes statehood for the PYD/YPG.

Assuming a successful effort at managing these different considerations among so many partners, the issuance of the joint statement explained above could be used to prime news coverage of this which would communicate this message loudly and clearly to those leaders of DAESH still in hiding, potentially seeking a return.

In Iraq, the players are similar (minus Russia and the smaller Arab or other ethnicity resistance fighters). Again, a joint statement from the Iraqi government, the United States, representatives of Kurdish Peshmerga fighters, and Iran and its Shiite militia fighters would in the same way confirm unity of purpose in working together to defeat DAESH, and suggest such an alliance would reconstitute to oppose any effort by the terror organization to come back to Iraq. This would again be used to prime news media coverage and communicate this message to the leaders of DAESH. As in Syria, the outcome is complicated. The Kurds have already had control of major oil facilities in the north taken back from them by the Iraqi Army—mostly, so far, without bloodshed. But they will expect something in return for their contributions to fighting DAESH. Perhaps a percentage of oil revenues from the north could go to assisting Kurds living in the region? Iran will also be more complicated—given their desire for that route to connect with Iraq as well. Once more, counsel from the United States might prove more valuable here—although much of this has become more difficult since President Trump promised to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal.[41]

Short Documentaries for Social Media That "Document" Critiques of DAESH Atrocities, Customs and Practices

An additional mediated messaging strategy suggestion is to sponsor and encourage the production and creation of documentary films, to be shown online and at where possible, broadcast on television, each looking at the specific atrocities committed by DAESH officials and soldiers in the territories

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[41] For a transcript of President Trump's speech about the Iran nuclear deal, go to:
http://www.npr.org/2017/10/13/557622096/transcript-trump-s-remarks-on-iran-nuclear-deal.

and cities they occupied in Syria and Iraq. The recommendation here is to compile film and photographs of the public executions and punishment meted out to average people living under DAESH, forcing women to become sexual slaves, along with examples of destruction of buildings and infrastructure, schools and hospitals, and structures and artifacts of history and culture. This would also be juxtaposed with ecological damage caused by lighting fire to oil wells, pouring huge amounts of poison and pollutants into the air, and infecting the soil and water tables with sulfur and air pollutants—thus damaging crops for farmers, and potentially impacting livestock that grazes and drinks water from contaminated sources. In contradistinction with former US State Department sponsored social message propaganda that used older Muslims to speak to younger male Muslims, the recommendation is to film and then black out the faces (for their own safety) of residents who had been trapped into living within areas controlled by DAESH—allowing them to narrate the terror they lived within for the former three-plus years.

As a means of professionalizing the finish and look of these documentaries *and* seeking out spaces to create continued working relationships between three of the countries involved here, we should be attracting and recruiting experienced and well known filmmakers from the area.

This author would add to this list some other full-length filmmakers and documentary filmmakers from Iran's rich and internationally recognized tradition of filmmaking. One of the norms for filmmakers working in Iran is that (owing to the political situation in the country) they must be careful about making political statements in their films that result in mocking or criticism of the government—and more importantly of the ruling Ayatollah or the Republican Guard. Living and working within that creative constraint, Iranian filmmakers have traditionally told wonderful stories, often in a minimalist style that focuses on simple, ordinary people and their problems. The films can sometimes be allegorical, such that the larger message is clear, even if not stated overtly.

Documentaries or other films made to provide a record of what transpired under DAESH can be another means of reminding viewers in Syria and Iraq—not to mention Libya, parts of Africa, and Afghanistan—what life was like during the 1000-plus days of DAESH control. Using films created by individuals from each country also allows an opportunity for working connections between Iraq and Iran and Syria and potentially authenticates this in ways that traditional government propaganda cannot.

The strategy here in recruiting the participation of filmmakers from the areas affected by DAESH is two-fold. First, short documentary films (4-6 minutes) told from the perspective and in the voice of established filmmakers who actually live in or hail originally from these areas lends a degree of authenticity and credibility to their work, as commentary on DAESH. As indicated above, the goal would be to document many of the abuses done in the name of DAESH, which actually blaspheme Islam—and assign each story to a different one of these directors. For example, one filmmaker might make a 4-5 minute documentary, retelling the enslavement and sexual exploitation of Yazidi women and children, which formed the basis of revenue production for DAESH, and was used to help lure foreign fighters from other countries. The documentary might, for example, stretch to include commentary from Nadia Murad, an Iraqi Yazidi young woman,

originally enslaved by DAESH and sold into the sex trade, who became an activist for Yazidis generally and enslaved girls and women specifically. On October 5th,2018, she was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace.

A second aspect of the strategy is to involve Iran by inviting some of its well-known filmmakers to participate. Iran is no supporter of DAESH—and although it may have other ambitions in Syria, it has been involved militarily precisely to defeat and destroy DAESH. Given its ostracizing by other countries over its development of missiles and a possible nuclear weapon—being involved in a documentary social media messaging campaign to accurately identify and reject DAESH might actually create a benign but meaningful way for Iran to participate in what would be a war of words and images. There can be long term benefits to focusing on what different countries agree upon—and building relationships from there.

Messaging Strategies to Mitigate DAESH Recruitment of Foreign Fighters, Version 2

Military success on the battlefields in Iraq and now Syria means that DAESH is being denied possession of land that was absolutely essential to authenticating its message of self-identity as a *transnational* entity—one that ignored and defied borders drawn by colonialists. The original message added a powerful form of *ethos*[42] to what was a *pathos*[43] appeal targeting primarily young male Muslims (ages 18-29), inviting them to come and be part of something larger than themselves. Undercutting that ethos (a transnational organization) in turn undercuts the pathos or emotional pull of being part of something larger than oneself. While this has potential for diminishing DAESH attempts at recruiting foreign fighters through social messaging—there are still some realities to consider.

First, as noted before, DAESH did manage to occupy and control land in both Syria and Iraq in excess of one thousand days. By itself, this distinguishes ISIS/ISIL from other so-called jihadist terrorist groups, including al Qaeda, arguably the terror group that gave rise/birth to DAESH. To make the point more forcefully, this mark of more than one thousand days also distinguishes them from nearly all contemporary, bottom up/non-state terror groups.

Second, DAESH has for many years demonstrated high aptitude and ability at manipulating what is essentially free social media platforms to recruit potential fighters and members for its organization. While multiple efforts aimed at assassination of high ranking officials of this terror group have produced some results,[44] many of the original Baathist military officers are still at large and with the organization, as is, apparently, DAESH leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Russia had reported his death with high probability earlier in June of 2017, but American officials remained

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[42] Ethos references credibility of the speaker/messenger or credibility of the message itself. For more see Joseph Tuman, *Political Communication in American Campaigns* (Sage Publishing, 2008) p. 66.

[43] Pathos references the appeal of emotion, or simply—an emotional appeal. Ibid, p. 67.

[44] For example, in 2016 coalition forces reported the killing of Haji Iman, ISIS/ISIL's acting finance minister and #2 organizationally (after ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi). See Eric Ortiz, Jim Miklaszewski, Richard Rengel, and Courtney Kube, "ISIS's Finance Minister, Haji Iman, Killed: Defense Officials," *NBC News,*(25 March 2016). Available online at https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/isis-s-second-command-killed-raid-sources-n545451

skeptical—and a recording released in late September of this 2018 was later authenticated by US intelligence as belonging to al-Baghdadi.[45] With key personnel still in place along with an awareness and ability to make use of social media for recruitment, there is no reason to believe DAESH will not attempt to recruit fighters from around the globe again.

Third, and perhaps most important, the term "transnational" is not limited to the act of occupying land in two countries. DAESH can also *act* as a transnational terror organization by recruiting individuals in other countries, and directing them to commit acts of terror in those countries. This can easily be accomplished by social media—*both* for recruiting individuals and directing of operations from afar. Indeed, in February of 2017, DAESH was already responsible for having conducted/directed more than 140 terror attacks since 2014, killing 2,043 people in twenty-nine countries *other than* Iraq and Syria.[46]

Fourth and finally, given DAESH sophistication with social media platforms—32and the now relatively high cost (in human and financial terms) of occupying and defending physical territory, the greater likelihood going forward is that DAESH will continue to maintain its Caliphate, but this time more likely as a *virtual Caliphate* within a virtual, digital environment. Such a space costs little to occupy or defend. It is a place constructed of electronic connections and the imagination of its users, not unlike the now antiquated "chat rooms" of internet yesteryear—places that were not real in the physical realm, but constituted a reality when participants gathered to communicate online. The same could said of terms like web*site,* or virtual *space*. Chat rooms and Blogs later helped bring forth social media platforms like Facebook. The words used to describe these— "rooms" or "platforms" are useful as technical monikers, but also because they allude to a physical space—even if such a space is illusory. It becomes real if one thinks it is real, and uses it as such. And as it has been for a social media platform, so it may be for a virtual Caliphate.

Given the very real likelihood that DAESH may reconstitute and perhaps reinvent itself as a virtual Caliphate, intent on using computer mediated communication and social messaging to recruit, communicate with its followers and direct operations against both random and strategic targets in multiple countries, some different approaches to strategy are in order for countries in NATO.

