

CLEIMUN20

“Diplomacy in a Challenging Global Environment”

Research Report

COMMITTEE: DISEC

QUESTION OF: Citizen Radicalization Into Terrorist Organizations

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Introduction and Background

Terrorist organizations, such as ISIS, the Taliban and Al-Shabab, have been stirring fear around the world for many years, and continue to threaten citizens of all nations today. Members of these terror organizations carry out malicious acts in the name of their religion, and studies prove this as the most dangerous aspect of their reign of terror. Their killing and sinister actions, such as the use of slavery and torture, are not seen as unethical acts. Aligning with this theory, “losses among their co-religionists are of little account, because such casualties will reap the benefits of the afterlife. Likewise, non-believers, whether they are the intended target or collateral damage, deserve death, and killing them may be considered a moral duty.”¹ These ideologies slowly plagued regions all over the world, mainly North America, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. Terrorists use social media, specifically organization chats and applications such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat, to convey their messages to these international audiences and recruit young, able-bodied soldiers for their cause. Empowered behind the the use of psychology and the person’s dissatisfaction of life, terrorists begin tricking their young minds into thoughts of violence to eventually reach the unstable mental state of a terrorist.

In What Ways are Terrorist Organizations Acquiring Foreign Fighters?

There are two main ways in which terrorist organizations acquire their supporters and fighters.

The first of which is the internet. Terrorist organizations, such as ISIS, have been using the internet in a multitude of ways to transmit their message to an international audience, mainly teens. By posting propaganda videos uploaded to platforms such as YouTube or DailyMotion are targeted towards teens that have developing minds.. Some of the videos include popular music, children speaking in a wide array of languages, to further increase their reach, and clips of glorified combat and massacres. These videos change a young teen's way of life and mental state into believing that joining a terrorist organization is a good life choices and benefits them.

Terrorists tend to direct message their victims and create an inclusive, brother-hood atmosphere.

The terrorist recruiters want to seem like a person that the victim can go to when they are in need. When the terrorist has subdued the victim to this unstable state, he would start demanding that the victim either carry out attacks in their home nation, or the victim to travel to the Middle East to fight with their terrorist organization. The two options most commonly chosen rely on the situation of the recruit, as recruits reside in a wide spectrum of the world.. For example, countries such as the U.S are landlocked to the Middle East, therefore radical jihadists in the U.S. will tend to carry out their attacks in the U.S., proven by the fact that the U.S. had over 60 terrorist attacks on home soil in 2017 alone. On the other hand, countries like Russia are very close to the Middle East, making it easy and reliable for radical jihadists from Russia to travel to countries like Syria. This is shown by the fact that Russia is the leading export of radical foreign jihadists, at 2,400 confirmed foreing fighters just last year.

Terrorism and Psychology

Terrorist recruiters tend to effect people who are in an unstable state-of-mind. Terrorists use their knowledge of psychology to subdue a victim to a weakened state where they are more likely to carry out radical acts due to their lack of rational thinking at the time. The American Psychological Association describes terrorism as such, "the warfare of the weak"—the means by which organizations that lack material or political power fight what they see as oppressive forces. Aligning with this theory, studies have proven that most terrorist attacks occur in a place where the victim will not have much opposition, such as gun-free zones, concerts, places of worship, or where citizens are most vulnerable. As such, they believe that terrorist actions and government reactions to them represent a dynamic interplay, with the moves of one organization influencing those of the other. As one example, if terrorists commit an attack and a state uses extreme force to send a punishing message back, the terrorists may use that action to drum up greater anti-state sentiment among citizens, lending justification to their next actions.²

Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVEs)

Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVEs) also pose a threat to national security and the well-being of citizens across the globe. HVEs are citizens who live outside of the Middle East who have not collaborated with a specific terrorist organization but follow radical jihadist methods. There are suspected HVEs and HVE organizations all across countries such as the United States, and they are extremely hard to contain because there is no way of determining their radicalization. Many terrorist attacks that happen in countries other than countries in the Middle East are from HVE's,

and this is because some countries are landlocked and travel to the Middle East is difficult. So these citizens decide to carry out their malicious acts inside their own countries. The way that HVE's are convinced to commit terrorist attacks is the same way in which foreign fighters are convinced, through the internet. Terrorist recruiters will encourage a citizen to carry out attacks in their own country if they believe that it would be too dangerous or risky to transport this victim to the Middle East to fight. In the past five years, over 455 terror attacks have happened outside of Syria, Iraq, or other declared territorial provinces. 80 percent of these attacks were conducted by HVE's and IS sympathizers. Recently, the authorities have stopped 58 percent of 363 attacks conducted by HVE's, yet authorities are not yet sure what exactly is working such that this many HVE's are being detained. Although the most effective method of stopping HVE's has not yet been determined, most discoveries are found through online monitoring and close surveillance of suspected citizens.

Past Efforts in Solving the Problem

Governments of many nations stress that their citizens remain aware of their surroundings, refrain from sharing personal information, and say something if you see something suspicious. Considering that most terrorist recruitment overseas is done through direct messages on social media sites, it is a major issue of privacy if the government were to be allowed to tap into to these direct messages. Other efforts include governments blacklisting people from flying to other countries who have been suspected and monitored communicating with terrorists.

Possible Solutions

There are multiple possible solutions to this problem, but many of them are seen by many nations of breaches of privacy and freedom of speech. A designated team to monitor terrorist activities is a viable solution, but the privacy of the general public would be a concern for many. Updated ideas of the United Nations urge nations to severely punish their citizens who decide to aid terrorist organizations financially or through combat. Redundant - find a new intro could be to go back to older United Nations documents, such as the UNOCT Consolidated Multi-Year Appeal 2019-2020, UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review, Activities of the UN system in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, Report on implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (can all be found the on the United Nations Office of Counter-Terroism) and revising them in accordance with current needs.

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