PERSPECTIVES ON TERRORISM

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VI. Notes from the Editor

Welcome from the Editor

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to announce the release of Volume X, Issue 1 (February 2016) of *Perspectives on Terrorism* at www.terrorismanalysts.com. Our free online journal is a joint publication of the *Terrorism Research Initiative* (TRI), headquartered in Vienna (Austria), and the *Center for Terrorism and Security Studies* (CTSS), headquartered at the Lowell Campus of the University of Massachusetts (United States).

Now entering its tenth year, *Perspectives on Terrorism* has, by the latest count, 6,117 regular subscribers and many more occasional readers and visitors worldwide. The *Articles* of its six annual issues are fully peer-reviewed by external referees while *Research Notes* and other content are subject to review by the Editorial Team.

This issue features four **Articles**. The first consists of an effort to profile Islamist militants in Bangladesh by Ali Riaz. He finds that many of them have a middle class and university background rather than coming from madrassahs. The second article by Joshua Wright explores why most religious terrorism is linked to Islam rather than to other religions. Then Christopher Wright looks at the threat emanating from foreign fighters returning to the United States, comparing them with homegrown jihadis who never went abroad. In the last article, James Adewunmi Falode looks at the kind of hybrid war Boko Haram has fought over the last five years in Nigeria, making it as deadly as the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.

The four articles are followed by an **Interview** Stefano Bonino had with Morten Storm, the Danish convert to Islam who gained the confidence of Al Qaeda but suddenly lost faith in his new religion after he searched online for 'contradictions in the Koran' and found hundreds of them. He immediately lost faith in Islam and soon thereafter began to work for Western intelligence services. The interview provides a fascinating account of radicalisation and de-radicalisation.

This issue of our journal continues with a **Research Note** by François Lopez that explores whether 'old' and 'new' terrorism treat the media that give them the 'oxygen of publicity' in different ways.

The **Resources** section introduces 'Counting Lives Lost'–the monitoring of the Islamic State's extrajudicial executions by Judith Tinnes. It also features from her hand another extensive bibliography, this time on the most researched terrorists in the world, those in Northern Ireland.

The **Book Reviews** section features a review by Brian Williams of Michael Morell's surprisingly frank memoirs on how the CIA fought Al Qaeda and ISIS.

Our regular book reviews editor, Joshua Sinai, introduces twenty books on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Finally, the editor reminds PhD thesis writers and their supervisors that the deadline for submitting doctoral dissertations completed or defended last year for TRI's **Best Thesis Award 2015** is only one month away.

This issue of *Perspectives on Terrorism* was prepared in the European offices of the Terrorism Research Initiative by the editor-in-chief. The April issue (PT X 2) will be prepared by the co-editor, Prof. James Forest, at the University of Massachusetts Lowell.

Sincerely,

Prof. em. Alex P. Schmid

Editor-in-Chief

I. Articles

Who are the Bangladeshi 'Islamist Militants'?

by Ali Riaz

Abstract

Bangladesh has attracted international media attention for heightened militant activities in 2015, particularly after a series of killings of bloggers by a local militant group allegedly associated with Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and after murders of foreign nationals, responsibility of which was claimed by the Islamic State (IS). Islamist militant groups in Bangladesh which emerged in the 1990s have undergone several transformations. Originally grown out of the volunteers who joined the Afghan war against the Soviet Union, these groups have since then taken different shapes. Since the 1990s, five 'generations' of militant groups appeared on the scene. In some measures, the militant groups have come full circle: they began as a result of a global agenda fighting an 'atheist' Communist system (war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan) to now being part of establishing a global 'khilafat' (by joining the IS in Syria and Iraq) via pursuing a circumscribed local agenda for a period in the early 2000s. Despite such transformations, very little is known about the Bangladeshi militants. This article attempts to address this lacuna by examining the socio-demographic profile of Bangladeshi militants arrested between July 2014 and June 2015. The findings reveal a significant diversity among the militants. Contrary to public perceptions in Bangladesh, significant numbers of militants are well-educated and come from a middle class background.

Keywords: *Bangladesh; Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS); Islamists militants; profiles.*

Introduction

There has been a significant increase in militant activities in Bangladesh in recent years, particularly in 2015. Both Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and the Islamic State (IS) have claimed their presence in the country. The Ansar al Islam (also known as the Ansarullah Bangla Team, ABT) claimed to be the Bangladesh unit of the India-based militant group AQIS and has taken responsibility for the murders of four self-proclaimed atheist bloggers and the publisher of one of the atheist blogger's book. [1] In a video posted online on 2 May 2015, titled "From France to Bangladesh: The Dust Will Never Settle Down", AQIS claimed responsibility for six targeted killings in Bangladesh and Pakistan.[2] Additionally, between September and November, there were a total of fourteen attacks allegedly carried out by individuals or groups that claim to be followers of the Islamic State. These attacks have included the murder of two foreigners (and seriously injuring two others, shootings and bomb blasts at Shiite gatherings, attacks on other minority religious personalities, and death threats to missionaries.[3] Not only were the murders of foreign nationals claimed by a militant group unprecedented in the history of the country, but so were the brazen attacks on the Shi'a community in October and November 2015. It was reported by the SITE intelligence group that the IS claimed responsibility for these attacks immediately following the attacks. These claims were reiterated in the IS's propaganda magazine named *Dabiq* (issue 12, Safar 1437), published in November.[4] The magazine also claimed that disparate militant groups in Bangladesh have come under the leadership of a proscribed militant organization named the Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB). These incidents have been widely covered in global media and have stoked the fear that international terrorist groups, particularly the IS, have gained a foothold in the third largest Muslim majority country of the world.

Since 2013 government officials, including security and intelligence officials, have repeatedly claimed that they had arrested the "chief," "recruiter," or several "members" of IS and presented these actions as evidence of their success in addressing militancy. However, they abruptly changed their tune soon after the murders of the foreigners in September and October. Since then they have denied the presence of the IS in Bangladesh. Instead, the government has accused the opposition, particularly the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) for these attacks. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina blamed the opposition for conspiring to tarnish the government's reputation.[5] She also suggested that militants might be carrying out attacks in retaliation for the war crime trials (i.e., trials conducted by the International Criminal Tribunal established by the government in 2010 to try those who had committed war crimes during the war of independence in 1971). [6] The BNP rejected the charge.[7] The Home Minister has echoed the Prime Minister: 'there is no IS in the country, no way.'[8] The PM further stated that her government is under pressure to admit the presence of IS in the country which is intended to taint Bangladesh's image and create a situation similar to those in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya, Iraq and Syria.[9]

These incidents took place at the heel of the Global Terrorism Index (GTI)'s assessment in early 2015 that the country is 'vulnerable to high terrorism risk.'[10] The GTI score of the country was already on the rise from an historic low of 4.1 in 2012 to 5.47 in 2013 to 5.92 in 2014. However, this trend and recent increase need to be contextualized within the historical developments of militancy in the country and counterterrorism efforts pursued since 2006.

Although violence has been an integral part of the Bangladeshi political landscape since its inception in 1971,[11] religiously inspired violent extremism and militancy emerged in the country only in the mid-1990s. Almost a decade later, in 2004-2005, a dramatic rise of a vigilante Islamist group in the northwest part of the country followed by simultaneous bombings around the country and a number of suicide attacks brought the issue to the attention of the international community and international media.[12] Notwithstanding the initial refusal of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)-led government to acknowledge the presence of militant groups, it cracked down on such groups and proscribed four organizations.[13] Hundreds of militants, including the leaders of one of the groups, were apprehended in 2006, and faced a speedy trial. Six key leaders were executed in March 2007 when the country was being ruled by a military backed technocratic regime.[14] The interim government devised and began implementing a strong counter-terrorism (CT) strategy.[15] The Bangladesh Awami League (BAL), which was elected to office in late 2008, adopted the CT strategy, made changes to various intelligence organizations and formulated new measures to counter the threat of militancy.[16] The government also banned an Islamist organization in 2009 and blacklisted a number of other suspected organizations.[17] The regime's commitment, political goodwill, and political stability combined with the international community's assistance tamed the militant groups in the following years. Between 2007 and 2014, 478 members of the Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), one of the proscribed organizations, were tried in 177 cases. Of them, 51 top leaders of JMB have been sentenced to death, 178 were given life terms and 245 jailed for different terms. [18] However, the Bangladeshi militant groups, as elsewhere, remained potent, and continued to reorganize. New organizations have emerged since then. In some instances members of the banned organizations rallied under a different name. Some of the Bangladeshi militant groups reportedly have connections with Pakistan-based militant organizations [19] and have been implicated in the acts of terrorism in India.[20] Alleged Pakistani militants[21] and members of Al Qaeda's branch in the Indian subcontinent (AQIS) have been arrested in Bangladesh.[22]

The gains in CT achieved since 2006 started to slide in 2013, as the domestic political situation became more volatile.[23] Not only did new militant organizations begin to appear on the scene but connections between local and transnational terrorist groups were found too. These signaled an urgency to revisit the CT

strategies, and examine the immediate causes allowing these groups to reclaim lost ground. The government responded with arrests of suspected militants in large numbers and claimed to have recovered their weapons. It also banned another militant group in 2015.[24] While the government continues to claim that it has adopted a 'zero tolerance' policy towards terrorism and that it is making progress in taming the tide, some critics have questioned the veracity of such a claim and argue that the government is also using the militancy as an excuse to crack down on its political opponents.[25] The statements of ruling party leaders and cabinet members characterizing the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) as a militant organization provides credence to this allegation.[26]

Despite significant developments over the past decade, there have been very few serious studies about militancy in Bangladesh. [27] Media coverage of incidents and sensationalized reactions often demonstrated a lack of in-depth understanding of the country's complex politics. Christine Fair and Seth Oldmixon noted, 'Islamist militancy in Bangladesh rarely draws the attention of scholars and policy analysts.'[28] As such, there are various lacunae in the extant literature. One of them is the absence of an understanding as to the identity of these militants.[29] In the absence of rigorous and systematic evidence-based study, public perception has been shaped by anecdotal evidence and the reproduction of clichés. For example, it has often argued by anti-Islamist activists that Bangladeshi madrassahs are the 'factories of the militants.'[30]

It is against this background that this article intends to examine the socio-demographic profile of the alleged militants. The primary objective is to gather four profiling data from the available information: age, occupation, level of education, and the organizations of which those arrested are part. This discussion needs to be contextualized; first within the various waves of militant groups, and secondly within the available discussions on the utility of terrorist profiles.

'Five Generations' of Bangladeshi Militants

The Islamist militant groups in Bangladesh, based on their transformations, tactics and objectives, can be divided into five generations.

The first generation of militants was the product of the Afghan War (1979-1992). Although geographically Bangladesh is located thousands of miles away from that battlefield, the connection was established in 1984 when a group of volunteers travelled to Afghanistan. An estimated 3,000 volunteers joined the war in several batches in the following four years, of which 24 died on the battlefield. Also a group of 'ulama' visited the country and reportedly met Usama bin Laden.[31] Between 1988 and 1992, Shafiqur Rahman, a returnee of the Afghan war, established contacts with a Pakistani Islamist organization called Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami and the Bangladesh chapter began its clandestine operations. On 30 April 1992, a week after the mujahideen emerged victorious in Afghanistan, the Bangladeshi participants of the war expressed their delight at a press conference in Dhaka where some of the speakers identified themselves as members of HuJI-Bangladesh (HuJI-B).[32] It is worth noting that the period was the expansionary phase of the HuJI-B.[33] In the first four years HuJI-B's activities were largely restricted to the southeastern hills close to the border with Burma, suggesting that their initial objective was to use Bangladesh as a launching pad to influence the Rohiyanga movement inside Myanmar.[34] The membership of the group was largely limited to those with connections to the Afghan War or links to organizations who had provided volunteers to the war. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the members of the leadership were older, mostly madrassah (particularly Deobandi) educated, and hailed from rural areas.

After 1996, the group moved its bases to the northern and northwestern parts of the country, and adopted the name "Qital fi Sabililah" (Fighting in the way of Allah). The expansion of the organization came after

contacts had been made with Shaikh Abdur Rahman, son of a deceased Ahle Hadith leader, and Asadullah Ghalib, leader of the Ahle Hadith Andolon Bangladesh (AHAB, Ahle Hadith Movement Bangladesh). They joined forces in 1998 and established the Jaamatul Mujaheddin Bangladesh (JMB).[35] Thus the second generation of militants was born. The new group's focus shifted inward, as opposed to supporting militants outside. It defined its objective as transforming Bangladesh into an 'Islamic state.' The group and its affiliate Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB), under the leadership of Shaikh Abdur Rahman and Siddiqur Rahman, alias Bangla Bhai, established a reign of terror in the northwestern part of Bangladesh. The organization also simultaneously blasted 450 homemade bombs throughout the country and conducted a number of suicide attacks. The information on JMB activists arrested since late 2006 reveal that youth educated in technical and vocational training colleges, and born and raised in urban areas, were being attracted to the organization and elevated to leadership.