Shift the Messaging Strategy from Reactive to Proactive

Past iterations of counter-messaging against DAESH—e.g., efforts by the United States State Department—were largely ineffective for several reasons as varied as poor design and production values which failed to hold the interest of Millennial generation target audiences, or being correctly perceived as government propaganda for displaying the State Department emblem at the social message. Worse is the fact the messages appeared to be largely reactive in orientation—meaning they were

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[45] Nick Walsh and Dakin Andone, "Where is the leader of ISIS?" *CNN*, (19 October 2017). Timothy Barrett, spokesman for the US Office of the Director of National Intelligence is quoted as saying the recording "appears to be authentic." Available online at: http://www.cnn.com/2017/10/19/middleeast/where-is-baghdadi-isis/index.html

[46] Tim Lister, Roy Sanchez, Mark Bixler, Sean O'Key, Richard Hogenmiller, and Mohammed Tawfeeq, "ISIS goes global: 143 attacks in 29 countries have killed 2,043," *CNN World*, (13 February 2017). Available online at: http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/17/world/mapping-isis-attacks-around-the-world/index.html

a reaction to what DAESH had already posted. Mostly responding to DAESH, came/comes at the expense of allowing this terror group to dictate and lead the discourse. Future efforts at challenging DAESH's dominance will require a proactive stance—meaning from the beginning, NATO countries must provoke and lead the discourse, forcing DAESH to respond to them rather than the other way around.

Make Use of Traditionally Accepted Means for Fighting Fire with Fire Online

These steps are more obvious, and to be more effective grinding down DAESH messages as opposed to a knock-out punch. Here are two considerations. First, in the spirit of ordinary techniques to challenge DAESH recruiter discussions and threads via social media by engaging in hard trolling—no different than what partisan readers did to one another via Twitter or Facebook in the 2016 US Presidential election. Excessive commentary disrupts discussions, and has the potential to slow the momentum of these threads, which can otherwise lead to recruitment or direction towards a terror act. Being bogged down in the minutia of responding to trolling can distract and slow these discussions. Additionally, NATO countries should put more pressure on any social media companies to suspend or shut down accounts for individuals known to be DAESH recruiters.

Make Use of Social Media and Public Statements to Traditional News Media to Accuse DAESH of War Crimes and/or Crimes Against Humanity.

DAESH made a practice of public execution of prisoners—including prisoners of war—during their occupation of territory in Syria and Iraq. Worse, they often videotaped the acts and distributed them to news outlets and through social media. Given that the executed prisoners were secured and defenseless, these same tapes (modified to avoid showing excessive gore and violence) present their own evidence for war crime charges, under the Geneva Convention. A steady diet of these videos as messages can be followed by references to the appropriate passages under international law for war crimes and/or crimes against humanity. By making the allegation proactively, you would be forcing DAESH to respond—or be perceived as acquiescing if they remain silent.

Fully Expect that DAESH will Claim Credit (falsely or not) for Any and All Attacks-and Proactively Challenge These Claims by Publicizing Basic Methodology for Determining the Truthfulness of the Terror Group's Claims.

As indicated before, DAESH can and will continue to claim to be transnational simply by focusing upon recruiting individuals for and directing them to commit acts of terror in other countries. When attacks are made, DAESH has historically been careful to claim credit for these attacks—although of late, it is unclear if they are actually responsible for all the attacks they have mentioned online. For example, on October 1, 2017, after a single individual was responsible for shooting and killing 58 people and injuring 546 more at a country music concert in Las Vegas, DAESH issued a communiqué claiming that the shooter—identified as Stephen Paddock—"is a soldier of the

Islamic State and carried out the operation in response to targeting coalition countries." [47] A day later they issued a second message, insisting that Paddock had "converted (to Islam) several months ago." [48] But U.S. law enforcement sources could find no evidence that linked Paddock to Islam or DAESH in any respect. As of time of this writing, it is still unclear what drove Paddock to this extreme act of violence.

In the future, a proactive approach to dealing with DAESH or other terror groups who wish to emulate their example, would be to establish and publicize for the news media methodological criteria for determining the authenticity and veracity of claims of responsibility made by individuals after a terror attack. For example, law enforcement agencies investigating an attack after the fact will often look to see whether there was any *previous evidence* of association between one or more terrorist attackers and the organization that later claimed them as its own. In instances where DAESH was in fact responsible for sponsorship or encouragement of a terrorist attack, one of their usual means of proving such a claim has been to provide *prerecorded* video evidence—depicting the individual(s) on video, making a claim of allegiance to the terror organization, and/or promising to wage a violent so-called jihad. Additionally, DAESH will sometimes reveal certain information immediately after the attack—perhaps naming the individual or individuals and providing other details about his/her or their background. In those instances where they have done this in the past, the linkage back to DAESH was more verifiable.

In addition to this, where the attacker's voice is heard on the video, or in a audio recording, there can be forensic analysis—both human interpretive, and technological analysis—to verify the identity of the speaker, thus validating what is seen in a video or heard on a recording. This can include: analysis of word pronunciation to situate and identify the regional background of the speaker; technological analysis and comparison of acoustic qualities of the speaker's voice—e.g., pitch, loudness (aka volume level), resonance, intonation, speed or rapidity, etc.—which can then be compared with other recordings of the same speaker or speakers to verify a match; evidence of splicing—which occurs when the sender of the video or audio recording has cut and spliced different segments to create the appearance of a entire statement; and the presence of consistent background noise to determine if the recording has stopped and started again, or moved to another location—or was, again, the product of splicing and reconstituting a recording.

These can be used to debunk or authenticate what DAESH will claim credit/ responsibility for in the future. They can also be used to verify recorded messages or statements issued by DAESH leaders who had not been heard from over an extended period of time, and otherwise were presumed to have been killed. A good example of this would be the aforementioned recent recording released by DAESH in late September of 2017 of self-proclaimed Caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who prior to that time had not been heard from for eleven months—and was, according to both Russia and Iran, presumed to have been killed in a Russian airstrike in Syria. The 46 minute recording of

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[47] From the communiqué issued by ISIS/ISIL's self-styled news agency Amaq, on the encrypted messaging app Telegram. See Jack Moore, "Trump Has 'No Idea' If The Las Vegas Shooting Was ISIS, Despite Expert Doubts," *Newsweek Magazine,* (4 October 2017). Available online at: http://www.newsweek.com/trump-has-no-idea-if-las-vegas-shooting-was-isis-despite-expert-doubts-677172

[48] Ibid.

al-Baghdadi's voice was capable of being verified by the analysis above—but references he made in his speech, especially as to North Korea and the United States—helped convince intelligence officials that this was not only his voice, but his voice spoken recently.[49]

Publicizing these methods for analysis to news media *and* openly challenging/daring DAESH to present evidence of the links to attacks or authenticating leaders thought to be dead would up the ante, and for the terror group—if they want news media coverage of their online claims, statements—to prove it in advance of any coverage. Absent that, news organizations themselves would be less likely to cover DAESH or others, thus diminishing their public profile and reach.

An Additional Concern: When/If Terror Groups Merge And Combine Resources

Although a sizable number of DAESH fighters remain in Syria and Iraq, other DAESH fighters and operations have migrated to Libya (in Barqa, Fezzan and Tripoli), Egypt (in the Sinai), Yemen, Algeria (Al-Jazair), and Nigeria (in Gharb Iriqiyyah) as well, as the Russian Caucuses (Qawqaz) and the Phillipines, there is more than enough reporting to suggest that DAESH has also retreated a major part of its operations to Afghanistan and to an extent, Pakistan (in Khorasun).[50] Part of this may be with the intention of limiting how much attention is being paid to DAESH's losses on the ground in Syria and Iraq. The spread of fighters and operations across such a wide area may also signal an intention from DAESH to evolve from a construction of itself as bringing on the new Caliphate in different countries, transforming instead into a global so-called jihadist terrorist movement.

Following a pattern established in recent years since the death of Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda has been active, but maintained a low profile. In light of DAESH's losses in Syria, it is possible Al Qaeda's affiliate in Syria (Al Qaeda in Syria, or AQS) may enter into coalitions with other groups (e.g., Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS) to fill any void created by DAESH's lack of activity. The notion of coalitions—more formal alliances between different terror groups—factors into consideration now as DAESH in Afghanistan contemplates its future. While there are a reasonable number of DAESH fighters left in Syria and Iraq, the organization's finances are now believed to have been substantially drained—and the traditional means of capital during the occupation of Syria and Iraq have considerably diminished.

All of which raises a logical question: would it be rational for DAESH to merge with a similar, larger entity, in the hopes of maintaining its status or growing as a global threat? And if so, which so-called jihadist group would make for a logical partner in any merger?

One possibility (which might also explain the presence of DAESH in Afghanistan) might be the reconstituted Taliban in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Following a humiliating and swift defeat in the conflict with the United States, the Taliban eventually reemerged, establishing itself as a

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[49] Martin Chulov, "ISIS releases new recording of leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi," *The Guardian,* (28 September 2017). Available online at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/28/isis-releases-new-recording-of-leader-abu-bakr-al-baghdadi

[50] Rohan Gunaratna, "Global Threat Forecast," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses,* 10 (1), (January 2018), pp. 1-6 p.2.

continuing political force in Afghanistan, especially outside of Kabul. According to news reports,[51] as well as a 2017 Pentagon report regarding "Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan" the group may have as many as sixty thousand fighters—both indigenous to the Taliban, and also cross-overs from the Haqqani network a separate group of Islamist militants.[52] A merger between DAESH and the Taliban might create a sizable fighting force of 90,000—not including what other DAESH affiliates might be willing to contribute.

As frightening a prospect as that seems, the notion of a merger between these two is unrealistic. First and foremost, the Taliban has always been primarily concerned with local issues, while DAESH wields a widening regional and now possibly global campaign. Of greater significance is the historically poor relationship between DAESH and the Taliban: "The connection between ISIL and the Taliban is mixed. ISIL-Afghanistan most likely links up with the Taliban when it comes to using established smuggling networks for people, weapons, etc. However, ISIL has been vocally opposed to the Taliban, with statements and propaganda videos questioning the legitimacy of the Taliban and accusing them of promoting the interests of Pakistan's ISI intelligence agency. The two groups actually declared war on each other in January 2015, and there have been violent skirmishes between both groups since then."[53] Indeed, this past August, 200 DAESH fighters in Afghanistan were overrun and surrendered to Taliban forces after attacking them only a day before.[54]

A more realistic partner for a merger may be the terrorist organization Al Qaeda. What advantages would there be to such a move? To begin with, the two organizations share the same institutional DNA: Al Qaeda was the parent entity that gave birth to what would become DAESH. The origins of DAESH tie to the Bush administration's decision to invade Iraq in 2003, falsely claiming linkage between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda. Prior to that time there was no Al Qaeda in Iraq—but after the U.S. invasion, one cropped up as an affiliate, Al Qaeda in Iraq, or AQI.

Both Al Qaeda and DAESH also share roots and sentiments about Sunni's, and share a dislike of the west generally, and the United States particularly. Both groups also dreamed of altering a shift of the asymmetry between Muslim countries and the West.[55] Nevertheless, there are significant differences that make such a merger high unlikely. These include a difference of ideological origin—in this case, DAESH is very influenced by a kind of apocalyptic bias—the belief that a

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[51] Courtney Kube, "The Taliban is gaining strength and territory in Afghanistan," *NBC News*, (30 January 2018), available online at https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/numbers-afghanistan-are-not-good-n842651

[52] See Department of Defense, "Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan," *Report to Congress in Accordance with Section 1225 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. 'Buck' McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015, (P.L. 113-291), as amended,* (June, 2017). Available online at https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/June_2017_1225_Report_to_Congress.pdf

[53] Jeff Gilmour, "The Recent U.S. Intervention in Afghanistan," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies,* 18 (3) (2018), at p. 13.

[54] Najim Rahim, and Rod Nordland, "Taliban Surge Routs ISIS in Northern Afghanistan," *The New York Times,* August 1, 2018. Available online at: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/01/world/asia/afghanistan-taliban-isis.html

[55] See Aureo Gomes, and Michelle Mikhael, "Terror or Terrorism? Al Qaeda and the Islamic State in Comparative Perspective," *Brazilian Political Science Review,* 12 (1) (Epub 26 March 2018).

prophetic figure or *Mahdi* would lead all Muslims in a battle against infidels. Such a battle would also purify Islam. Unlike Al Qaeda, DAESH rather controversially decreed that "any Muslim that does not follow the Muslim faith in the manner dictated by DAESH is an apostate who deserves to be killed. This included nearly all Muslims, and in particular applies to Shia Muslims, who DAESH considers pagan apostates who should be annihilated."[56] But perhaps most significant are the strategic and tactical differences between the organizations, and the individual leaders who possess them.

AQI eventually became the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI), and would later be led by Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. By several accountings, the split between the ISI and Al Qaeda was the result of a declared merger between ISI and a group called Jabhat Al-Nusra in Syria, (2013). Al Baghdadi was warned by Al Qaeda's leader (following the death of Bin Laden) Ayman al-Zawahiri that such a merger would not be allowed. According to O'Shea, Baghdadi ignored the Al Qaeda Central (AQC) leader, dangerously challenging his authority, and accusing him of bowing to the Western powers, by him "insisting on a distinction between the lands of Syria and Iraq, was deferring to artificial borders drawn up by Western imperial powers at the close of the First World War [Sykes-Picot]. By ensuring a division between the Al-Qaeda affiliates in Syria and Iraq, Baghdadi argued that Zawahiri was technically cooperating with the West." [57] This affront to Zawahiri's authority was perceived as the kind of disrespect Bagdhadi surely had intended. Bagdhadi then went about recruiting more fighters from Jabat al Nusra, and with civil war in full force in Syria, employed those fighters to help him topple and occupy the city of Raqqa, which in 2014 he officially declared a Caliphate. Bagdhadi would do the same in Iraq, seizing control of Mosul, and also declaring the Caliphate there as well. For good measure he also declared himself *Caliph*, the leader of this new state that ignored boundaries imposed by western powers. Bagdhadi's background included time spent in prison at Camp Bucca, after the U.S. invasion. His time there placed him in the company of Baathist ex-military officers, many of whom he would later recruit to assist him with his ambitions for his new Caliphate. Bagdhadi also earned a Masters degree and a PhD in Islamic studies, allowing him to present as a learned and educated man. His membership in Ouraysh tribe—the tribe to which the Prophet Muhammad had belonged—allowed the new Caliph to justify his position by a claim of linkage to the Prophet.

For Zawahiri, the lightening quick speed with which these events occurred was alarming. Ties between Al Qaeda and DAESH were permanently severed. They remain antagonistic to this day, more than likely owing to the continued presence of both men, in charge of their individual organizations. Their personal views of strategy and tactics inform an organizational basis for their split as well: Zawahiri (like Bin Laden before him) and Al Qaeda are not above the grand theater produced by a significant act—such as that produced on September 11th. Critical to the horrific results of that attack, however, was Zawahiri's ongoing commitment to playing the long game.

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56 Thomas McCabe, "An ISIS-Al Qaeda Merger?" *Small Wars Journal* (2017), available online at http://smallwarsjour-nal.com/jrnl/art/an-isis-al-qaeda-merger. For a typical commentary about Shia Muslims, see Al Hayat Media Center, "The Rafidah; From Ibn Saba' to the Dajjal," *Dabiq*, #13, P.32-45, https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/the-islam-ic-state-e2809cdacc84biq-magazine-13e280b3.pdf , accessed 11 May 2017.

57 Justin O'Shea, "ISIS: The Role of Ideology and Eschatology in the Islamic State" *The Pardee Periodical of Global Affairs,* 1, (52), (2016), pp 51-65 at 55.

9/11 was product of careful, long term planning. By contrast, Bagdhadi's move to merge with al-Nusra, then military conquest of both Raqqa and Mosul, followed by the declaration of a Caliphate came at a much quicker pace. From Bagdhadi's perspective, he was merely making decisions in real time to take advantage of circumstances (such as the distraction presented by a civil war) which would guarantee him success. From Zawahiri's perspective, Bagdhadi's decisions were impulsive and not well thought out. The Al Qaeda leader would likely argue today that DAESH's loss of both cities this past year was inevitable.

In this environment, a merger between both DAESH and Al Qaeda is most unlikely—so long as both men are in control. If, however, one or both of them were deposed, replaced or killed, it is possible a new leader or leaders would be open to thinking differently about unification. NATO would do well to consider how much of an increased terror threat there would be if that came to pass. While DAESH has upwards of 30,000 fighters hiding in Syria and Iraq, Al Qaeda has forces spread out in numerous regions, amounting to upwards of 40,000 when the affiliates are included. With these possible outcomes, what strategies might be pursued to avoid a merger of these two terror groups?

Conclusion

Messaging to Normalize the Split between DAESH and Al Qaeda

To discourage any possibility of rapprochement between DAESH and Al Qaeda, NATO and affiliate countries should flood DAESH target social media with news stories that document the split between Al Qaeda and DAESH, not to mention Zawahiri and Baghdadi. Careful and deliberate placement and reposting of these pieces on any social media likely to be used by young and impressionable, potential so-called jihadist targets for recruitment, or already existing rank and file members of Al Qaeda and DAESH, can reintroduce their troubled relationship into that discourse, and in the process contribute to normalizing the break between the two groups. NATO might also reach out to news organizations such as Al Jazeera, looking for previous coverage of these same topics, and repost the video and audio links online, accessible to the same audience. The goal is make all aware of the split—and the reasons behind animosity between the two groups—making discussion about a merger considerably less likely.

Alternative Strategy if Zawahiri and/or Bagdhadi were Deposed, Replaced or Killed

Both Zawahiri and Bagdhadi are wanted men—sought by military, intelligence and law enforcement operatives in many parts of the world. It has long been believed Bagdhadi is in hiding in Afghanistan—but honestly, he could be hiding in many places. Zawahiri, on the other hand, has long been committed to Afghanistan and the Taliban, in light of the freedom he, Bin Laden and Al Qaeda have historically enjoyed there.

It is possible that U.S. Special Forces may undertake a *decapitation* strategy reminiscent of what used by U.S. Navy Seals who tracked down and executed Bin Laden. The same may be true of NATO forces. At this particular moment—with both terror organizations estranged from one another and actually in a position to benefit from merging—eliminating either or both leaders would subject us all to the risk that younger replacements, absent the emotional baggage and grudges carried by both Zawahiri and Bagdhadi, might decide that merging in the new order of things was the sensible decision. It goes without saying that this would be disastrous for the rest of the world. For that reason, while it makes sense in the short term to track, eavesdrop and monitor both men and their organizations, it would be prudent to avoid decapitation strategy for either man at this time.