As the JMB and HuJIB were gradually transforming, a new organization with international connections and a global agenda appeared on the scene: the Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HT). The Bangladesh chapter of the HT was founded in 2001 by a university professor who had studied in the United Kingdom as a Commonwealth Scholar. This can be categorized as the third generation of militants. [36] The new generation is characterized by its technical skills, being students of universities, and well versed in global political events. The profiles of arrested activists in the past years indicate that they are largely from middle class backgrounds and more urban-based than any other Islamist groups, including the mainstream Islamist parties.

The arrests and execution of the JMB leaders in 2006–2007, followed by strong CT efforts, and the political stability in the early years of the AL government weakened the militant groups. At times, it appeared that the country has successfully tamed the menace of militancy. However, these groups, particularly the HuJI and the JMB, continued to reorganize. A new group named the Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), which can be described as the fourth generation of militant groups, emerged around that time. According to the Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium (TRAC), the ABT surfaced in 2007 under the name of Jamaat-ul Muslimen. [37] The group was reportedly funded by external sources and 'ceased to operate when funding ended.'[38] Inspired by Anwar al Awlaki and led by local Mufti Jasimuddin Rahmani, the ABT began to attract new recruits in 2012 when its presence in cyberspace became prominent.[39] Originally the group used the 'Ansar al Mujahideen English Forum' (AAMEF), an Al Qaeda affiliated website, and later moved to another website, 'bab-ul-islam.net', launched in Pakistan. The group uses Bengali, Urdu, Arabic and English for the dissemination of its message.[40] "The group reflects a young generation of jihadist in Bangladesh, which uses cyberspace extensively in propagating jihadist ideology and training manuals to guide terror attacks". [41] One of the videos produced by the groups is entitled 'Eradicate Democracy.'[42] The ABT was thrust into the limelight in March 2013 after arrests of five university students in connection with the killing of blogger and activist Rajib Haider. Haider, a self-proclaimed atheist, was hacked to death in February. The students, according to police, confessed to the killing and creating this new organization. The group's leader Rahmani was arrested with 30 followers in August.[43] Members of the group are largely drawn from middle class educated youths.

With the announcement of Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in September 2014 that the organization was establishing a branch in South Asia, Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) came into being. [44] In February 2015, Zawahiri called upon the people of Bangladesh to 'launch a massive public uprising (intifada) in defense of Islam against the enemies of Islam.'[45] Yet there has been very little indication of an organized presence of AQIS in Bangladesh until mid-2015. In early July the law enforcing agencies arrested Maulana Mainul Islam, the alleged AQIS chief coordinator in Bangladesh, and his top advisor Maulana Zafar Amin, along with ten other AQIS activists. [46] The AQIS, as mentioned earlier, claimed responsibility

for the brutal killing of bloggers in 2015. Since the beginning of 2015, a number of individuals reportedly connected to the IS have been arrested. These arrests include the alleged Bangladesh Coordinator of the IS, Mohammad Sakhawatul Kabir. He was arrested along with three other suspects in January 2015 in Dhaka. In May, the police claimed that it had nabbed the 'Bangladesh Coordinator' of the IS, Abdullah Al Galib. Galib is a former member of Hizb ut-Tahrir, and a follower of Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), according to press reports. [47] Members and followers of the AQIS and the IS can be described as the fifth generation of militants in Bangladesh. The defining feature of the new generation is that they are inspired by, and connected to, the transnational terrorist groups, intend to pursue their objective of establishing an Islamic state in Bangladesh and participate in the global militant Islamist movements. This generation of militants is also founding their own local organizations. The most recent ones are the Shaheed Hamza Brigade (SHB) and the Bangladesh Jihad Group (BJG) that were identified by law enforcement agencies in 2015.

In some way, the militant groups have come full circle: they began as a result of a global agenda fighting an 'atheist' Communist system (the Soviet military in Afghanistan) to now being a part of establishing a global 'khilafat'(by joining the IS in Syria and Iraq). The circumscribed national Islamist agenda features only a part of the larger agenda.

The Elusive Profile of a Terrorist

Scholars of terrorism studies and policy-makers have long debated whether distinctive traits (psychological, or social, or demographic) of terrorists/militants can be identified and used for predictive purposes.[48] For almost two decades beginning in the 1960s, based on the assumptions that terrorists are not 'normal', some scholars hypothesized that some common psychological elements exist among terrorists and that psychology and psychiatry should be able to identify those traits; but empirical studies provided only very limited support for this hypothesis. Subsequently, the notion that there is a typical 'terrorist personality' came under close scrutiny. Walter Laqueur insists that a 'terrorist personality' is non-existent and therefore a search in this regard is bound to be fruitless,[49] a view to which Jerrold Post concurs to some extent.[50] Franco Ferracuti reached the same conclusion in his study of the Red Brigade in Europe.[51] Additionally, contrary to the basic assumption that terrorists are abnormal, some studies indicate that if there is anything that can be identified as a common characteristic to them, it is how normal they are.[52] Granted, these studies have not deterred scholars to look for the elusive 'terrorist personality' but they shifted the focus elsewhere.

The absence of an obvious psychopathology has turned the attention of scholars more to the socio-demographic aspects of the terrorists to probe whether common characteristics can be identified. The classic study in this regard is the one conducted by Charles A. Russell and Bowman H. Miller in 1977. Based on more than 350 urban terrorists of various national origins (i.e. Argentinian, Brazilian, German, Iranian, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Palestinian, Spanish, Turkish, and Uruguayan) over a whole decade (1966-76), the authors drew a sociological portrait or profile of the 'modern urban terrorist':

> In summation, one can draw a general composite picture into which fit the great majority of those terrorists from the eighteen urban guerrilla groups examined here. To this point, they have been largely single males aged 22 to 24...who have some university education, if not a college degree. The female terrorists, except for the West German groups and an occasional leading figure in the JRA and PFLP, are preoccupied with support rather than operational roles.[53]

A study conducted in 2008 by the British intelligence agency MI5's Behavioral Science Unit which was based on several hundred in-depth case studies of individuals in Britain known to be involved in, or closely associated with, violent extremist activity, concluded that a typical profile of the 'British terrorist' cannot be drawn; and that most were 'demographically unremarkable' and are simply reflecting the communities in which they lived. [54] Other studies (for example Bux, [55] and Horgan [56] have reached a similar conclusion.

On the other hand, some studies have pointed to similarities among the terrorists. These include studies conducted by Krueger,[57] Krueger and Laitin,[58] Laitin and Shapiro,[59] Richardson,[60] Kepel,[61] to name a few. These and other studies have provided ample data that were summarized by Guilain Denoeux and Lynn Carter in the following manner:

> A. There is no single "terrorist personality."

> B. Until recently at least, most terrorists have shared some basic attributes in terms of socioeconomic background and educational achievement. These similarities have tended to cut across cultures, regions of the world and time periods.

> C. The socioeconomic and educational profile of that particular sub-set of violent extremists represented by Salafi jihadists has experienced significant changes since 2003. The trend toward increasing diversity in the socioeconomic background of global jihadists is likely to intensify in the years ahead.

> D. While *violent extremists do* not *share a single profile* across countries and time periods, they may do so *in a specific country and at a particular historical juncture*.[62]

Therefore, available studies suggest that there is no catch-all 'profiling' of terrorists for global use, but one can be found in a specific country at a specific time, and that profile has analytical value. With this understanding, we gathered and examined the socio-demographic data of the militants in Bangladesh.

Profiling Bangladeshi 'Islamist Militants'

Method

Data of individuals arrested as 'militants' have been gathered from three daily newspapers: two Bengali and one English, for a period of one year, between July 2014 and June 2015. The newspapers are *Prothom Alo*, *Daily Janakantha* and *Daily New Age*. *Prothom Alo* is the largest in terms of circulation, and considered to be one of the most influential newspapers in Bangladesh. The paper was at the forefront of bringing the issue of rising militancy in 2005 to public attention. Since then it has paid close attention to the issue, and widely reported on various militant groups and measures against the militants. *Daily Janakantha* is one of the widely circulated newspapers of the country and politically leaning towards the incumbent Awami League regime. As the regime has insisted that counter-terrorism is one of its pivotal successes, the *Daily Janakantha* is expected to report extensively on the arrest and prosecution of militants. *Daily New Age*, an English newspaper, has earned admiration for its critical voice challenging the establishment.

As our primary goal is to understand the profile of the alleged 'Islamist militants' we only identified the news reports that described the arrested individuals connected with an Islamist organization. We are cognizant of the fact that these individuals can be falsely identified as 'militants', and that the law enforcing agencies may make arrests to boost numbers to demonstrate their effectiveness. Also, there are allegations that the

political situation and expediency serve as factors in arresting 'militants.' We tried to minimize the effect of such allegations by focusing on an entire year (2014-2015) that includes a period of relative calm (July 2014 through December 2014) and a period of heightened violence (January 2015- June 2015).[63] Despite these limitations, in the absence of any evidence-based study on Bangladeshi militants, these reports provide us with a rough picture as to who are perceived to be 'Islamist militants' in Bangladesh.

All these arrests were made by the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), the elite law enforcement agency of the government. For ensuring the consistency of the information we have cross-checked all of the three newspapers and in case of any discrepancy, we have also checked the official website of the RAB (www.rab. gov.bd). [64] No arrests were double counted.

Data Sources

We identified 67 reports published during the period under study. Twenty-nine reports were published in *Prothom Alo*, 20 in *Daily Jankantha* and 18 in *New Age* (Figure 1). No arrest was reported in July 2014. Therefore, the number represents the arrests over 11 months. We have also included one report published in *Prothom Alo* that identified 12 individuals as "militants' who were reported to have plans to travel to Iraq or Syria to join the Islamic State fighters although they are yet to be arrested.[65]

Figure 1: Reports of Arrests by Newspapers
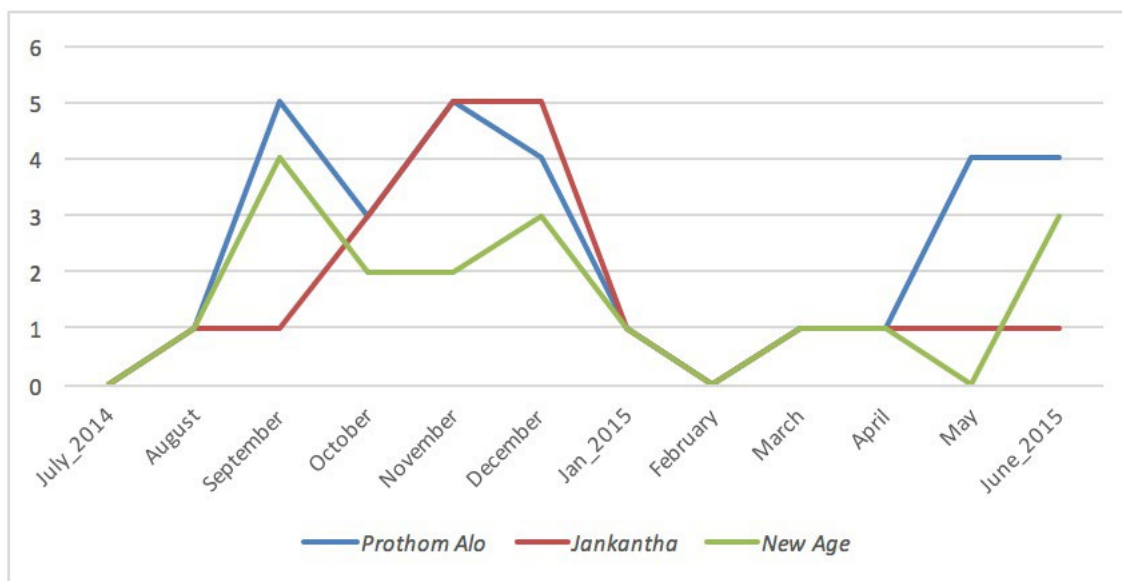
Sample

During the period under review 100 individuals were arrested, and additionally 12 were identified as 'militants' by the law enforcing agencies and reported accordingly by these newspapers. As for arrests, most were made in February 2015; a total of 17 individuals were arrested that month. The second largest number of arrests was made in November 2014 when 16 were arrested (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Arrests by Month, July 2014 – June 2015
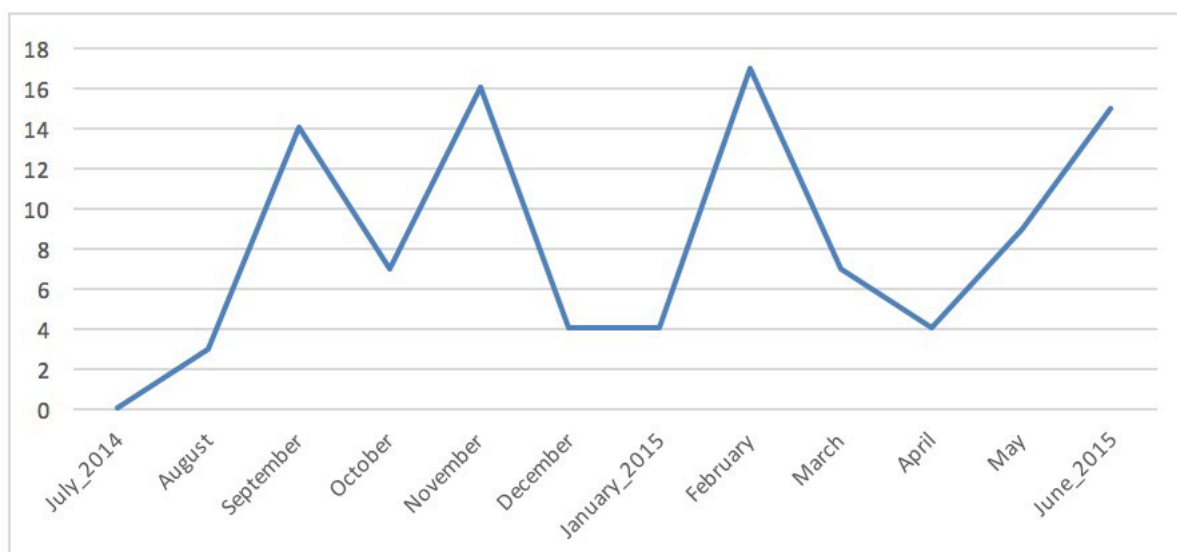
Findings

Findings are discussed in four broad categories: age, occupation, level of education, and the organizations with which those arrested were associated.

Age

Of the 112 alleged militants, only two were females–one of them is the wife of a leader of the Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) who is also identified as the head of the women's wing of the organization, and the other is a student. [66] The age of 81 individuals could be gathered from the press reports.[67] We divided them into three groups: 18-30 years; 31-40 years; and above 41 years. Only one arrestee was below 18 years old. He was arrested with others of older ages. Fifty-two individuals were between 18 and 30 years of age (65% of the sample); 23 were between 31 and 40 years (28.39%); and 5 were above 40 years (6.17%). The oldest among them was 58 years old. These findings are consistent with anecdotal evidence and conventional wisdom that younger males are more likely to become militants than older ones (Figure 3). One of the suspected is a Bangladeshi-born British citizen. [68]

Figure 3: Age Distribution of Suspected Militants (n=80)
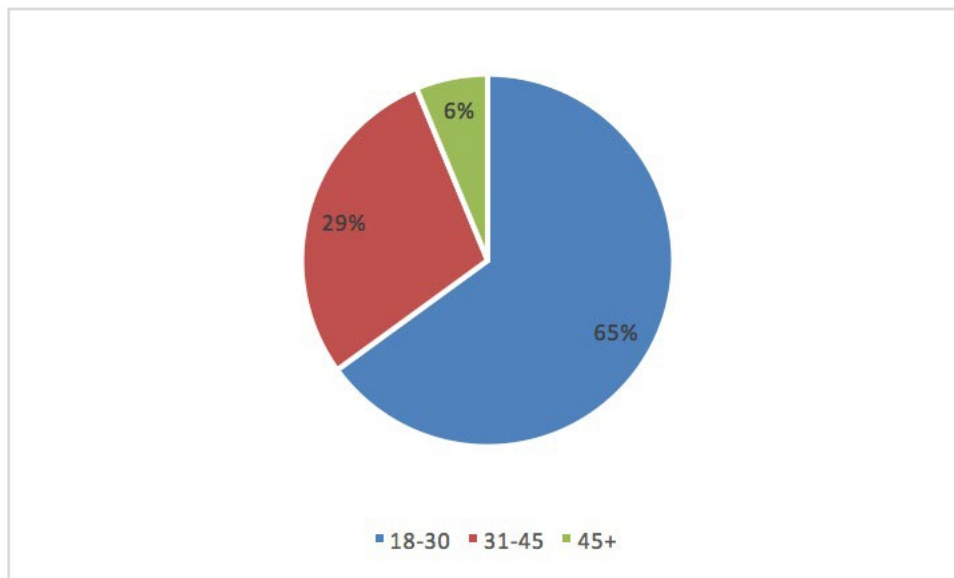
Occupations

Although available reports failed to describe the occupations of all suspected militants, there are 65 instances where references were made to their occupations. In one instance, 12 madrassa students were arrested from a madrassah making them the largest cohort in any one profession.[69] Of the remaining 53 individuals, 13 are engaged in various kinds of manual jobs and belong to the lower economic strata; the occupations include garment workers, laborers, security guards, rickshaw/auto rickshaw pullers, fruit vendors and bus drivers; nine are engineers, nine are businessmen, nine are students, five are teachers (including one madrassah teacher), three are Imams (one of them is also a madrassah teacher), two are described as IT experts, two are described as arms dealers, and one is an office clerk of a hospital (Figure 4).

In addition to the nine individuals identified as engineers who were employed in their respective fields, a school teacher who is currently teaching English was reported to be a graduate of the Military Institute of Science and Technology in Civil Engineering. Among the engineers was the head of an IT department of a multinational soft beverage company. The businessmen include owners of a transport company, a printing press, and a travel agency. Overall, except madrassah students and manual laborers (25 individuals; 38.4%), 40 individuals (61%) have come from at least either middle class or upper middle class backgrounds. It is worth noting here that six of the arrested individuals are sons of former high ranking public officials. Two are sons of former military officers, one is a son of a former navy commander, two are sons of high-ranking civil service officers, and another is a son of a former justice.

If the madrassah students are excluded from the computation (n=53), as we are unaware of their family occupational background, the share of middle and upper middle class jumps to a staggering 75.47% of the sample.

Figure 4: Occupations of Suspected Militants (n= 65).
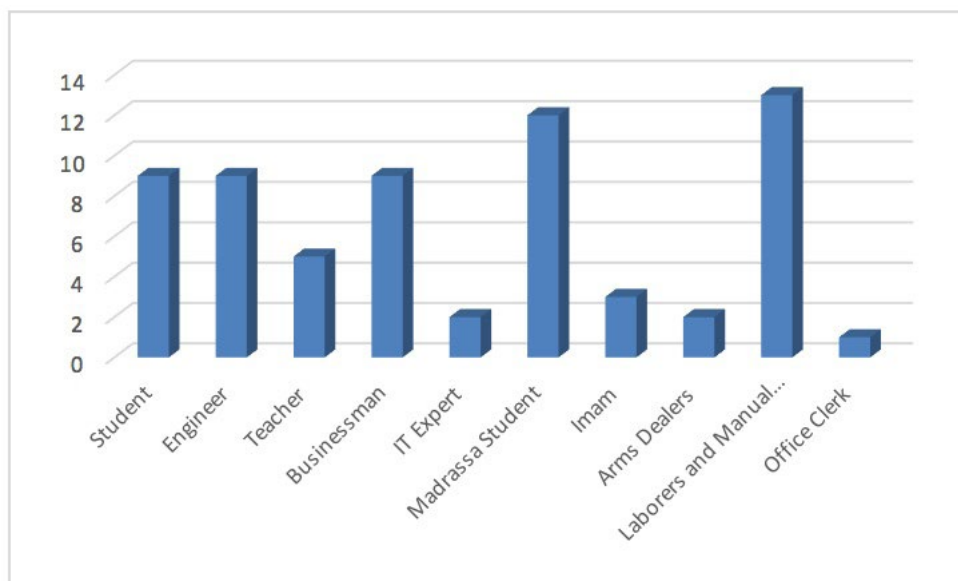
Levels of Education

Those identified as students came from diverse disciplinary backgrounds. All of the students have completed at least 12 grades and are studying at the university level. One of them is a PhD candidate in Sociology; one is studying Electrical Engineering, one is completing a bachelor's degree in Business, and another in Chemistry. Among the engineers, one received a degree from the University of Malaysia while others graduated from respected institutions within the country, including one in marine engineering. Most of the nine businessmen are well educated. One of them owns a printing press and has a Master's degree in Soil Science, one has a Bachelor's degree in English. Two businessmen are reported to be IT experts as well. One businessman is reported to have been educated in 'English medium school', a reference to the strand of mainstream education system that follows either a British or American curriculum. Of the two individuals who are described as IT experts, we found the academic qualification of one: he graduated from a reputed private university.

It is interesting to note that five of these individuals attended Cadet Colleges, and one of the current students included in the sample attends a Cadet College. Cadet Colleges in Bangladesh are special academic institutions known for their rigorous discipline and higher academic standard. The initial goals of the Cadet Colleges include producing 'students capable of leading the country'. These institutions are considered as the feeder for the Army officer corps.[70]

Organizations

Of the total 112 suspected militants, press reports specifically identified the organizations which 104 individuals were either affiliated with or aspired to be affiliated with. In ten cases the law enforcement agencies have not provided the names of the organizations. A total of 25 reported Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) members have been arrested. The number of Ansarullah Bangladesh Team (ABT) members arrested during the period under review was 14. Thirteen members of the Harkatul Jihad-al Islam Bangladesh (HuJI), the fountainhead of all militant groups in Bangladesh, were arrested. Reports show that two new organizations have emerged in 2015: the Shaheed Hamza Brigade (SHB), and the Bangladesh Jihad Group (BJG). Nineteen of the SHB, and 11 of the BJG have been arrested during the period. Members of the

BJG were arrested in two separate raids on 8 June and 25 June 2015. The press reports quoted police sources claiming that the BJG members belong to HuJI and ABT but were operating under a new name. The SHB activists were arrested in four separate raids, three in February and one in April of 2015. Law enforcement agencies could not identify the organization these arrestees were connected to when they made arrests of 12 students from a madrassah in the port city of Chittagong on 19 February. However arrests of five suspected militants a few days later on two separate operations based on the information gathered from the first group brought to light the existence of a new militant group. The name of the group and its structure became known when four individuals were arrested in April 2015 (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Organizations of the Suspected Militants (n=101)
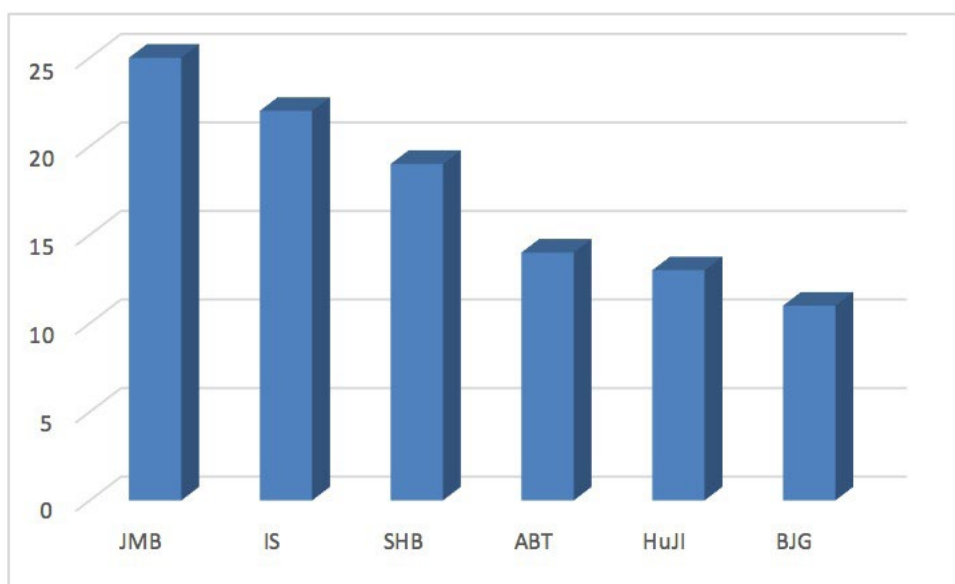
Besides those who are affiliated with extant local militant groups, 22 individuals have been identified as either connected to or aspiring to be connected with the Islamic State (IS). As noted before, 12 individuals were identified to be planning to travel to Syria or Iraq to join the IS. Except for two individuals – the British citizen and the Head of an IT department of an international soft beverage company – none seems to have access and resources to be directly connected to the IS or formally joined the IS. However, the authorities have identified one of them as the regional Commander of IS Bangladesh Chapter. [71] One of those who has been identified to have connections with the IS, arrested in June, also claimed to be the founder of a new group called *Junud At-tawhid Wal Khilafha.* Although no other activists of this new group has been arrested, a video was discovered with him that showed seven youth expressing their allegiance to the IS leader and that ten (presumably including those seven) were taking basic physical training and carrying weapons.

Conclusion

This exploratory study does not provide a definitive profile of the Bangladeshi 'Islamist militants' but shows that their characteristics are diverse. It also highlights the point that generalizations regarding militants are difficult to make, to say the least. This is important in the context of public perceptions in Bangladesh about the source of militancy and the profiles of militants.[72] The general notion that poverty, unemployment and madrassah education are the common drivers of terrorism in Bangladesh does not bear out from the socio-demographic data of the arrested individuals. The majority of them have come from middle class or upper middle class backgrounds; a significant number were educated in prestigious institutions of higher learning

and/or have a background in technical education. The finding that the militants are largely youth should not come as a surprise.

This is consistent with earlier studies across the world over time. However, it assumes greater importance if we take into account that about 47.6 million or 30 percent of the total 158.5 million people in Bangladesh are young (10-24 years).[73] More than half of the Bangladeshi population is between one and 24 years old. One of the important points that emerged from the discussions on various militant groups and the data is that the profiles can change.