As the old saying goes: Better the devil you know.

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Employing Upper Echelon Approach to the Crisis Management Team Intervening in Terror Incidents and Regional Conflicts

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Abstract: *The ever-growing increase in the acts of terror which threaten both personal safety and national/international stability led to a search for new perspectives in crisis management at national and international levels so as to formulate new policies for the establishment of crisis management units to fight terrorism and to handle regional conflicts. In line with these developments, academic studies often focus on the crisis itself as well as its consequences. However, scholars have not focused on the composition of crisis management teams which intervene in and manage terrorist incidents, the characteristics of the individual members of the team, and the impact on the resolution of the situation (or lack thereof). Therefore, this study intends to impose a new perspective to the field, making the case for the use of the 'Upper Echelon' approach for crisis management teams responding to regional and global conflicts and the fight against terrorism. It is believed that the implementation of the Upper Echelon approach to crisis management teams employed in response to past terror attacks and related crises could be of substantial value for future efforts in this area.*

Keywords: *Crisis Management, Upper Echelon, Demographic Profile, Terrorism, Crisis Management Team.*

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Introduction

The last century was marked by with two global scale wars, followed by an extreme polarization and decades of Cold War and a number of regional crises which had, and continues to have, substantial impact on individuals, enterprises, countries, and international organizations. Moreover, due to globalization, even small-scale crisis arising within the boundaries of a nation can have substantial international consequences. Therefore, the management of crises is of such importance and the consequences depend upon the success of the decisions taken and the practices implemented at the strategic level. In a similar vein, it is also evident that the crises caused by terror can lead to even graver consequences, and hence needs to be handled with care by the nations as well as by organizations.[3]

Moreover, the word 'war' is effectively replaced by the word 'crisis', which has become the dominant term used in the literature.[4] The recent rise in the acts of terror, which threaten both personal safety and national/regional stability, as well as ethnic-religious violence, natural disasters, epidemics and disinformation, have all led to a search for new perspectives in crisis management at national and international levels. All these developments in turn also led to the formulation of new policies and the establishment of crisis management units to fight against terrorism and handle regional conflicts.

In parallel to these developments, academic studies often focus on the crisis itself, as well as its consequences. Yet an in-depth review of the literature did not come up with any studies on the composition of crisis management teams, the characteristics of the individual members of the team, and the impact on the proposed solutions (or lack thereof). Therefore, the present study intends to offer a new perspective in the field, making the case for the use of the Upper Echelon approach for crisis management teams responding to regional and global conflicts including the fight against terrorism.

Management of crisis serves two basic functions: Preventing the occurrence of the crisis, and limiting the damage in the event of one.[5] The management of the crisis at both stages requires executives equipped with distinct sets of skills and perspectives. Therefore, a highly qualified and hand selected team is a must in successful crisis management so as to prevent the crisis even before its advent, and effectively manage it once it occurs. The crucial question in this context is: What kind of team is needed for successful crisis management? This question is well known and frequently studied in business administration literature which sets the baseline for the Crisis Management Team (CMT) more than any other discipline. CMT members are composed of experts at various levels within the organization, who are tasked with monitoring and identifying crises.[6]

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[3] Sara Thorne, "Failures of Imagination: Terrorist Incident Response in the Context of Crisis Management", (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Portsmouth, 2010), p. 88.

[4] Iztok Prezelj, *The Fight Against Terrorism and Crisis Management in the Western Balkans* (IOS Press, 2008), p. VII.

[5] Timothy Coombs, *Code Red in the Boardroom Crisis Management as Organizational DNA*, (Praeger Publishers, 2006), p. 4.

[6] Dawn R. Gilpin and Priscilla J. Murphy, *Crisis Management in A Complex World*, (Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 135

In contrast, the decisions and practices at the strategic level are made and implemented by the personnel and the teams from the upper echelons of the organization. Therefore, management science can present the answer to creating an effective Crisis Management Team by using the Upper Echelon theory. Upper Echelon teams were studied for the first time in 1984 by Hambrick and Mason. The Upper Echelon approach has yet to be applied to the study of teams in crisis management, an area which serves a distinct purpose, and the impact and consequences of which can often be destructive, affecting multiple organizations and even countries simultaneously.

This study will firstly present the fundamental concepts of crises and their management. Afterwards, there will be a short history of the upper echelon approach, and a description of its features. The most important feature of the upper echelon perspective lies in the fact that the decisions and actions of top managers responsible for strategic decisions and practices of enterprises are shaped by their cognitive structures, which are mainly built around their demographic profile. Demographic profiles are not, however, the only determinants of the decisions and practices of the top managers. The structure of the team also plays a major role. The variance of certain demographic profiles among the ranks of top managers may lead to homogeneous or heterogeneous team structures. Therefore, it is essential to shed light on each fundamental element of demographic profile and their role on the team so as to understand the Upper Echelon and Top Management Teams. Additionally, this section will also discuss the demographic profile' influence on top management structures and their crisis management methods.

Crisis Management and Crisis Management Teams

It is possible to discuss crisis in two parallel lanes: its scope, and its management. In terms of scope, the crises vary with reference to the area affected, the form and scale of the occurrence, and the areas of application. The first fact to note is that crisis management lies in the domain of more than one branch of science. Crisis management does not represent a distinct field, but is covered extensively by professionals from numerous disciplines. Scientists such as sociologists, political scientists, anthropologists[7] as well as management scholars are discussing crisis management. This is the natural consequence of the fact that any crisis which arises does so at different scales and in different forms, affecting very diverse types of organizations such as families, companies, cities, governments, as well as private agencies.[8] Furthermore, in the post-Cold War era, and especially in recent years it has become clear that a terror-related crisis needs to be handled by professionals from different backgrounds because it has a much broader effect than any other type of crisis.[9]

Another element of crisis response operation relates to management. Crisis management has some peculiar aspects of its own, compared to conventional management. In the literature, crisis

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[7] Edward P. Borodzicz, *Risk, Crisis and Security Management,* (John Wiley & Sons Ltd. Press, 2005), p. 10.

[8] Rachelle Alterman, *Planning in the Face of Crisis Land Use, Housing, and Mass Immigration in Israel*, (Routledge Press, 2002), p. 9.

[9] Uriel Rosenthal and Alexander Kouzmin, "Crises and Crisis Management: Toward Comprehensive Government Decision Making", *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*: J-PART, 7 (2) (1997), pp. 277-304.

response management is often described with reference to efforts to shape the existing state of affairs, and while doing so predicting the foreseeable future and, to a certain extent, trying to control it. As a rule, crisis management strives to eliminate, or at least reduce uncertainties. The main approach to crisis management is about estimating and controlling the events of the future, on the basis of predictions to bring about at least some degree of desirable circumstances, with a view to ascertaining a precise and stable perspective of the crisis.[10] Predicting and successfully managing the crisis entails the use of varying numbers of distinctive measures to cope with uncertainties, and rapid change. In this context, the development of the NATO's crisis management mechanism can serve as an important example.

The change in NATO's approach to crisis management began with the Strategic Concept adopted in 1991. That document explicitly refers to "the management of crises affecting the security of its members" with respect to crisis management measures. The Strategic Concept document dated 1999, on the other hand, stated that the alliance would be taking an active part in crisis management, and that such operations would also cover those outside the scope of Article Five. The Strategic Concept dated 2010, in turn, further expanded the definition of crisis management, stating the will of NATO to work, where it deems it necessary, to prevent and manage the crisis, and to bring stability after the conflict.[11] Currently the NATO's crisis management approach is designed as a six-stage process, and tries to develop comparable mechanisms in member states, with a view to achieving standardization. On the other hand, the process and the mechanism thus developed have yet to present a clear description of the team that will manage the crisis. The crisis management team is rather set up through negotiations between member states.

The management staff involved in any stage of the crisis response action, from planning to implementation, are required to exhibit different experiences and skills.[12] The prediction as well as prevention of the crisis, not to mention successful management of the process once the crisis occurs, depends on the cognitive structure of the organizations involved. Those cognitive structures determine the decisions and actions the management teams take with respect to the crisis, as well as the results of those efforts. Crisis management requires a combination of a large number of distinct skills and competences. That is why crisis response operations cannot depend on a sole manager or executive. Predicting a crisis that would have negative consequences on an organization or multiple countries or organizations, taking relevant precautions, and minimizing the negative consequences once they occur, and bringing about a healthy conclusion to the crisis exceeds the capabilities and experiences of any single manager. This explains the requirement for team work, rather than individual-work.[13] In terms of bringing about success in the organization's crisis preparation and response management, management by a team plays a much more important role than crisis management by a single individual.[14]

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[10] Gilpin and Murphy, p. 158.

[11] www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49192.htm# Crisis management Last updated: 29 Jan. 2015.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Gilpin and Murphy, p.63.

[14] Granville King, "Crisis Management & Team Effectiveness: A Closer Examination", *Journal of Business Ethics*, 41 (3) (2002), pp. 235-249, p. 236.