One of the key limitations of this study lies with the sample; it relied exclusively on allegations of being militants instead of more reliable proof obtained through due process. Despite such a limitation, this study provides a snapshot of a profile of militants, which until now is not available in the extant literature. A follow up study on those who have already been convicted by various courts in Bangladesh will address the limitations of this study and should contribute to a better understanding of the militants. This might also address another lacuna of the study and fill in a void in the existing studies on militancy: the sources of motivation and the drivers of the radicalization process.

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Notes

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[10] Global Terrorism Index 2015, Sydney: Institute for Economics and Peace, November 2015. http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2015.pdf

[11] For a history of the founding of Bangladesh and subsequent tumultuous political developments, see: S. Mahmud Ali, *Understanding Bangladesh*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.

[12] For discussions on the background, causes, conditions, and initial responses, see: Ali Riaz, *Islamist Militancy in Bangladesh: A Complex Web*, London: Routledge, 2008.

[13] These are Shahadat-e-al Hikma banned on February 9, 2003; Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) banned on February 23, 2005; and Harkat-ul Jihad al-Islami (HuJI) on October 17, 2005.

[14] These militant leaders were leaders of the Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), a banned organization. They were the supreme leader of the JMB Sheikh Abdur Rahman, JMB deputy, Siddiqul Islam also known as Bangla Bhai, ruling council members Ataur Rahman Sunny, Abdul Awal, Khaled Saifullah and Iftekhar al Mamun.

[15] The difference in regard to the CT strategy between the BNP-led center-right coalition government (2001-2006) and the caretaker government (2007-2008) is described in a confidential memo of the US embassy in Dhaka to Washington: 'The interim government's intention to prosecute JMB's political supporters stands in sharp contrast to the facile assurances of the previous BNP-led government that there was no evidence of involvement by government or party officials.s Steps such as the executions, continued JMB arrests, and the focus on JMB's backers suggest the interim government is serious about terrorism' (Cable no 07DHAKA546, 4 April 2007; accessed through *Wikileaks*, Public Library of US Diplomacy, accessed on July 10, 2015; URL: https://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07DHAKA546_a.html .

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[36] There is a debate whether the HT should be categorized as a 'militant' or 'terrorist' organization. It was banned in Bangladesh in 2009 allegedly for its involvement with the failed rebellion of the paramilitary border guards – Bangladesh Rifles (BDR). The organization operates legally in many countries..

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[38] TRAC, ABT, accessed August 7, 2015; URL: http://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/ansarullah-bangla-team-abt

[39] For earlier online presence of the group, see URL: https://archive.org/details/ShariahRulesOfJihadiForumUsersBangla ; accessed July 25, 2015. -

The ABT, in 2012, propagated translated versions of books by Sheikh Abdullah Azzam. Azzam was a Palestinian from Jordan, who was among the first Arabs to volunteer to join the Afghan War against the Soviet forces in the 1980s. Azzam is considered to have been the mentor of Usama bin Laden and one of the founders of the Al Qaeda. He later founded the Pakistan-based militant organization Lasker-i-Tayeba. For a brief introduction to Azzam, see Bruce Riedel, 'The 9/11 Attacks' Spiritual Father', *Brookings*, 11 September 2011, accessed July 8, 2015; URL: http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2011/09/11-riedel

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[42] Ansarullah Bengali Team–Presents–Eradicate Democracy; URL: http://qitaltube.blogspot.com/2013/02/ansarullah-bengali-team-presents.html ; accessed August 31, 2015.

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[46] 'Two top leaders of Al Qaeda Indian Sub-continent (AQIS) nabbed', *bdnews24*, 2 July 2015, accessed July 2, 2015; URL: http://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2015/07/02/two-top-leaders-of-al-qaeda-indian-sub-continent-aqis-nabbed

[47] 'Police arrest suspected ISIS "coordinator" in Bangladesh, *The Strait Times*, 31 May 2015, accessed June 1, 2015; URL: http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/south-asia/police-arrest-suspected-isis-coordinator-in-bangladesh

[48] For an excellent bibliography of available studies related to terrorist personality and organizations, see: Alex P. Schmid (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research*, London and New York: Routledge, 2013, pp. 502–507.

[49] Walter Laqueur, *Terrorism*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1977, p. 129.

[50] Jerrold M Post, "Individual and Group Dynamics of Terrorist Behavior." In: World Congress of Psychiatry, *Psychiatry: The State of the Art*, 6. New York: Plenum, 1985.

[51] Franco Ferracuti, "A Psychiatric Comparative—Analysis of Left and Right Terrorism in Italy." In: World Congress of Psychiatry, *Psychiatry: The State of the Art*, 6. New York: Plenum, 1985, and "A Sociopsychiatric Interpretation of Terrorism," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 463, September 1982, pp. 129–141.

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[61] Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and Pharaoh.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

[62] Guilain Denoeux and Lynn Carter, *Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism*, Washington, D.C: USAID, 2009, p. 51.

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[64] Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) is an elite force created in 2004. It comprises members from Bangladesh's Army and the police. While the RAB has played a crucial role in counter-terrorism (CT) efforts since 2006, it has an abysmal record in protecting fundamental rights of the citizens. There are credible allegation of RAB being engaged in extrajudicial killings of alleged criminals and political opponents of the regime. Human Rights Groups, including the Human Rights Watch (HRW), stated that the Rapid Action Battalion '[is] Involved in Serial, Systematic Killings' and called upon the government to disband the unit. (Human Rights Watch, 'Bangladesh: Disband Death Squad', 20 July 2014. URL: https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/07/20/bangladesh-disband-death-squad). Amnesty International (AI) also alleged that the RAB was involved in a number of enforced disappearances (AI International Report 2014-15, Bangladesh; URL: https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/bangladesh/report-bangladesh/

[65] 'Police in Search of 15-20 Youths intended to Join the IS', *Prothom Alo*, 30 May 2015, p.20.

[66] The 20-year old female arrestee is a member of the Islami Chattri Sangstha, the female student wing of the mainstream Islamist party Bangladesh Jamaat-i-Islami (BJI). Neither BJI nor any of its student wings have been proscribed by the government. However, they have been treated as clandestine organizations since the International Crimes Tribunals (ICT) was founded in 2010. The ICT, a national court established by the Bangladesh government, is trying those who allegedly committed war crimes during the independence war in 1971. Most of those who have been convicted, being charged and awaiting trail, are leaders of the BJI. The party opposed the independence war and collaborated with the Pakistani military which unleashed a genocide. Despite her affiliation with a mainstream political party we have treated her as a militant group as reported by the law enforcing agencies.

[67] To determine the age of those missing in the reports of these newspapers, the author checked other newspapers too.

[68] 'Involvement with IS, a British Citizen Arrested', *Prothom Alo*, 30 September 2014, p.1;

[69] The press reports that 22, including the principal and two teachers, were initially arrested, but ten were released as no evidence was found against them., "12 Arrested in Rab Operation in Hathazari', *Daily Janakantha,* 21 February 2015; URL: http://dailyjanakantha.com/?p=details&csl=110617

[70] Currently there are 12 Cadet Colleges, nine for male, three for females. Prior to the independence in 1971, the country had four such colleges.

[71] '4 ISIS suspects arrested, placed on 5-day remand,' *New Age*, 20 January 2015, p. 1; URL: http://newagebd.net/87681/4-isis-suspects-arrested-placed-on-5-day-remand/#sthash.mjTefU62.0QNJekOD.dpuf

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Why is Contemporary Religious Terrorism Predominantly Linked to Islam? Four Possible Psychosocial Factors

by Joshua D. Wright

Abstract

This article explores four psychosocial religious factors that may help researchers conceptualize and explain why religious terrorism is predominantly Islamic. Empirical work supports a link between individual differences in fundamentalism and out-group hostility. Combined with significantly higher self-reported fundamentalism among Muslims compared to adherents of other major religious groups, Muslims may be more susceptible to religious appeals to violence. This may be especially true when these appeals are minimally counterintuitive. Religious involvement has been suggested to cause coalitional commitment, which may relate to more hostile behavior to outsiders; however, religious involvement does not appear significantly higher in Muslims than among other religious believers. Religious commitment may relate to a stronger desire to protect one's religious group through enhancing perceptions of threat. This has importance in the Islamic world due to the possibility of higher average religious commitment compared to other religious groups and the current political environment that often challenges the self-concept of Islamic believers. Finally, homogenization of Islamic beliefs is considered as an intergroup difference that may enhance social-psychological processes of intergroup conflict. Together, a broader emphasis on psychosocial religious factors may help explain the current rise of Islamic terrorism within the current political context of Islamic-West relations.

Keywords: *terrorism; religion and terrorism; religion and violence; religious violence; religious conflict; Islamic terrorism; Islamist terrorism; jihad.*

Introduction

Terrorism has been a major concern since the attacks on September 11, 2001 in the United States. This surge in terrorist activity, beginning in 1998 with Osama Bin Laden's declaration of war against the United States, has taken a predominantly religious form [1]. Upal [2] argues that the rise of Islamist terrorism stems from a long history of decline following the Muslim cultural and material dominance in the 11th and 12th centuries. He argues that the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, followed by colonialism in the 20th century, has led to a revival of anti-Western sentiment and a belief in a need for stricter adherence to the law of Allah. Some Muslim clerics believe that liberal adherence to Sharia law caused the decline of Islamic empires, which were once culturally, politically, and technological more advanced than Western empires [3]. Likewise, some clerics believe that stricter adherence to Sharia law will bring about a resurgence of Islam's superiority [4]. While historical decline of the Islamic empires may have enhanced a homogenized anti-western sentiment and a push for religious law, other factors need to be taken into consideration to explain why religious terrorism has taken a predominantly Islamic form, despite secular pressures also threatening other major religious groups.

A note of caution is in place at the outset to clarify misperceptions. The majority of targets of Islamist terrorism are Muslims, rather than Westerners, and the majority of Islamist terrorist attacks occur in the Middle East, rather than in the West [5]. The concern with religious terrorism is not its base rate, nor its primary target. The concern with religious terrorism in general is that religious terrorism is more deadly than other forms of terrorism [6] and more difficult to defeat than other forms of terrorism [7, 8]. Islamist terrorism makes up the majority of religious terrorism, is the most deadly form of religious terrorism, and

is the primary concern of Western governments [9]. In addition, some data suggest that Islamic civilization is the most conflict prone, constituting over 25% of all wars in the post-Cold War period [10]. This article concerns itself with the overrepresentation of Islamism within religious terrorism and uses a social-psychological perspective to explore possible mechanisms that may have explanatory value.

Attempting to explain the rise of modern extremism in Islam, factors such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of education do not appear explanatory [11,12, 13]. In fact, the majority of terrorists are employed and live in middle-income countries [14, 15]. Further, religious terrorists appear to be motivated by moral sentiment rather than by instrumental reasoning [16]. This article adds to the literature on Islamist terrorism by examining four possible psychosocial religious factors that may help explain why religious terrorism is predominantly Islamic: (i) the fundamentalist nature of Islam, (ii) religious involvement that forms coalitional commitment, (iii) religious commitment that results in increased perceptions of threat from secularization, and (iv) the homogenization of Islam compared to other religious groups.

(i) Fundamentalism

Probably the term most linked with religious extremism, and terrorism in particular, is *fundamentalism*. Broadly speaking, it refers to a strict adherence to a belief system. This has elsewhere been referred to as scripturalism [17]. Alternatively, fundamentalism has been defined in terms of a reaction toward changing contexts that threaten particular beliefs. Emerson and Hartman [18] emphasize this contextual nature of fundamentalism within a modernizing and secularizing world. Colloquially, the term fundamentalism has a negative connotation, primarily being used to denote radical and violent movements; however, the use of fundamentalism in empirical research is closer to scripturalism. We also must differentiate those with absolute personal beliefs (i.e., scripturalism) from those who desire to enforce personal beliefs on a collective system.

This article adopts a definition of religious fundamentalism from the social psychological literature. Borrowing from Altemeyer and Hunsberger, fundamentalism is defined as,

> *"the belief that there is one set of religious teachings that clearly contains the fundamental, basic, intrinsic, essential, inerrant truth about humanity and deity; that this essential truth is fundamentally opposed by forces of evil which must be vigorously fought; that this truth must be followed today according to the fundamental, unchangeable practices of the past; and that those who believe and follow these fundamental teachings have a special relationship with the deity"* [19]

This definition adequately addresses important assumptions. First, not all religious believers are fundamentalists. Second, advocating for a particular belief system within the collective sphere is distinct from the current, usually violent, fundamentalist movement. Thus fundamentalism, as an individual difference variable, can be perfectly acceptable if advocating beliefs is done through politically acceptable means (e.g., through democratic processes), rather than violence. However, fundamentalists may be more susceptible to calls to violent action through traditional media, religious scholars, and social media campaigns.

While some argue that religious factors are not the predominant cause of the rise of fundamentalist Islam [20, 21], there is reason to believe that Islam is more easily connected to violent fundamentalist movements and terrorism than other religious groups. This may help explain why the majority of religious terrorism is in the form of Islamist terrorism, pursuing the "lesser" jihad, and why religious terrorism predominates in Muslim dominated regions [22].

While I differentiate fundamentalism as an individual difference variable from the violent fundamentalist movements, fundamentalist beliefs may be one factor that helps explain why religious terrorism is predominantly Islamist. Religious fundamentalism, as an individual difference variable, has been implicated in racial prejudice [23], hostility toward value violating out-groups [24, 25], and support for violence against out-groups [26]. In addition, in a Shiite Muslim sample, Rothschild, Abdollahi and Pyszczynski [27] demonstrated that religious fundamentalism is positively related to anti-Western attitudes. With the connection between fundamentalist beliefs and out-group hostility established, it seems useful to compare religious groups on the degree to which groups' believers hold these fundamentalist beliefs. If, in fact, fundamentalist beliefs are implicated in the disparity between Islamist terrorist violence compared to religious terrorism from other religious groups, this should reveal itself through evaluating levels of fundamentalism among believers of different faiths.

Altemeyer and Hunsberger [28] collected data on religious fundamentalist beliefs from multiple religious groups within the United States, finding that Muslims scored highest in a standard measure of religious fundamentalism ($M = 112.3$, $SD = 40.3$) compared to Christians ($M = 85.0$, $SD = 33.0$), Hindus ($M = 84.5$, $SD = 31.5$) and Jews ($M = 48.3$, $SD = 21.1$). To reexamine this finding, I evaluated data previously collected from a sample of both Muslim ($N = 198$) and Christian ($N = 167$) students from a Canadian university. Muslims scored significantly higher on religious fundamentalism ($M = 50.04$, $SD = 19.44$) compared to Christians ($M = 43.70$, $SD = 16.93$), $t (363) = 3.29$, $p = .001$.*(Note that these two datasets use different scoring for the fundamentalism scale. Thus scores are not directly comparable between these two studies; however, the scores are comparable across religious groups within each study and thus are an accurate reflection of the increased adherence to religious fundamentalism in Muslims.)* This evidence suggests that Muslims, on average, tend to adhere to a more fundamentalist interpretation of religious doctrine than do people from other major religious groups.

Because these samples are taken from two Western countries, and thus limited in generalizability, the 6th wave of the World Values Survey (WSV-6) [29] was consulted for a more global perspective. First, a fundamentalism measure was created from 4 items ("Whenever science and religion conflict, *religion* is always right", "The only acceptable religion is my religion", All religions should be taught in our public schools", and "People who belong to different religions are probably just as moral as those who belong to mine"). Participants responded with their agreement to each item on a four-point scale ranging from 1, "strongly agree" to 4 "strongly disagree". For analysis, the scale was reversed so that a higher number indicated stronger agreement with the items and items three and four were reverse scored. The mean of the four items was calculated as representative of one's degree of agreement with fundamentalist beliefs. Table 1 reports the means, sample size, and standard deviations of religious fundamentalism among the world's major religious groups from the WVS-6. These data suggest that Muslims have, on average, higher levels of fundamentalism than other religious groups.

This does not necessarily indicate that those scoring relatively high in religious fundamentalism will necessarily engage in terrorist activity. As Rogers et al. [30] point out, no comparative research on levels of fundamentalism has been carried out among terrorists and non-terrorists. Despite a lack of this type of empirical data, highly fundamentalist beliefs are likely a prerequisite; however, other factors are probably necessary as a bridge to terrorist activity. For example, Pech and Slade [31] argue that contextual, historical, and psychological factors that elicit desires for significance, domination, and legitimation may be necessary for fundamentalism to lead to violence.

Table 1: WVS Religious Fundamentalism by Religious Group

Religious Group	Self-Reported Religious Fundamentalism		
	Sample Size	Mean	SD
No Affiliation	10222	2.18$_b$	.478
Buddhist	2639	2.28$_b$	.420
Hindu	1345	2.28$_b$	.460
Jew	340	2.19$_b$	.446
Muslim	14488	2.81$_a$	.609
Orthodox	5308	2.29$_b$	.507
Other	1397	2.43$_b$	.540
Protestant	4664	2.39$_b$	.493
Catholic	12435	2.31$_b$	.479

Note: 2.5 is the midpoint of the scale.

Key: *a* is significantly different from *b* at *p* < .001

The evidence that Muslims tend to have more fundamental beliefs than other religious groups suggests that Muslims may be more susceptible to what Pech and Slade [32] term the "terrorist meme"—an ideal expressing selective interpretation of the Quran that is spread throughout the Islamic world. In this way, fundamentalist beliefs may act as a facilitator for religious terrorism. Similarly, describes how the jihadi message successfully motivates Muslims "because it is a natural extension of the dominant narrative in the Islamic world" and "is *minimally counter-intuitive* [sic, italics original] for most Muslims…"[33]. Higher levels of fundamentalism may enhance this acceptance of the jihadi message.

As a final note on fundamentalism: it has been argued that fundamentalism may exist in three stages. The first stage is that of *passive fundamentalism*, in which most believers of strict doctrine would fall. Passive fundamentalists have no quarrel with secular society or other religious groups, preferring to do things their own way and leave others as they see fit. The second stage is *assertive fundamentalism*; assertive fundamentalists do have a desire to exert influence in wider society, but do this through legal political processes. The third stage, *impositional fundamentalism*, is that which can lead to terrorism. Impositional fundamentalists wish to bring about change "by covert or overt interventions, including fomenting revolution or enacting terrorism" [34]. This taxonomy helps to distinguish clearly between fundamentalism as an individual difference variable as held in the social sciences and the violent fundamentalist movements that reflect reactions to perceived threats by outsiders [35]. While no known comparisons have been made between terrorists and non-terrorists on levels of fundamentalism, empirical evidence does suggest that religious fundamentalism is highly related to out-group animosity. This relationship, combined with the presented data suggesting that Muslims hold more fundamentalist beliefs, may help explain why religious terrorism is predominantly Islamist.

While religious fundamentalism can be problematic, there is reason to believe that fundamentalism need always lead to out-group hostility or anti-western sentiment. Rothschild, Abdollahi, and Pyszczynski [36] demonstrated in a sample of Shiite Muslims that the relationship between fundamentalism and anti-Western sentiment could be attenuated by exposing believers to religiously labeled compassionate values (e.g., "Do goodness to others because Allah loves those who do good"). This suggests that the ability to prevent Islamist religious terrorism may be in the hands of the religious power holders, who can emphasize positive aspects of Islam without undermining belief in scripture [37].

While religious fundamentalism may help explain the susceptibility of the Islamic community to religious terrorism in comparison to other religious groups, two other factors are functionally and statistically related to fundamentalism: religious involvement and religious commitment. Religious involvement encourages group belonging, and through what Ginges, Hansen, and Norenzayan [38] term *coalitional commitment,* may lead to out-group hostility. Religious commitment may also enhance the effects of fundamentalist beliefs through enhancing perceptions of threat and increasing retaliatory responses in protection of one's deeply committed beliefs [39, 40, 41].

(ii) Religious Involvement

Religious involvement can incorporate any number of activities related to a religion but most widely consists of religious service attendance, prayer, and reading of scripture. These components are also not particular to any one religious group, allowing for cross-group comparisons. Some empirical evidence suggests that religious involvement can relate to less vengefulness [42], less violent behavior [43], and lower violent crime rates [44]. In a study on belief in violent jihad as a mediator between religious involvement and violence in Indonesia, survey data indicate that religious practice (measured as a function of mandated prayer, optional prayer, fasting, and religious activities) related negatively to belief in violent jihad in a sample of Muslims [45]. However, an alternative perspective related to religious involvement and violence is what Ginges, Hansen, and Norenzayan [46] describe as the *coalitional commitment* hypothesis. These authors suggest that engagement within group activities related to one's religion increases in-group cooperation and commitment to its members. This collective action (i.e., the communal ritual) may lead to increased support for violence against out-groups through what is termed *parochial altruism*—a combination of out-group hostility and in-group sacrifice [47]. It typically exists in the form of suicide terrorism, the primary differentiating factor in religious terrorism [48, 49]. Ginges, Hansen, and Norenzayan [50] provide empirical evidence that frequency of mosque attendance may increase the predictive likelihood of Palestinian Muslims supporting suicide attacks, despite prayer being unrelated.

In support of this conclusion, evidence from large scale survey data suggests that religious service attendance is positively related to agreement that violence against others is justified [51]. If Muslims are, on average, more involved in their religious communities, coalitional commitment may be enhanced in comparison to other religious groups. Thus a greater emphasis on religious involvement may lead to coalitional commitment and a furtherance of support for terrorism and parochial altruism, which may help explain why most religious terrorism is predominately Islamist terrorism.

Do Muslims generally report higher involvement with their religious group or higher attendance at religious services? In order to investigate religious involvement across religious groups, the author's own data collected from a sample of Canadian Muslims was utilized. These data suggest that Muslims ($N = 202$, $M = 2.54$, $SD = 1.29$) report significantly higher scores on a religious involvement measure (i.e., frequency of prayer, reading of scripture, and service attendance) compared to Christians ($N = 171$, $M = 2.19$, $SD = 1.04$), $t(371) = 2.87$, $p = .004$. Furthermore, service attendance was investigated independently since it should be more related to coalitional commitment than other forms of religious involvement [52, 53]. However, this revealed that the groups did not differ in frequency of attendance. I further evaluated only the extreme end (i.e., 1 standard deviation above the mean) on frequency of religious service attendance, finding that the most "devout" Muslims did report higher frequency of service attendance compared to the most "devout" Christians (Muslims, $N = 41$, $M = 4.73$, $SD = .807$, Christians, $N = 33$, $M = 3.61$, $SD = .827$), $t(70) = 5.60$, $p < .001$. Unfortunately, data for other religious groups was not available in this particular data set for comparison.

To further compare religious involvement across religious groups, I consulted the WVS-6. Comparing Muslims to Protestants, Catholics, Hindu, and Jewish respondents, these data reveal that Muslims reported lower overall service attendance (N = 12395, M = 2.77, SD = 1.67) than Jews (N = 326, M = 3.88, SD = 1.66, p < .001), Catholics (N = 13307, M = 3.00, SD = 1.54, p < .001), and Hindus (N = 1618, M = 3.35, SD = 1.50, p < .001), but higher overall attendance than Protestants (N = 5277, M = 2.31, SD = 1.51, p < .001).(Scores ranged from 0 (never, practically never) to 6 (more than once per week).) To evaluate these data in only the most devout adherents, I compared the percentage of total sample that had scores greater than 5 (equivalent to more than once per week). Results showed Muslims having a lower percentage of respondents at the extreme end than all other groups except Protestants (Table 2).

Table 2. Percentage of respondents who self reported religious service attendance greater than once per week.

Self-Reported Religious Service Attendance					
Religious Group	Hindu	Jew	Catholic	Protestant	Muslim
% > 5	18.66%	32.52%	17.98%	11.79%	13.94%
Sample Size	302	106	2392	622	1,728

Based upon the data presented, there is little evidence to suggest that Muslims engage in more frequent religious activity or have a greater proportion of adherents at the extreme end of religious service attendance that might enhance coalitional commitment compared to other religious groups. The caveat to this is Protestant Christians. This leaves little reason to believe that coalitional commitment is more prevalent or more extreme throughout Islam than other religious groups. This may, however, be different in particular regions [54, 55]. Religious involvement and coalitional commitment may be entirely dependent on contextual factors such as country and denomination or subgroup, or perhaps, may be highly dependent on the content of what it is being promulgated through houses of worship.

The resultant data only suggests that Muslims do not engage in their religious practices more frequently than most other religious groups; however, the data does not undermine the empirical finding that religious involvement may be related to enhanced justification of violence against others [56] or support for suicide attacks against the "other" [57]. Thus, the extent to which Muslims engage in violence compared to other Muslims may still be predicted partially by religious involvement, but the question of more prevalent Islamist terrorism compared to other religious groups likely will not.

Religious community involvement is unlikely to lead to coalitional commitment when power holders emphasize positive aspects of religion to the community of believers (e.g., compassion). However, when power holders emphasize lines of division between believers and outsiders, coalitional commitment may be enhanced. Again, this will likely depend on systematic and contextual factors related to the country, political structure and emphasis of the power-holders within a religious community. Furthermore, the discrepancy between high religious fundamentalism in Muslims but not religious involvement may suggest a problematic aspect–that those with fundamentalist Islamic beliefs may not have formal teaching or training in Islam–education which is necessary for fully understanding the nuances, complexity, and context of religious teaching. [58] Some suggest that radicalized individuals are often recent converts who are not considered devout Muslims [59]. This may leave a high number of Muslims at the mercy of religious power holders for religious teaching and interpretation, which can have negative consequences [60], such as through too easily accepting jihadist messages within the current Islamist narrative [61]. A highly related construct–*religious commitment*–may also be related to tolerance of jihadist movements through the cognitive enhancement of perceptions of threat.