In the literature, team management is referred to as Crisis Management Team (CMT). Dawn and Priscilla note that the members of the team should exhibit certain characteristics and behavior patterns regarding crisis and crisis response management.[15] The first and foremost of these, is the ability to work as a team towards shared goals. The second refers to functional expertise of the members of CMT, while a third relates to the CMT members' skills to assess the positive and negative aspects of a development with a view to grasping the actual state of affairs in case of an unexpected development, analyzing the problems to take crucial decisions and then evaluating and processing the alternatives. Finally, robust communication skills are noted as a must. According to scholars, success in crisis management depends mostly on the CMT members' internal characteristics, expertise and experiences regarding their specialties. The success of CMT requires a comprehensive yet accurate perspective covering a number of disciplines with respect to the structure of the team and the competences of individual members. Management science's 'Upper Echelon' approach can be considered the most helpful discipline in order to understand the overall CMT concept.

Upper Echelon and Top Management Teams

The concept of top management, a frequent utterance in contemporary management science and organizational studies, was born in 1980s. Having originally been introduced by Hambrick and Mason in 1984, the "Upper Echelon" approach marks a landmark in top management studies and its theoretical foundations are based in behavioral science. The theoretical work Cyert and March carried out in the 1960s[16] at Carnegie School led to the conclusion that the results achieved by an enterprise are based more on behavioral factors, than on mechanical structures and operations.[17]

The second source of inspiration for the Upper Echelon approach was the organizational demographics studies carried out by Pfeiffer. According to the organizational demographics' studies, noting that demographic profile is a crucial determinant of individual behavior and organizational outcomes, the demographic profile of the management staff is the most, if not the only element in guiding the management and analysis of the organization. The individuals' demographic profiles play a major role in determining the behaviors and preferences of the top management teams and have a decisive role in shaping their cognitive structures, strategic preferences and practices.

The recent emphasis on upper echelon teams is based on a number of reasons. First of all, the upper echelon teams and their members are effectively the top levels of the organization, taking strategic decisions regarding the future, and guiding the practices of the organization. The upper echelon team responsible for the operations of the organization as a whole is the body of executives taking the top-level decisions, assuming the responsibility of such decisions, and collectively governing the organization. As noted above, organizations are effectively reflections of their upper

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[15] Ibid

[16] Philip D. Mosciski, "The Study of Top Management Team Heterogeneity, Sociocultural Context, and Internationalization, on Firm Performance: Where to Go from Here", *The Journal of Applied Management and Entrepreneurship*, 9 (2) (2004), pp. 133–147.

[17] Albert A. Cannella, "Upper Echelons: Donald Hambrick on Executives and Strategy", *Academy of Management Executive*, 15 (3) (2001), pp. 36–42.

echelon teams. Secondly, by providing a thorough assessment of the organization with reference to not only its own existence, but as part of an immediate and extended environment, the upper echelon team focuses on the future rather than the present. The team structure offers more than a simple 'sum of the parts' of the personal characteristics of the individual members, because the synergies created lead to results well beyond expectations.

The two main elements stand out in studies on Upper Echelons are the personal profiles of the team members, and the meaning of such profiles for the wider team, which also determine CMT's strategic preferences. Most of the studies on strategic management teams analyze the influence of demographic profiles on behaviors and results achieved. A number of studies found substantial associations between the organizational characteristics, and the personal profiles of the members of top management.[18] To put it simply, organizations produce teams composed of executives in line with their areas of operation, strategic objectives, and structural characteristics.

Yet another important attribute of team management as emphasized by Upper Echelon studies is the variance of the demographic profiles within the team. Two leading concepts present themselves as crucial elements in the variance of demographic profiles: Homogeneity and heterogeneity. Homogeneity refers to cases where members of the upper echelons essentially share the same or similar sets of characteristics. Heterogeneity, in contrast, refers to cases where team members have completely or mostly distinctive demographic profiles as individuals. The variance of the team members' demographic profiles shape numerous factors and activities, such as cognitive wealth within the team, harmony among the members, communications, conflicts, and more. As Figure 1 shows, the level of the cognitive variance between the members of the team determines their strategic preferences, decisions, practices, and hence, the results.
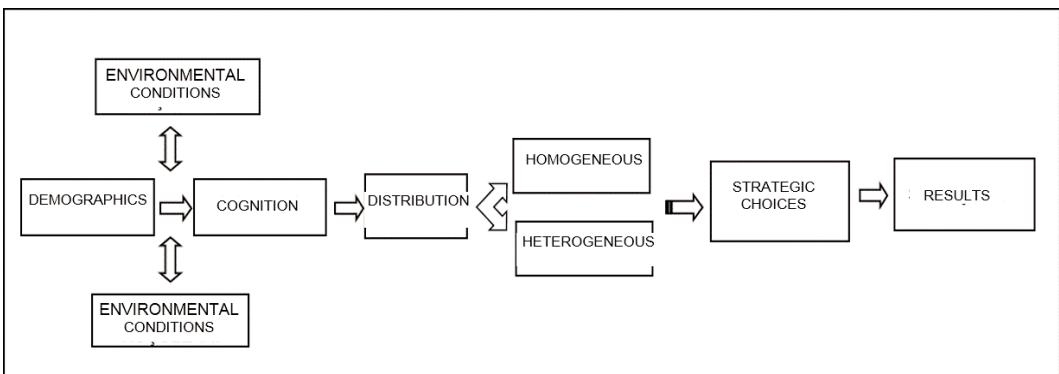

Figure 1. Upper echelon team model

18 Melenie J. Lankau et. al., "Examining the Impact of Management Value Dissimilarity in Top Management Teams", *Journal of Management Issues*, 19 (1) (2007), pp. 11–34.

Crisis Top Management Teams and Age

Age is a crucial demographic element which plays a determining role regarding the physical and cognitive structures of the individuals and the age of the individuals of the upper echelon team plays a major role in shaping their perspectives towards strategic options. Compared to their younger comrades, older executives embrace a more cautious approach towards the developments, and by doing so have an easier time in overcoming problems. Their experience helps increase the accuracy rates of the decisions made by noticing potential problems in advance, and thereby taking the required measures to maintain the current standing of the organization in the face of the crisis is definitely easier in organizations which have older executives in their ranks. However, older executives often choose rather conservative options to maintain the existing state of affairs and the career picture, given the slowing pace of their physical and cognitive skills.[19] They do not engage in strategic decision-making to risk their existing career positions, unless they are absolutely required to.

Younger executives, in turn, have more recent insights into the organization, as they have been part of the lower ranks in relatively more recent time frames. Young executives are more willing to learn and educate themselves, compared to their older colleagues. Armed with a more energetic physical shape, young executives embrace idealist outlooks and a willingness to take an active stance in the face of developments. Therefore, they have rather open perspectives towards innovation. Young executives are more inclined to take risks given their physical and mental facilities. They act quickly in the face of developments, and take decisive action. Young managers move on to new knowledge, follow a more active attitude and create direct consensus.[20]

The age profiles of the upper echelon teams can exhibit homogeneous or heterogeneous characteristics. Crisis management teams composed of executives from a large number of nations and a diverse set of disciplines are never good candidates for homogeneous teams. Heterogeneous crisis management teams composed of members from an extended age range reinforce mutual advantages, neutralizing the disadvantages other members pose. On the other hand, other members of top management who have a rather conservative outlook in the face of the need for strategies to bring about a stable period to follow a crisis, thus maintaining the existing position, also pose advantages at times.

Crisis Top Management Teams and Gender

Even though gender is essentially a physiological feature, it arguably has an influence on management behavior and preferences. Traditionally, the management levels had hitherto been the domain of men, but today women have been reaching upper echelon positions through hard work. Nowadays, many women are joining the upper echelons of various organizations operating at the global scale.

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[19] Donald C. Hambrick and Phyllis A. Mason, "Upper echelon: The organization as a Reflection of Its Top Management", *The Academy of Management Review*, 9 (2) (1984), pp. 193–206, p. 198.

[20] Arthur P. Brief, *Diversity at Work*, (Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 98.

Business-focused male executives with a competitive outlook embrace strict distance with others. In contrast to the probability that female senior executives can be away from work for extended periods due to childbirth and care, such concerns do not apply for male executives. Furthermore, the military organizations which occupy a major position in crisis management have predominantly male management cadres. Male military leaders act on the basis of extended shared histories and cognitive structures.

Women, in contrast, are often characterized by higher emotional intelligence levels and perceptions, so female senior executives can play a major role in identifying a looming crisis in advance. Women in the upper echelon ranks are often skilled in working in harmony, and developing strategic partnerships. The presence of female senior executives is needed particularly in the formation of multinational teams and in ensuring harmonious work therein. The communication skills of female senior executives are also commendable. In addition to communications within the team, the organization's communications with the outside world can benefit immensely from the skills of female senior executives who can play most effective roles in public relations activities to follow a crisis. In terms of developing management connections and harmony within the team, female executives are at least as effective as men. While men in the management ranks exhibit rather aggressive, confident, decisive - or one would say masculine - management styles, female executives often employ easy-going, gentle, sensitive and feminine perspectives to management.[21]

The existence of different management perspectives at various stages of crisis management may have positive influences on strategic outlooks and practices. Upper echelon teams composed of executives from both genders are often characterized by the presence of differing perspectives and experiences. The heterogeneous structures stemming simply from the existence of female executives in the ranks of crisis top management teams can bring not only a number of distinct strategic perspectives, but also advantages regarding team dynamics and communications.