(iii) Religious Commitment

Religious commitment refers to the degree to which one's religious beliefs underlie a persons behavior in day to day life [62, 63] and is highly related to both fundamentalism and religious involvement. It is distinct via its practical application to daily life and its implied intrinsic nature. It may have implications for addressing why religious terrorism is predominantly Islamist because religious commitment may be related to increased anger and hostility in response to perceptions of threat [64]. While commitment to a group makes acting according to group values and beliefs more likely [65], these values and beliefs may be developed through comparative processes vis-à-vis an out group [66]. In-group norms serve to independently guide behavior when in situations of intergroup conflict [67, 68]. Because people highly committed to their religious group "perceive their group membership as central to their self-concept" [69], more religiously committed people may be more inclined to defend their beliefs when threatened. This has been demonstrated in work by Ysseldyk, Matheson, and Anisman [70], who determined that intrinsic religious orientation positively relates to greater sadness and anger when a threat to religious identity is experienced and this is further associated with confrontational intentions. This has been corroborated in recent work with Muslim, Christian, and Jewish samples [71], in which religious commitment related positively to increased anger and hostility in response to a religious identity threat, when religious identity was salient. This suggests that religious commitment may be enhancing perceptions of threat, which ultimately may lead to violence against out-groups.

Using the author's own data collected from a sample of Canadian Muslims and Christians, Muslims and Christians were compared on self-reported religious commitment. Muslims ($N = 201$, $M = 28.62$, $SD = 9.67$) reported significantly higher scores on religious commitment compared to Christians ($N = 171$, $M = 26.73$, $SD = 8.60$, $t(370) = 1.97$, $p = .049$). Unfortunately, the World Values Survey (WVS-6) does not report on religious commitment and this author knows of no large-scale survey that does report on standard measures of religious commitment, in line with Worthington's [72] definition. This limited evidence that Muslims may be, on average, more committed to their religious group, may have implications for religious terrorism since people highly committed to a set of beliefs may be more likely to respond to perceived threats to those beliefs with increased ardor and hostility [73]. This preliminary evidence of an inter-group difference must be replicated in other samples and across various religious groups for any worthwhile conclusions to be drawn. A final psychosocial religious factor that may help explain the phenomenon of overrepresentation of Islamist terrorism within the confines of religious terrorism is what can be termed the *homogenization of Islam*.

(iv) Homogenization of Islam

Homogenization of Islam refers to the idea that followers of Islam are more homogenous in their beliefs than are members of other religious groups. While the empirical work regarding this phenomenon is scant, homogenization of Islam can be inferred from two critical pieces of evidence. First is the observation that the majority of the Islamic world identifies with a central authoritative branch of Islam–Sunni Islam. Sunnis makes up approximately 87–90% of all Muslims [74], providing a rather homogenized group with shared beliefs. While Sunni and Shia splits can be further divided into schools of Islamic jurisprudence, this number is rather small in comparison to other religions, such as Christianity [75]. Furthermore, despite these divisions, the four orthodox schools of Sunni law are in agreement about most matters. The second evidence for a relative homogenization of Islam is that central tenets of Islam are almost universally accepted in the Islamic world [76]. This universality does not appear consistent with other religious groups [77].

This homogenization of Islam reflects itself through homogenous support for Sharia law in most regions of the world and through belief in a single interpretation of Sharia [78]. A homogenized Islam leaves little room for dissenters, and rather than accept challenges and disparities in beliefs, Islam has taken a relative "all-or-nothing" approach, perhaps to protect the foundation and sanctity of Islam's origins. This is likely due to the belief that the Qur'an is the literal, eternally operative word of Allah and Muhammad is viewed as the ideal Muslim whose behavior should be emulated. This is distinct from the Judeo-Christian perspective, in which scriptures are the work of divinely inspired humans. A possible outcome of this is extreme in-group homogeneity, coalitional commitment, parochial altruism, and out-group hostility. When perceptions of threat become enhanced, especially in a highly homogenized group, this may lead to a violent backlash [79]. The concept of homogenization of Islam must be evaluated more fully via empirical data before any conclusions can be drawn as to the explanatory power of homogenization in explaining the prevalence of Islamist terrorism. This brief introduction, it is hoped, might encourage others of the importance of this line of work.

Conclusion

There is a necessity within the field of terrorism studies to more adequately address theoretical perspectives of both the rise of terrorism, the current predominant types of terrorism, and effective preventative measures to reduce terrorism. The rise of Islamist terrorism and the overwhelming position that Islamist terrorism holds within the realm of religious terrorism is currently in need of further exploration. An emphasis on psychosocial factors assists in examining the reasons for Islamist terrorism predominating within religious terrorism. Is Islam more susceptible to religious terrorism than other religions? While the current article does not adequately answer this question, it does enhance our understanding and proposes avenues for further research. First, empirical work evaluating religious fundamentalism is clear in its implications that fundamentalist beliefs are related to racial prejudice [80], hostility toward value violating out-groups [81, 82], support for violence against out-groups [83], and anti-Western sentiment [84]. The data in this article suggest that followers of Islam do, on average, hold more fundamentalist beliefs than do believers from other religious groups. This increased fundamentalism may create more susceptibility to the calls for action from extremist Islamist clerics [85], helping to explain why religious terrorism is predominantly Islamist. This finding also implies that fundamentalist beliefs may be targeted by the religious elite to reduce susceptibility to calls to Jihad [86].

Practically and statistically related to religious fundamentalism are religious involvement and religious commitment. The empirical work on religious involvement is unclear as to the direction of its effect on violence. Some work suggests a negative relationship between religious involvement and violence [87, 88]; however this article concentrated on the possibility of the enhanced coalitional commitment argument for a relationship between religious involvement (specifically religious service attendance) and parochial altruism [89, 90]. The data is inconsistent on whether Muslims engage in more frequent religious service attendance or are generally more involved with their religion than members of other religious groups. A contextual and comparative analysis of the content being promulgated through houses of worship within and between religious groups would likely provide more insight than simplistic evaluations of frequencies.

The empirical basis for religious commitment as a facilitator of hostility, anger, and aggression in response to perceived threats to one's religious group is theoretically, and to a lesser extent, empirically established [91, 92, 93, 94]. However, the data presented on inter-group differences in religious commitment only weakly support the notion that Muslims are more committed to their religious beliefs than members of other religious groups. The limitations of the dataset prevent a stronger conclusion but do provide important

preliminary support. Other data also suggest that religious commitment might be related to increased support for Sharia law in Muslims [95]. Data comparing religious commitment across more varied religious groups is necessary to investigate this more adequately. The final psychosocial religious factor explored was the relatively homogenized structure of Islam. While large-scale survey data does support the notion that Islam is more homogenized than other religious groups (i.e., membership in one predominant (Sunni) form of Islam; overwhelming acceptance of core beliefs), the direct effect of this homogenization is not clear.

This author knows of no empirical data that specifically connects homogenization of religious beliefs to more out-group hostility; however, the function of in-group homogeneity is solidarity, intra-group support [96], and in-group favoritism [97]. In-group favoritism may be related to out-group hostility, enhancing the effect of perceived out-group dissimilarity in values, although it need not have to [98]. Other evidence suggests that in-group homogeneity can have negative effects through preventing the collection of new, contradictory information, and through preventing experimentation of different viewpoints, opinions, and values [99]. Thus, homogenization of Islam may act to increase extremist beliefs and maintain high levels of fundamentalism in the Islamic community.

Not surprisingly, the most supported psychosocial religious variable that may help explain why religious terrorism is predominantly Islamist is religious fundamentalism, which may make Muslims more susceptible to what Pech and Slade [100] term *the terrorist meme*, or what Upal [101] describes as the jihadist additions to the Islamist narrative. Critical personal study of religious texts [102], religious leaders who frame their messages around positive aspects of religion, such as compassion and forgiveness [103], and who reframe the current acceptability of parochial altruism may go a long way in reducing Islamist terrorism [104].

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How Dangerous Are Domestic Terror Plotters with Foreign Fighter Experience? The Case of Homegrown *Jihadis* in the US

by Christopher J. Wright

Abstract

Do Americans who return home after gaining experience fighting abroad in Islamist insurgencies pose a greater risk than homegrown jihadi militants with no such experience? This study looks at the net effect of foreign fighters on domestic plots in the US by disaggregating data from the Jihadi Plots in the West dataset. It finds that the presence of a returnee decreases the likelihood that an executed plot will cause mass casualties. Also, plots carried out with American returnees from Islamist insurgencies abroad decrease the likelihood that a plot will come to fruition. This may be because the presence of a known foreign fighter increases the likelihood of detection and disruption by law enforcement officials. The US as a case study may not be generalizable to other Western countries because of its unique geographic position and its longer experience of prosecuting would-be foreign fighters.

Keywords: *Foreign fighters; United States; homegrown terrorism; jihadis.*

Introduction

How great of a threat do would-be American *jihadis* pose to their home country? And do Americans who return home after gaining experience fighting abroad in Islamist insurgencies or attending terror training camps pose a greater risk than other *jihadi* militants? This article attempts to answer those questions by looking at those with deep ties to the US who (for some reason) decided to go abroad to fight for various Islamist groups, only to return home with what is often assumed an even greater militancy than before. Of even greater worry is the notion that not only has their commitment level to attacking their homeland increased after their experience as foreign fighters, but that they also may bring back a skill set which makes it more likely that plots go from planning to execution. This same skill set, it is hypothesized, also leads to greater numbers of casualties. These veteran returnees, then, appear to be more dangerous than non-veteran would-be domestic *jihadi*s.

This is the conclusion reached by Hegghammer in his seminal 2013 study on foreign fighters and Western terror plots.[1] Hegghammer's study is seminal because it was both timely and appeared to have had an actual impact in policy circles. It is timely because it was published one year before the leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) declared himself Caliph and the Islamic State as the Caliphate. It is impactful as it came at a time when intelligence agencies and law enforcement officials were noticing what seemed to be an extreme increase in the number of Muslims raised in the West making their way to Syria to join ISIS. Given the apparent large number of Westerners going to Syria, it stood to reason that some of them would eventually come home. Hegghammer's analysis suggested that these returnees might be a greater danger than when they left.

Other research has led to similar conclusions.[2] For instance, Byman's 2015 study of veteran returnees suggests that they, like their Western counterparts, may be more dangerous than those without foreign fighting experience.[3] Nilson's study of Swedish veteran *jihadi* foreign fighters of the Afghan, Bosnian, and Syrian conflicts claims that although such fighters may not be more skilled at conducting acts of terrorism, as others have suggested, that they are more dangerous because they may help normalize *jihadi* thinking

that attacking in the West is legitimate and thus lead to more plots on domestic soil.[4] Kenny's case study of jihadi plots in the UK and Spain concludes that cell members developed important skills by attending terrorist training camps abroad. When combined with the specific geographic, cultural, and social knowledge only a local would have, plots involving those with longtime ties to the areas in the West where the plot was launched were found to be more effective. [5] Similarly, Vidino's study found that explosives training abroad was key to more lethal plots. [6] A more recent examination by Hegghammer and Nesser finds that in recent years plots involving foreign fighters are executed at a lower rate than plots without them. However, the same study shows that executed plots including foreign fighters were far more deadly on average than those without foreign fighters. [7]

This growing body of research, combined with media reports have led governments and think tanks to study the phenomenon as well.[8] Public conclusions drawn by these analyses might be summed up nicely in the title of a Brookings policy paper, "Be Afraid. Be A Little Afraid: The Threat of Terrorism from Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq."[9] In 2014, President Obama addressed the UN General Assembly and urged member states to do more to address the growing problem. In February 2015, fears of radicalized Westerners led the White House to host a three-day summit on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE).[10] UN Security Council Resolution 2178, adopted in September of 2014, "requires states to prevent and suppress recruiting, organizing, transporting, and equipping of [foreign terrorist fighters]."[11] Worrying about returnees is not just an academic exercise: it is now the province of legislators and policymakers on a global scale.

One important exception to the literature is the work of de Roy van Zuijdewijn, whose study of European jihadis makes a conceptual distinction between Westerners who had engaged in traditional insurgencies (foreign fighters) and those that had attended terrorist training camps (trainees).[12] While I do not adopt de Roy van Zuijdewijn's specific definition here, distinguishing between types of foreign fighters is helpful because much of what is driving the concern of policy makers is the notion that citizens of Western countries will travel abroad, become even more radicalized, learn skills which might be useful in terrorist attacks, and then return home to commit acts of violence on a greater scale than had they simply stayed home. With this distinction in mind, de Roy van Zuijdewijn's research, "could suggest that Western foreign fighters (and trainees) do not make more lethal operatives than non-foreign fighters." [13]

As I conceive it, these two categories of *jihadi*s – foreign nationals who travel internationally to commit acts of terrorism, and domestic citizens who return home after gaining *jihadi* training abroad – should be treated as related but separate phenomena which may require separate policies in addressing them. Because this study begins with the same dataset used by Hegghammer, I adopt his definition of *foreign fighters* as any *jihadi* involved in any military activity, using any tactic, against any enemy, "so long as it occurs outside the West." [14] Thus, a foreign fighter would both include a Saudi fighting in Iraq and a Belgian fighting in Syria. By *would-be jihadi,* I mean any person who has made concrete plans to commit acts of violence in furtherance of the *Salafi-jihadi* ideology, whether they are attempting to travel abroad (successful or not) to become a foreign fighter or who makes the determination to stay home and commit acts of terror domestically. By *homegrown jihadi,* I mean those who have been raised in the West, become naturalized citizens of Western countries, or who have spent substantial time and who have substantial ties to a Western country but who have adopted the Salafi-jihadi ideology and are would-be *jihadis*. By *veterans,* I mean foreign fighters who are no longer engaged directly in fighting outside the West. Veterans could include both Westerners and non-Westerners alike. By *returnee,* I mean only those homegrown *jihadis* who are veteran foreign fighters and who have returned to their country of origin in the West. An example of a returnee would be a German citizen who joins a jihadi group in Afghanistan only later to return to Germany. Non-

Western *jihadi* veterans who may move to the West are not treated as returnees. Thus, while Muhammad Atta – one of the leaders of the 9/11 plot — would be treated as a veteran foreign fighter, as I conceptualize it he would not be counted as a returnee. The rest of this article shows how using these definitions and disaggregating data on returnees specifically from the more general foreign fighters yields very different result as to the effectiveness of plot execution and the number of casualties caused by those plots.

Quantifying Homegrown Terrorists

Using the Jihadi Plots in the West and Foreign Fighters Observation datasets, I first looked at all *jihadi* plots carried out on US soil from 1990 – 2010.[15] I then looked at each individual and coded them as homegrown, foreign, or unknown. A simple internet search was done to determine background information on each of the plotters. Both media reports and sources such as Wikipedia were treated as authoritative. While the latter source might be seen as problematic, there is little reason to believe that biographical information, such as country of origin or citizenship status, would be controversial enough to be open to debate amongst those who can edit Wikipedia pages.

A plotter was coded as "homegrown" if he or she was clearly a US citizen, whether born in the US or through naturalization. Further, those who were not US citizens but who had clearly been raised in the US without going through the formal naturalization process were also deemed homegrown. Such is the case, for instance, of several of the convicted Fort Dix plotters. The assumption here is that regardless of citizenship status, those raised from childhood in the US have adopted, to some extent, the norms and values of their host society. This method of coding is similar to the one of de Roy van Zuijdewijn who codes "Westerners" based on citizenship, age of naturalization, or number of years in Western countries prior to terrorist activities. [16] Those who immigrated to the US as adults but who never naturalized as US citizens are treated here as foreign.

One problem encountered while coding for homegrown *jihadi*s were cases in which a plotter was born in the US to foreign parents, and therefore become automatically a citizen, but raised abroad only to return to the US in adulthood. For instance, this is the case of Abdul Rahman Yasin, one of the first World Trade Center plotters. He was born in Indiana while his father was a graduate student, but was raised in Iraq. Yasin used his US passport to come "home" as an adult to help carry out the attack. In such cases I coded the plotter as homegrown, although they may be rightfully seen as part of a separate category. I did so, based on the notion that possession of a US passport alone makes such a plotter of greater concern, because it is more difficult to stop them in our first line of defense – at the border.

Another problem arose when encountering those who immigrated to the US as adults, never became citizens, but who were here for many years before becoming involved in *jihadi* plots. In such cases it is not clear when the individual became radicalized, and thus how to code them for this article.[17] Here, I simply treated such individuals as foreign.

This subset of the JPW dataset yielded 95 perpetrators involved in 33 plots against target in the United States from 1990 to 2010. Of those, 47, or roughly half, were homegrown *jihadi*s – these were the domestic plotters who were US citizens or who had been raised in the US. Of the remaining plotters, 44 were coded as foreign – those *jihadi*s who were not US citizens or who had not been raised in the US (See Table 5). Four were left uncoded for lack of information.[18]

Table 1: Background of 95 Perpetrators of Plots in the United States

Number of jihadi plots in the US 1990 - 2010	Total number of US jihadi plotters 1990 - 2010	Homegrown jihadis in the US 1990 – 2010 (% total)	Foreign jihadis in the US 1990 – 2010 (% total)	Returnees: homegrown plotters with foreign fighter experience
33	95	47 (49%)	44 (46%)	12 (13% of total / 25% of homegrown jihadis)

From this subtotal, I then derived homegrown "returnees" by looking at the total number of homegrown *jihadi*s and calculating how many of them had been coded as having "foreign fighter experience" in the JPW dataset. Of the 47 homegrown *jihadi*s, only 12 of them were returnees – those who were US citizens or who had been raised in the US and who are known to have traveled abroad, gained some experience as a foreign fighter or attended a terrorist training camp, and then returned home to plot acts of violence domestically. These 12 known returnees represent only about 13% of all *jihadi* plotters in the US, but represent about 25% of homegrown *jihadi*s. Thus we can safely say that from the years 1990 – 2010 about one in four homegrown *jihadi* plotters were returnees.

Since the fear is that these returnees are more likely to: a) have their plots come to fruition; and b) cause more deaths; I then looked at the number of casualties inflicted by plots carried out by purely domestic *jihadi*s vs. those plots which involved returnees. I exclude those plots which were purely foreign in nature – those plots in which none of the perpetrators had any deep ties to the United States. Only six of the 33 plots can be said to be entirely foreign or international in character – lacking any participant with deep ties to the US. However, these six include the 9/11 plot which accounts for the vast majority of deaths at the hands of *jihadi*s in the 20 year period covered in this study. Of the 2999 killed in domestic *jihadi* attacks, 9/11 accounts for 2977 or 99% of them. Other excluded plots include that of Richard Reid, the so-called "shoe bomber", and the LAX plot because the lone actors involved were not homegrown. Since this article is concerned with how returnees might affect the effectiveness of domestic terror plots, these and other plots with no US connection are excluded. Therefore, 27 plots were included in this portion of the study.

Of these 27 plots against targets in the US which included at least one homegrown *jihadi*, 9 of them – or about 33% — involved returnees (see Table 2). Only 5 of the 27 – or 19% of the total – plots ever came to fruition and were executed. These five executed plots led to the deaths of 22 people. But a returnee was involved in only one of the plots in which there were actual victims. This represents 4% of the total plots, or 20% of the plots that were executed. The other four plots, those in which no returnee was involved, accounted for 95% of deaths.

The solitary homegrown plot involving a returnee in which casualties were inflicted was the case of Abdulhakim Muhammad. In Muhammad's case that victim was Private William Long, an Army recruiter in North Little Rock. Also injured, but not killed, was Private Quinton Ezeagwula. Muhammad had gone to Yemen to study Arabic and later claimed that he had been in contact with al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Muhammad, a convert to Islam who changed his name from Carlos Leon Bledsoe, was born in Tennessee and claims that he was committed to violent jihad from the moment of his conversion. [19] This represents the only case in the twenty years covered by this study in which a homegrown *jihadi* was

radicalized domestically, went abroad to seek out foreign *jihadis*, and then returned to the U.S. to actually commit an act of violence in which someone was killed. There is also no evidence to suggest that Muhammad had actually taken up arms nor that he had been trained in any way by AQAP. All other executed plots were either foreign in character (e.g. 9/11) or completely domestic without the participation of a single returnee.

Table 2: Plots and Fatalities Involving Homegrown Terrorists and Returnees to the US

Number of plots in the US with homegrown jihadis	Number of plots involving returnees (as % of total)	Total number of deaths in homegrown plots	Number of homegrown plots executed (as % of total)	Number of executed plots with returnees (as % of total)	Number of deaths in plots with returnees (as % of total)	Number of deaths in plots with no returnees
27	9	22	5 (19%)	1 (4%)	1 (5%)	21 (95%)

But what of these other homegrown plots which were executed without the assistance of a returnee? Of the 21 other victims in these plots in which a homegrown *jihadi* was involved, 13 of those were killed in a single attack at the hands of Nidal Malik Hasan in the mass murders at Fort Hood, Texas. Hasan is a classic homegrown *jihadi*. Born and raised in Arlington, Virginia to parents from Palestine, Hasan had served as an enlisted soldier in the Army prior to earning his medical degree and being commissioned as an officer. Hasan became radicalized sometime after 9/11. Although some of his fellow soldiers reported some unusual discussions on Hasan's part that might have been construed as sympathetic to violent *jihadism,* the red flags were not enough to prevent him from turning on his fellow soldiers, killing 13 in the process. Law enforcement and media reports suggest that Hasan was in contact with American born cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, a spiritual leader in AQAP.[20] However, the extent of Hasan's relationship with AQAP remains unclear and most indicators are that he was either working alone or had little to no organizational support from AQAP. Thus, the deadliest homegrown plot in the US during the period covered did not involve a returnee, but rather would better be conceived as a "lone wolf" or "single cell" attack.[21]

Seven of the 8 remaining deaths were caused by the first World Trade Center bombings in 1993. This plot was included because two of the six cell members were coded as homegrown under the operationalization explained earlier. These were Nidal A. Ayyad and Abdul Rahman Yasin and coding them as homegrown was marginal and relied on a judgment call. Ayyad moved to the US when he was 17—technically still a minor—and might have been excluded from being coded as "homegrown" had he not also attended Rutgers University and lived in the US for 8 years prior to the plot. Yasin, as explained earlier, was only included because he had been born in Indiana and therefore held a US passport. Despite his US citizenship, Yasin had been raised in Iraq. For purposes of this study, the first WTC plot was counted as having some homegrown participants. However, the same plot might rightfully be considered by others as a purely foreign plot carried out on US soil when one takes into account the specifics of Ayyad and Yasin's relationship to the US.

Another marked difference between the first World Trade Center attack and that of the Fort Hood plot are the six core participants involved. Whereas the key to evading detection and disruption in Fort Hood may have been the lone-wolf character of the perpetrator behind a fairly unsophisticated attack, the success of the first WTC attack was in the organizational capacity of a larger group to put together bombs in a more sophisticated high-impact attack. I will return to this theme later.

The last victim of homegrown *jihadi* plots on US soil is that of Rabbi Meir Kahane at the hands of El Sayyid A. Nosair. According to McCann, the Egyptian born Nosair immigrated to the US in 1981, married a US citizen, and naturalized in 1989.[22] Nosair attended the mosque where Egyptian cleric Omar Abd al-Rahman preached. Rahman had deep links to the first WTC bombings and was himself convicted in the New York landmarks plot. This case is unique: Kahane, the founder of the Jewish Defense League, has himself been labeled a domestic terrorist by some because the group he founded has been linked to attacks against Soviet interests in the US. Kahane was also an elected member of the Israeli parliament, however his Kach movement was banned for being racist [23]. McCann also notes that it is likely that Nosair had at least some involvement with the first WTC bombings as documents found at his house were linked to the planning of the plot. Because those documents were in Arabic and left untranslated, it was not until years later that prosecutors realized the connection. Thus, the murder of Rabbi Meir Kahane might rightfully be considered an extension of the first World Trade Center plot. At the very least it can be concluded that some amount of organizational overlap existed between the two plots.

Conclusion and Discussion

While disaggregating homegrown *jihadi* plots in the US from the larger phenomenon using the JPW dataset leads to the problem of low sample size, looking at the individual plots and plotters seems to confirm what the numbers suggest: the presence of a returnee, at least in the case of homegrown *jihadi*s in the US, *decreases* the likelihood that a plot will come to fruition. The presence of a returnee also *decreases* the likelihood that an executed plot will cause mass casualties. Of the five homegrown *jihadi* plots in the US in which at least one returnee was involved, only one of those came to fruition. That one plot, the case of Abdulhakim Muhammad, only killed a single individual. This stands in contrast to Hegghammer 's finding that, "the presence of foreign fighter returnees increases the effectiveness in attacks in the West," [24] but is in line with the findings of de Roy van Zuijdewijn in the case of Europe.[25] These data suggest that plots in the US involving returnees are more prone to detection and therefore disruption.

If returnee participation lowers the likelihood of execution, what were the key factors leading to plot success? Of note is that not a single homegrown plot following the 9/11 attacks and through 2010 consisted of a cell size greater than one. In other words, every single homegrown *jihadi* plot in the time frame studied that was executed since 9/11 was done by a lone wolf or single cell actor. The vast majority of these executed plots had few, if any, victims who died. The bad news is that it seems that it is much more difficult for US intelligence agencies and law enforcement officials to interrupt homegrown *jihadi* plots where only one perpetrator is involved than when a larger network is involved. This is of concern because this is exactly what groups such as AQAP and ISIS have been encouraging.[26] Should would-be *jihadis* in the West begin to answer this call to lone-wolf *jihadism* encouraged by transnational terror organization, then domestic agencies tasked with counterterrorism will be faced with a difficult task.

Yet the good news is that these data suggest that counterterrorism measures taken against returnees and currently in place in the US are largely effective. The fact that they have traveled abroad to conflict zones may put them on the radar of intelligence and law enforcement. Some returnees may have no desire to commit acts of violence in their home countries in the West. Others may *want* to commit acts of terror in the US, but are unable to do so because they are under observation by those tasked with preventing terrorist plots. If going abroad really does increase their level of commitment to acts of violence at home, as suggested by Hegghammer [27], it is also makes it harder for them to carry out those attacks because it increases the likelihood of them being under observation by intelligence and law enforcement agents.