The International Aspect of the Crisis and Nationality

Today, crisis management is certainly not solely the domain of a single organization or nation. The 1990s saw the rise of participation in international crisis management operations as a new political phenomenon[22] which is simply because of the scale of the crisis that occurred/to occur often concerns the domains of more than one nation and organization. Therefore, one cannot really talk about a single organization or country handling a given crisis. This fact has also been reflected by the response of international organizations. For example, according to the strategic concept of NATO, the security environment of the future is not only about the defense of the territory of a country, but also about the concerted action of the international community to handle potential crises.[23] The defining features of the systemic definitions of international crises are as follows: interaction between states, diversity and concentration, acute and rapid change, short-term

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[21] Gary N. Powell, "One More Time: Do Female and Male Managers Differ", *Academy of Management Review*, 4 (3) (1990), pp. 68–75.

[22] Marc Houben, *International Crisis Management: The Approach of European States*, (Routledge, 2005), p. 12.

[23] Ingrid Rasmussen, "Multinationality in Crisis Response Operations", Committee_Reports_(NATO_Parliamentary_ Assembly), http://www.nato-pa.int/publications/comrep, (2000).

systemic loss of stability, and the increased risk of violence.[24] Consequently, the management of an international crisis is an inherently complicated matter, given its nature and the actors involved.[25]

Coping with crisis arising at the global scale requires organizations with global scale skills and capabilities that will help those organizations to cooperate with various countries and organizations. Often, already existing multinational organizations will serve as the facilitators of coalitions to handle specific crises. NATO and the UN are perhaps the best examples of such multinational organizations. Both are based on a multinational structure, given the ideas that gave birth to them, as well as their *raison d'être*.[26] Doing so, a unilateral perspective on the crisis is avoided, emphasizing the 'international' nature of the crisis by building interaction between two or more states.[27] The multinational organizations and their perspectives are effective not only after the crisis occurs. Controlling regional conflicts, and developing norms and rules have a positive impact on potential future crisis as well. Such efforts can also help reduce the possibility that conflicts arise or expand beyond their initial confines.[28] Two recent examples are of NATO's execution of crisis response operations which were observed in Kosovo[29] and Afghanistan.

It would not be logical to expect the management teams handling the crises that often arise in the multinational environments to be composed of members from a single nation. Just like enterprises operating on a global scale, the upper echelons of other organizations are also multinational in character. The performance levels of the heterogeneous upper echelon teams at the helm of global enterprises, as products of the diversity of nationalities involved, are deemed to perform better.[30] In a similar vein, the involvement of senior executives from various countries would increase their chances and levels of success.

The ethnic diversity of upper echelon teams often brings in different perspectives, experiences, cultural backgrounds, cognitive structures and attitudes. According to Caligiuri, Lazarova and Zehetbauer, the heterogeneous structures posed by the diversity of nationalities involved in the upper echelon team are useful for two reasons: First of all, collectives of diverse members have a positive advantage in terms of creativity, innovation, and decision-making.[31] Secondly, the diversity of the upper echelon enables the development of distinctive strategies needed in a multitude of environments.[32] Successful handling of crises in a range of diverse cultural environments requires management by entities offering at least the same level of diversity. In today's globalizing world, multicultural and multinational teams provide important strategic and structural elements in any

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[24] Zeev Maoz, "Crisis Initiation: A Theoretical Exploration of a Neglected Topic in International Crisis Theory", *Review of International Studies*, 8 (4), (1982), pp. 215-232, p. 216.

[25] Ibid.

[26] North Atlantic Assembly, Parliamentary Assembly Committee Reports, "Special Report: Multinationality in Crisis Response Operations", (Report, 2000).

[27] Maoz, p. 216.

[28] Osler F. Hampson, "Building a Stable Peace: Opportunities and Limits to Security Co-operation in Third World Regional Conflicts", *International Journal*, 45 (2) (1990), pp.454-489, p. 471.

[29] Rasmussen, Ibid.

[30] Christopher P. Earley and Cristina B. Gibson, *Multinational Work Teams A New Perspective*, (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 2002), p. 22.

[31] Paula Caligiuri, Mila Lazarova and Stephan Zehetbauer, "Top Managers' National Diversity and Boundary Spanning: Attitudinal Indicators of a Firm's Internationalization", *The Journal of Management Diversity*, 23 (9), pp. 848–859, p. 851

[32] Ibid.

organization.[33] Diverse cultures, experiences, and values help with the identification of crises, the development of solution strategies, and the implementation of decisions culminating in positive outcomes.

Yet another advantage offered by multinational teams lies in legitimacy. Managing crises with homogeneous teams composed of members of a single nation or a few nations can lead to legitimacy issues with regard to the differences concerning national interests. Legitimacy is the leading concern in an environment characterized by the presence of participants with different national interests and diverse strategic outlooks.[34] The solution lies in the construction of teams from a multitude of nations. When heterogeneous ideas are combined with cultural diversity, the product would often be an international foundation on which the senior executives to operate.[35] Legitimacy would be coming short where the upper echelon teams include representatives of countries that are only actively involved in crisis management. The involvement of the other countries engaged in crisis operations, in the actual formation of the upper echelon; help settle any legitimacy problems, in addition to the actual cognitive input they provide.

The advantages of multinational heterogeneous teams, however, are coupled with certain administrative disadvantages. Cultural differences can lead to conflicts in strategic preferences, decision-making, and implementations. Differences in communication styles lead to further differences in administrative outlooks. For heterogeneous multinational teams to perform successfully, interoperability skills need to be developed. The path to solving potential problems lies through interoperability[36] and cooperativity.[37] Shared goals and strategies, development of values, and bringing nations together in efforts to achieve international goals beyond their individual national interests would undoubtedly contribute to raising the chances of success in the management of crisis.

Crisis Top Management Teams and Tenure

As a demographic value, tenure plays an effective part in shaping the behaviors and decisions of upper echelon. The time the senior executives spend at various levels and positions is reflected in on their strategic outlooks and preferences. The behaviors of the members of upper echelon are shaped by their past. In the previous studies, the tenure of top managers took different forms. Studies in the field of management science often focus on three components of tenure: tenure at the current entity, tenure in the industry, and tenure at the current position.[38] There are also studies focusing exclusively on the tenure of upper echelon teams.[39] All these forms of tenure contribute to the development of the cognitive structures of senior executives in their own unique ways. In this perspective, different types of tenure mean different outcomes for organizations. One can forcefully

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[33] Claire B. Halverson and Ageel S. Tirmizi, *Effective Multicultural Teams: Theory and Practice*, (Springer Science Business Media B.V., 2008), p. 12.

[34] Jean-Paul Perruche, *Crisis Response Operations Management by the European Union (EU),* Doctrine (2007), pp. 30-33, p. 33.

[35] Caligiuri, Lazarova and Zehetbauer, p. 851.

[36] Rasmussen, Ibid.

[37] North Atlantic Assembly, Parliamentary Assembly Committee Reports, "Special Report: Multinationality in Crisis Response Operations", (Report, 2000).

[38] Sydney Finkelstein, Donald Hambrick and Albert Cannella, *Strategic Leadership Theory and Research on Executives, Top Management Teams and Boards*, (Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 85.

[39] Muzaffer Aydemir, "Üst Yönetim Ekibi Heterojenliğinin İşletme Performansı Üzerine Etkisi: Türk İşletme Grupları İştirakleri Üzerine Bir Araştırma (The Impact of the Heterogeneity of Top Management Teams on the Performance of the Enterprise: A Study on the Subsidiaries of Turkish Business Groups", (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Çukurova Üniversitesi, 2010), pp. 66-68.

argue that in crisis management, tenure at the current organization, tenure in upper echelon, and tenure in the current position can play a crucial role in determining strategic decisions and acts.

The tenure at the current organization refers to the time actually spent with the organization actively involved in crisis management. The executives would naturally have different positions of entry into the organization. Some would have their whole career in a single entity that they joined right after graduation. Some, on the other hand, may transfer in at various levels of the organization, implementing crisis management practices learned from other organizations. The tenure with the current organization provides not only experience, but a certain level of familiarity with the organizational culture. The tenure at the organization is crucial in shaping the behavior of the members of upper echelon, in terms of organizational wisdom, level of psychological adaptation, commitment to the organization, importance attached to status, commitment to the values of the organization, and various approaches to strategic options.[40]

The level of familiarity with the organizational culture facilitates understanding how activities within the organization are executed, as well as embracing shared values. Having worked at the organizations involved in crisis management for one's whole career, served at a specific organization for extended periods, and occupied various posts therein for various time periods could bring substantial advantages for the executives. Having extended tenure at a given organization can help the executives acquire accurate information, substantial experience, and correct forms of behavior. On the other hand, new members of management who join from other organizations would bring along different cognitive histories and strategic outlooks. Senior executives with an extended tenure at the organization would rarely be enthusiastic about strategic change, while teams of heterogeneous tenure have an easier time implementing strategic change. Within the framework of crisis management, extended tenure at the organization would help in handling internal operations successfully, whereas other executives joining from other organizations, to assume various levels of responsibilities, contribute to achieving diversity in implementation and strategies, through the different sets of experience and outlooks they bring.

The tenure in the upper echelon team refers to the overall time spent as part of the team. The Upper Echelon refers to the strategic level of the organization. The time spent with the team entails, naturally, involvement in strategic decisions and actions. Time spent as an active member of the team plays a decisive role in determining practices and results. Service for extended time frames within the team, however, can also lead to developing a routine. Extended tenure in the team leads to improved communications, commitment, and harmony among team members. Executives who served in Upper Echelon for extended periods get slower in terms of perceiving environmental influences and reacting to them.[41] They can even lose those abilities completely, effectively turning into roadblocks on the way to structural change. New members brought into the upper echelon team, on the other hand, bring fresh experiences and know-how along with them. New members add new dimensions to the external environment. In particular, crisis operations executed in a multinational setting leads to the involvement of management staff with different levels of tenure in the team.

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Rachel M. Hayes, Paul Oyer and Scott Schaefer, "Coworker Complementarity and the Stability of Top-Management Teams", *The Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization*, 22 (1) (2005), pp.184–212, p.184

Tenure in a given position, in turn, is a rarely studied topic in the domain of management science. The executives experience change in their duties within the upper echelon team or within the wider organization, through promotions or re-assignments. Newly assigned duties translate into new responsibilities within the team and the changes can lead to different forms of behavior within the larger team. Diversity in terms of tenure in a given position leads to a heterogeneous structure as well. Changes of positions in crisis management teams enable the inclusion of new members in the team. Every new member contributes to the development of a heterogeneous structure, through the introduction of new experiences into the team.

One can hardly speak of a fixed structure in crisis top management teams. When teams are needed to prevent or manage crises, managers from different organizations and countries are involved. In accordance with the type and stage of the crisis, new members of the team can lead to different approaches to crisis management. The lack of long-term and fixed crisis top management teams leads, naturally, to the dominance of heterogeneous structures. Such a state of affairs, in turn, is a sign that crisis top management teams have their distinctive cognitive structures.

Crisis Top Management Teams and Education

No one would doubt the distinctive role education plays in the development of cognitive structures of individuals. Today, education takes place in numerous periods of life. In addition to helping develop the individuals' innate skills, education also equips them with many other skills and pieces of knowledge about life which reflects their skills, abilities, and comprehension.[42] Education plays a defining role in shaping the relationship between the cognitive structures and the strategies. As elements of demographic profile, the educational backgrounds of senior executives are investigated in two distinct frameworks: The level of education, and the domain of education.

There is a linear correlation between the level of education, and the cognitive levels of senior executives. The command of knowledge required in diverse and complex environments expands in line with the level of education the management cadres have. New pieces of knowledge acquired by the individual pave the way for improved skills of reasoning. The level of education, reflecting comprehension, skills, and abilities are closely related to the senior executive's capacity to process information and discern different options among alternatives. It is also about the individuals' ability to handle uncertainties and respond in the face of complications.[43] The higher the levels of education among the management cadres, the better their skills and the capacity to process information. Hence, senior executives can develop a holistic perspective towards the relationships between different incidents. The higher the level of education, the more open-minded the individual would be. Accurate comprehension of developments helps improve the accuracy and effectiveness of decisions and reactions. Each stage covered in education leads to progress at the cognitive level, and differentiation of behavior patterns. The further one's education, the readier one would be for

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[42] Karen A. Bantel, "Strategic Planning Openness the Role of Top Management Team Demography", *Group & Organization Management*, 19 (4) (1994), pp. 406–424, p. 411.

[43] Margarethe Wiersema and Karen Bantel, "Top Management Team Demography and Corporate Strategic Change", *Academy of Management Journal*, 35 (1) (1992), pp. 91–121, p. 99.

assuming new positions in one's career. The level of education would lead senior executives towards a more compatible standing with their assignments.[44]

The level of education sets the management style of the executive and guides projected results and perspectives.[45] Higher levels of cognitive awareness bring along numerous benefits to executives such as compatibility with new circumstances, assessment of the environment through wider lenses, quicker perception of developments, and facilitating communications within the team. Crisis management requires decision-makers to make use of the skills and knowledge they gain through standard education, as well as knowledge and skills specific to the crisis. The type of education to be provided and its adequacy are crucial in this context.[46] In addition to the level of broader education the executives receive, training to be offered with reference to their specific position would certainly lead to distinctive levels of cognitive awareness. Position-specific training is, therefore, also an important requirement.

Yet another criterion concerning education is about its branch. Research on the branch of education is scarce compared to the studies focusing on the level of education. The branch of education plays a part as important as that of the level of education, in terms of the development of cognitive structures of senior executives. The branch of education stands out among the qualifications to define professional specialization and it eventually set the limits of the strategic perspectives. Different branches of education facilitate the acquisition of different talents. NATO can be a good example to explain further the importance of different educational background in crisis management. NATO and similar organizations handling crises are often military and political structures. NATO is a collective of both military and political organizations.[47] Its multinational character attests this fact. At times, the crises are political in nature, and do not require military measures. At other times, military measures can go beyond political ones. There is a need for concerted and coordinated action among the civilians and the military to ensure the success of operations aiming to provide a sustainable peace through a comprehensive approach to crisis management.[48] The teams assigned to crisis management exhibit a heterogeneous variance in terms of branches of education. The heterogeneity of the branches of education the crisis top management teams had received enables the supply of a diverse set of skills to the team. The necessary level of cognitive awareness required for both military and political aspects of the crisis is thus introduced. The harmonious operation of distinct educational skills is a must for success. Preventing conflicts and facilitating communication within the team has a directly determinant impact on the results. In this vein, the heterogeneous structure also brings along harmony and success. Upper echelon teams composed of executives with distinct educational backgrounds would have the necessary skills and experience, that would bring harmony and stability in the short- and long-term, facilitating strategic decision-making, and, as a consequence, improve operational performance.[49]

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[44] Hambrick and Mason, Ibid., p. 199.

[45] Wiersema and Bantel, Ibid.p. 99.

[46] Borodzicz, Ibid, p.153.

[47] Rasmussen, Ibid.

[48] Peter Jakobsen, "NATO'S Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Response Operations A Work in Slow Progress DIIS Report The Civil-Military Agenda", (Denmark Vesterkopi AS., 2008), p. 3.

[49] William Auden, *Top Management Team and Performance*, (Book Surge LLC., 2006), p. 13.

Crisis Top Management Teams and Functional Background

Upon taking up a career, the executives serve in a number of distinct duties. Often built on one's educational foundations, the career would then proceed through the performance of a series of distinct assignments. Each new assignment undertaken and the experiences gained lead to changes in the cognitive structures of the executive. Positive changes in cognitive structure affect the thought, perception, decision-making and behavioral patterns of the top management. The functional domains the senior executives perform in are the source of the experiences they put to use in their duties.[50] The functional backgrounds of senior executives refer to the skills they develop through the leading duties they served in.

The functional backgrounds of senior executives make it easier to be aware of their executive capabilities. The management staffs get promoted in an area they are successful in, and get to serve in subsequent executive functions. The functional domains of the executives are categorized under three groups: Outwards-looking functions, inwards-looking functions, and environmental functions. Such categorizations introduced for the enterprises lead to a holistic approach to functional areas, for the success of the organization. Inwards-looking functions enable the performance of the organization's activities in complete harmony. Outwards-looking functions lead to organizational outcomes or outputs. Environmental functions, on the other hand, refer to the resources required for the continuity of activities, as well as to regulatory issues. They are mostly involved in relationships with the environment. The success of the organization depends on the composition of the team, containing executives with functional backgrounds covering all three domains. In the upper echelon perspective, executives with different functional backgrounds can come up with different decisions in light of their previous experiences from a comparable development.[51] The different functional backgrounds executives were employed in at the strategic level lead to different strategic preferences.

An important feature of crisis management teams lies in the functional backgrounds of the members.[52] Crisis management depends mostly on the CMT members' internal characteristics, expertise and experiences regarding their specialties. The crisis management teams are essentially strategic levels where strategic preferences for different functions are made, and different practices are implemented. The members' functional backgrounds often vary with reference to the diversity of their functions within the larger team. The size of and the diversity within the team also varies with reference to the type, stages, and scale of the crisis. The functional diversity of teams at different scales of crisis would also be different. The senior executives' functional backgrounds - the functional domain they have the most experience in - is effectively the leading factor in shaping their strategic decisions[53]. Increasing diversity enables access to diverse sets of skills within the team. The wealth of cognitive diversity would, in turn, translate to strategic diversity. The assessment of complex events through a distinctive perspective would increase the accuracy of strategic

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[50] Aniysa Thomas and Roy Simerly, "Internal Determinants of Corporate Social Performance: The Role of Top managers", *Academy of Management Journal*, vol 1, (1995), pp.411–415.

[51] Hambrick and Mason, Ibid, pp. 193–206.

[52] Dawn and Murphy, p. 135.

[53] Urs Dallenbach, A. McCarty and T. Schoenecker, "Commitment to Innovation: The Impact of Top Management Team Characteristics", *R&D Management*, 29 (3) (1999), pp. 199-208.

preferences. On the other hand, harmony is crucial for the teams bringing numerous skills together, on the basis of the diversity of backgrounds involved.

The Upper Echelon Approach and the Composition of Crisis Management Teams Intervening in Terrorist Incidents and Regional Conflicts

During the last few decades terrorism has grown into a threat that can hit anytime and anywhere, affecting any aspect of life. Every year thousands of people lose their lives or are injured in terror attacks.[54] To give just an example, Strandh[55] found that there were 1122 attacks against rail traffic in a 40-year period. Even if the majority of these attacks have been categorized as small-scale, such a state of affairs necessitates the formation of crisis management teams capable of timely and accurate response, as well as rapid action. However, experience so far suggests that it is not always possible to achieve this goal. For instance, despite the fact that four distinct agencies responded very quickly to the 9/11 attacks, the complete autonomy of these agencies led to coordination issues. A similar case was observed in the response to the Sarin gas attacks in Tokyo.[56]

'India's 9/11', the Mumbai attack in 2008 which left at least 172 people killed showed similar deficiencies such as poor strategic communications, limitations of emergency services and response timing problems.[57] The Madrid train bombings of 2004 left 191 dead and more than 1,800 injured. The Committee for Disaster Medicine Studies experts highlighted that, coordination during the response was based more on personal initiative than organizational structure.[58] Two simultaneous suicide attacks in İstanbul showed similar problems such as patient distribution issues between hospitals and coordination of the flow of information to the public regarding both sets of attacks.[59] The main problem set of the aforementioned terror attacks is related to command and coordination between different emergency and security services. At each scene, authorities had varying degrees of difficulty coordinating the response operations. A broader review of the literature also points the same conclusion. Holgersson[60] reviewed one hundred and five articles related to mass casualty attacks and noticed that "command and coordination on scene including establishing leadership and inter-agency collaboration" have been common problems during response operations.

Crisis management studies mainly focus on the "what went wrong?' questions, and try to find solutions offering better command, coordination and communication during and after the crises. Strandh, for example, identifies "organizational fragmentation and the failure to ensure that relevant

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54 There were 25,673 deaths in 2016 and 18,814 in 2017. Global Terrorism Index, economicsandpeace.org

55 Veronica Strandh, Exploring vulnerabilities in preparedness – rail bound traffic and terrorist attacks, *Journal of Transportation Security* (2017) 10, p.47.

56 Thorne, p. 81.

57 Angel Rabasa et al., *The Lessons of Mumbai*, (RAND Corporation, 2009) p.9-12.

58 Roger Bolling et. al. *The Terror Attacks in Madrid*, Spain, 2004, The Committee for Disaster Medicine Studies (KAME-DO)-report 90, Published www.socialstyrelsen.se, (September 2007), p.42

59 Ulkumen Rodoplu et al., "Mass-Casualty Terrorist Bombings in Istanbul, Turkey, November 2003: Report of the Events and the Prehospital Emergency Response," *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine*, vol. 19 no. 2, April – June 2004, p. 140-143.

60 Annelie Holgersson, "Review of On-Scene Management of Mass-Casualty Attacks", *Journal of Human Security*, 2016, Volume 12, Issue 1, pp. 91–111.

actors have a cognitive and mental preparedness" as main vulnerabilities and rightly notes that both of them relate to organizational capabilities.[61] Another study from Ansell, Boin and Keller investigates transboundary crises and concludes that coordination between multiple organizations is a neglected aspect of crisis management. One of the proposed mechanisms is networked coordination which is defined "some type of coordinative effort is needed to orchestrate, synchronize and adjust cooperation between organizations (mission-critical stakeholders) that may have never worked with each other before".[62] Hart, Heyse and Boin identify nine areas of change in crisis management practices and based on them propose a new agenda for researchers.[63] However, none of these studies mention the cognitive structures, characteristics or demographic profile of the members of crisis management teams. Uhr's study probably is the most relevant one since it tries to understand multi-organizational emergency response management by analyzing interactions among individuals?[64] He uses social network theory to collect and analyze data on individuals and their interactions.[65] But this study still does not use/investigate Upper Echelon approach for the establishment of crisis management teams.

Many more crises of comparable nature were studied in literature, culminating in many pieces of scholarship on the mistakes made as well as exemplary practices implemented before, during and after the crises at organizational or national levels.[66] However, such studies do not involve the application of the Upper Echelon perspective on Crisis Management Teams. For instance, we still do not know the exact impact of gender or age on the performance of the past crisis response teams when intervening in terror related incidents. The application of the upper echelon approach to the study of crisis management teams employed in response to past terror attacks and crises could be of substantial value for future practices. The investigation of the impact of demographic profile noted above, as well as education, tenure and work experience on the formation of the crisis management teams, as well as the relationship between the profile of the top-level managers responding to past crises and the results of those crises, would be an academically fruitful endeavor. Moreover, such studies could be enlightening for crisis management teams to be formed in the future. Even though the imposition of such rules on international organizations such as NATO would require substantial effort academic studies of the sort described above could play a crucial role in terms of convincing member states.

NATO's Crisis Response System starting with indications and warning and culminating in the transition process is focused completely on the crisis and its solution. There are no provisions detailing how the crisis management team is to be established during this process. In a similar vein, the principles governing the establishment of the crisis response teams set up by individual countries in response to domestic terror are also mostly far from clear. For example, US Federal Emergency

[61] Strandh, p.60-61.

[62] Chris Ansell, Arjen Boin, and Ann Keller, "Managing Transboundary Crises: Identifying the Building Blocks of an Effective Response System", *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, Volume 18 Number 4 December 2010, p.203.

[63] Paul `t Hart, Liesbet Heyse, Arjen Boin, "New Trends in Crisis Management Practice and Crisis Management Research: Setting the Agenda", *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, Volume 9 Number 4 December 2001, p.181-188.

[64] Christian Uhr, "Multi-organizational Emergency Response Management – A Framework for Further Development" (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Department of Fire Safety Engineering and Systems Safety Lund University 2009), p.26.

[65] Ibid,p.98.

[66] See the Holgersson Review.

Management Agency (FEMA) planning guide[67] for the management of the terrorist incidents rightly emphasizes unique characteristics of each event and highlights the requirements of tailored direction and control process. The decision-making process that goes up to the US President is described in this planning guide but we do not know the impact of the cognitive structures or demographic profiles of the decision makers within the process.

Even though the types of experts from specific units to be included under this umbrella have been specified, the imposition of the upper echelon approach for the evaluation of the said personnel, culminating in selection on the basis of the criteria developed, has yet to occur. Such an endeavor would lead to the development of a database, identifying common criteria applicable to the creation of crisis management teams within the framework of international organizations such as the NATO and the UN, as well as in individual countries.

Conclusion

The management characteristics of upper echelon teams composed of strategic executives performs a crucial role in detecting a looming crisis, and then managing it successfully once it occurs. Senior executives' strategic preferences and practices depend on the cognitive skills they have. Their cognitive structures, origins, demographic profiles, and the variance of these elements within the wider team are the components of management science providing the most important guidelines in this area. The upper echelon approach can present the principles governing the formation of successful top crisis management teams. The demographic profile laying down the foundations of the cognitive structures of senior executives can vary with reference to the type of organization being analyzed. The elements of demographic profile that determine the strategic decisions and practices of senior executives within the framework of crisis management are age, gender, nationality, tenure, education, and functional background. Even though all these elements of demographic profiles are individual in essence, they are still significant determinants of the larger team-structure.

The significance of variations in demographic profiles as well as team compositions, in the case of crisis management teams needs to be understood better so as to develop a level of conceptual awareness, culminating in subsequent work on model development on an empirical footing, which will, in turn, lead to further research conclusions. The increasing number of crises caused by acts of terror, with little regard to borders or time, only underlines the importance of the teams formed to manage crises. Therefore, the testing of the Upper Echelon approach in the selection of crisis management teams could lead to substantial improvements for international organizations and individual countries' crisis response operations. We hope that this study can stimulate a debate about the implementation of upper echelon approach to the crisis management research and subsequently help governments and international organizations to build a database from which to build more competent crisis management teams.

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[67] Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), "Managing the Emergency Consequences of Terrorist Incidents, Interim Planning Guide for State and Local Governments" (July 2002).

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1. Attachments (documents), shall be presented at the end of the text and down below shall be a brief information as to the content of the document and proper citation in line with the relevant criteria.

2. Other attachments (Table, Figure, and Graphics) shall be presented as Additional Table: 1, Additional Graphic: 3 and Additional Figure: 7. If indicators other than the text are too many in number; attachments shall be presented after the References.

a. References to these attachments in the text shall absolutely be made as Additional Table: 1, Additional Graphic: 3 or Additional Figure: 7.

b. If citation has been made for table, figure, graphic or picture, the source shall absolutely be indicated.

3. The names of the tables within the text shall be written on the top of the table and these tables shall be cited in the footnote according the publication type from which it was cited.

4. The names of the figures, graphics and maps within the text shall be written at the bottom of the figures, graphics and maps and these figures, graphics and maps shall be citied in the footnote according the publication type from which it was cited.

E.   PRINCIPLES TO ABIDE BY IN BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Just like giving citations but this time surname of the author shall be at the beginning.

2. Resources shall be sorted alphabetically from A to Z.

3. Page numbers shall not be indicated.