This article only looked at the case of homegrown *jihadi*s in the US and the effects of veteran foreign fighters in plot execution over a specific period of time. It may very well be that the US is a special case and that the conclusions drawn here cannot be generalized to fit other Western countries. The rise of ISIS may pose problems not seen in earlier years. Perhaps the most glaring difference is the sheer numbers involved. By most estimations, the number of Western *jihadis* have skyrocketed to levels never seen before with estimates ranging between 3,000 and 5,000 Europeans fighting in Syria.[28] With limited resources, there may be a tipping point at which agencies tasked with countering terrorism on domestic soil are simply overwhelmed. If US agencies have so far been successful at preventing veteran returnees from executing plots, they may have done so within the historical context of few actual returnees to worry about. As hardened veterans from the Syrian conflict begin to come home, their numbers may reach a tipping point where keeping track of them becomes problematic. Whether or not we have reached that point is purely speculative. However, such a concern should be kept in mind as policy makers take into account future actions.

Another key difference of note is geography: Europe is geographically closer to the conflict zones than the United States. Would-be *jihadi*s from the US must get on an airplane to reach conflict zones in Syria, North Africa, and Central Asia. Veteran returnees must also get on board an airplane to come back. While this does not pose an impossible barrier for veterans of Islamist conflicts, it is a substantial barrier nonetheless. The difficulty in leaving the US may be one factor in explaining why so few American *jihadi* sympathizers actually ever make it abroad to fight. Many such would-be foreign fighters are arrested before they ever make it to the airport. Simply buying the plane ticket or making other travel arrangements has been viewed as enough evidence of intent to join a terrorist organization to land the would-be foreign fighter in a federal prison. With European countries only recently beginning to bring criminal charges against would-be foreign fighters, it is too early to see if adopting what has long been the norm in the US will also yield similar results in Western Europe.

Proximity may also help explain why so few ever return to the US. Presumably, some proportion of such returnees would already be on a federal watch list making it difficult for them to get on board a plane to come home. Geography means returning to the Europe from the conflict in Syria requires none of the security checks now standard at most airports. Trains, buses, and ships which might transport veteran foreign fighters back to their country of origin are generally reported to have far fewer security checks than airlines. A recent example of this might be Ayoub el Kahzzani who is reported to have been known by authorities as a *jihadi* sympathizer and was on the French equivalent of the US terror watch list. The fact that he decided to attack passengers on a train from Amsterdam to Paris meant that he was not subject to the scrutiny that would have followed him had he taken an airplane. The same is probably true of the November, 2015 Paris attackers who killed 130 people and wounded many more. All seven of those directly involved in the attacks were citizens of EU countries and were either known by authorities as *jihadi* sympathizers or known to have traveled to Syria to fight with ISIS but were able to travel undetected and undeterred.

Another cautionary note is that proximity to Syria and North Africa also may mean an increase in the weapons available to veteran returnees. As LaFree from the University of Maryland has noted, the vast majority of successful terrorist attacks use guns.[29] Access to guns has generally not been a high hurdle for would-be domestic *jihadi*sts in the US. This is especially the case where the would-be terrorist is a US citizen and therefore entitled to gun ownership, but not so in Europe where restrictions on firearms are generally much tighter. The same routes which funnel *jihadi*s back and forth from Europe to conflict zones like Syria could also be used to smuggle weapons to be used in domestic terror attacks in the West.

What is left to see is if the findings in these data can be confirmed. If my understanding is correct, then the original JPW dataset was compiled to look at the effects of foreign fighters on terrorist plots in the West

and has been used to explain why *jihadi*s tend to prefer to go abroad to fight rather than stay at home and attack local targets. The analysis conducted for this article is much more limited and narrow in scope: while using the same data set, it only asks whether or not those who returned from abroad were more dangerous than those who never left to become a foreign fighter. The evidence suggests that returnees are not nearly as effective or deadly as some other researchers have suggested. In order to do so, though, it was necessary to disaggregate data in such a way that each of those categories of interest was left with a very low sample size. Since the sample of homegrown veteran *jihadi* returnees in the US is so small, those comfortable with a more qualitative, thick narrative might find ample room to flesh out (or, indeed, falsify) some of the conclusions drawn here.

Another area for further study would be to use the same coding and disaggregation method used here and to apply it to other Western countries. This has been done in the case of Europe as a whole by de Roy van Zuijdewijn, [30] but further disaggregation could be done on a country-by- country basis. Are returnee effects greater or smaller in some European countries than in others? If so, could disparate policy approaches to the homegrown *jihadi* phenomenon explain any of that variation? As more and more European countries adopt US-like approaches to would-be *jihadism* – namely, arresting and prosecuting those wanting to go abroad to fight – the conclusion to these questions will only become more important.

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Notes

[1] See Hegghammer, Thomas. 2013. "Should I stay or Should I Go? Explaining Variation in Western *Jihadi*sts' Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting." *American Political Science Review* 107 (1): pp. 1–15.

[2] For instance: Sageman, Marc. 2010. "Confronting al-Qaeda: Understanding the Threat in Afghanistan." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 2(4): pp. 4–25; Gartenstein-Ross, Daveed, and Laura Grossman. 2009. *Homegrown Terrorism in the U.S. & UK*. Washington, DC: Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

[3] Byman, Daniel. 2015. "The Homecomings: What Happens When Arab Foreign Fighters in Iraq and Syria Return?" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38(8): pp. 581–602.

[4] Nilsson, Marco. 2015. "Foreign Fighters and the Radicalization of Local Jihad: Interview Evidence from Swedish *Jihadi*sts." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38(5): pp. 343–358.

[5] Kenney, Michael. 2010. "'Dumb' Yet Deadly: Local Knowledge and Poor Tradecraft Among Islamist Militants in Britain and Spain." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33 (10): pp. 911–932.

[6] Vidino, Lorenzo. 2011. "Radicalization, Linkage, and Diversity: Current Trends in Terrorism in Europe," pp. 1- 49. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation.

[7] Hegghammer, Thomas and Petter Nesser. 2015. "Assessing the Islamic State's Commitment to Attacking the West." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9 (4): pp. 4–30.

[8] See: Bakker, Edwin and C. P. & E. Entenmann. 2013 *Dealing with European Foreign Fighters in Syria: Governance Challenges and Legal Implications*. The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT); URL: http://www.icct.nl/download/file/ICCT-Bakker-Paulussen-Entenmann-Dealing-With-European-Foreign-Fighters-in-Syria.pdf ; Sinkkonen, Teemu. 2015 *War on Two Fronts: The EU Perspective on the Foreign Terrorist Fighters of ISIL*. Helsinki: Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA); URL: http://www.fiia.fi/en/publication/470/war_on_two_fronts/ .

[9] Byman, Daniel. & Shapiro, Jeremy. 2014. "Be Afraid. Be Afraid a Little Afraid: The Threat of Terrorism from Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq" Foreign policy at Brookings; POLICY PAPER, Number 34, November

2014. Washington, D.C.: Brookings; URL: http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2014/11/

western%20foreign%20fighters%20in%20syria%20and%20iraq%20byman%20shapiro/be%20afraid%20%20

web.pdf .

[10] A press release to that effect can be found at URL: https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/18/fact-sheet-white-house-summit-countering-violent-extremism .

[11] Davis, Sean. 2014. *Responding to Foreign Terrorist Fighters: A Risk-Based Playbook for States and the International Community*. Global Center on Cooperative Security. URL: http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Nov2014_Responding-to-FTFs_SD.pdf .

[12] De Roy van Zuijdewijn, Jeanine. 2014. "The Foreign Fighters' Threat: What History Can (Not) Tell Us." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 8(5): pp. 59 -73.

[13] Ibid, p. 65.

[14 Hegghammer (2013), p. 1 (see *Supra* at 1).

[15 The Jihadi Plots in the West dataset is available for download at URL: http://hegghammer.com/_files/JPW_Dataset_1.0.xls. The Foreign Fighters Observation Set can be downloaded at URL: http://hegghammer.com/_files/FF_Observation_Set_1.0.xls .

[16 De Roy van Zuijdewijn (2014) p. 62 (see *supra* at 12).

[17 On the one hand, it could be that the individual originally came to the US with positive attitudes (or, at least, ambivalence) towards their host country, and only later radicalized to the point where they believed violence against the US was justified. On the other hand, some individuals may have come to the US already predisposed to believing violence was justified, and thus could not be said to be "homegrown" in the sense that they became radicalized here. What event or change in attitude occurred where they went from passive believer in violent jihad to active participant is usually unknown, but one can easily see the difficulty in coding such individuals as homegrown vs. foreign.

[18] Those four were Hammad Samana (Torrance plot), Hysen Sherifi (North Carolina cluster), and Ibrahim El-Gabrowny and Fares Khallafalla (New York landmarks plot).

[19] Goetz, Kristina. 2010. "Muslim who shot soldier in Arkansas says he wanted to cause more death." *Knoxville News Sentinal*, Nov. 13. URL: http://www.knoxnews.com/news/state/muslim-who-shot-solider-arkansas-says-he-wanted-ca .

[20] Blake, Mariah. 2013. "Internal Documents Reveal How the FBI Blew Fort Hood." *Mother Jones*, Aug. 27. URL: http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2013/08/nidal-hasan-anwar-awlaki-emails-fbi-fort-hood .

[21] For a more complete discussion, see: Simon, Jeffrey D. 2013. *Lone Wolf Terrorism: Understanding the Growing Threat*. Amherst, New York. Prometheus Books.

[22] SMcCann, Joseph T. 2006. *Terrorism on American Soil*. Boulder, CO. Sentient Publications, pp. 170–176.

[23 Ibid.

[24] Hegghammer (2013), pg. 11 (see *supra* at 1).

[25] de Roy van Zuijdewijn (2014) (see *supra* at 12).

[26] Hegghammer and Nesser (2015) (see *supra* at 7)

[27] Hegghammer (2013) (see *supra* at 1).

[28] Schmid, Alex and Judith Tinnes. 2015. *Foreign (Terrorist) Fighters with IS: A European Perspective*. The Hague. International Centre for Counter-Terrorism. URL: http://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/ICCT-Schmid-Foreign-Terrorist-Fighters-with-IS-A-European-Perspective-December2015.pdf . If the upper estimate of 5,000 Europeans fighting for ISIS is correct, then the authors note that this means that 20% of ISIS fighters are probably European in origin.

[29] LaFree, Gary. 2011. "Using Open Source Data to Counter Common Myths About Terrorism". In: *Criminologists on Terrorism and Homeland Security*, Brian Forst, Jack Greene and Jim Lynch (Eds). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

[30] De Roy van Zuijdewijn (2014) (*supra* at 12).

The Nature of Nigeria's Boko Haram War, 2010-2015:
A Strategic Analysis

by James Adewunmi Falode

Abstract

The activities of Boko Haram in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria have highlighted the need for more effective counter-strategies. Nigeria's difficulties in defeating Boko Haram has security ramifications that go beyond its borders, especially for West Africa. Much has been written about the origins of Boko Haram. However, thus far there has been little analysis of the nature of the conflict between Nigeria and Boko Haram. It is this lacuna that this article seeks to address by applying the concepts of hybrid war, compound war, fourth generation warfare and unrestriced warfare to the confrontation between the state and its Islamist challenger.

Keywords: *Nigeria; Boko Haram; Insurgency; Hybrid Warfare; Compound War; Fourth Generation Warfare; Unrestricted Warfare.*

Introduction

With the end of the Cold War in the 1990s, it was assumed by some theorists of international relations, such as Francis Fukuyama, that the world has finally entered a period of peace.[1] Interstate conflict seemed on the wane in the post-Cold War world. Most of the few wars that were fought, like the Israeli-Hezbollah war of 2006 and the Russo-Georgian War of 2008 over Ossetia and Abkhazia, were of short duration and asymmetric in nature.[2] This asymmetry was supposed to take the form of intrastate conflicts resolved without external interventions. This perception of the post-Cold War world was shattered by the September 11 2001 attacks launched on the United States of America by Al-Qaeda.[3] With this attack and the subsequent declaration of the 'war on terror' by the US, the issue of 'terrorism' was pushed to the forefront of international political discourse. The 9/11 attacks has brought the spectre of how well-organized non-state groups can challenge even a superpower to the forefront.

Nigeria is not an exception when it comes to unconventional conflict. Since her independence in 1960, the country has witnessed attacks by non-state political entities. There was the Maitatsine crisis between 1980 and 1982;[4] the insurgency of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) between 2000 and 2010;[5] the Ombatse cult group in 2013[6] and the activities of the extremist religious group Boko Haram.[7] None of these other groups have threatened the territorial integrity of Nigeria like Boko Haram since Biafra tried to create a separate state in the late 1960s. Boko Haram has waged a protracted insurgency against the Nigerian state since 2009.[8]

A great deal has been written on the origins and objectives of Boko Haram. Works such as Anyanwu and Nwanaju's, *Boko Haram: Religious Conflicts and Dialogue Initiaves in Nigeria,*[9] Agbiboa's "*The Nigerian Burden: Religious Identity, Conflict and the Current Terrorism of Boko Haram,*"[10] and Forest's *Confronting the Terrorism of Boko Haram in Nigeria*[11] contain excellent accounts of the origins and motivations of Boko Haram. While works such as Adeolu Adewunmi's "*The Battle for the Minds: The Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Northern Nigeria,*[12] Samson Eyituoyo Liolio's "*Rethinking Counterinsurgency: A Case Study of Boko Haram in Nigeria,*"[13] and Solomon's *Counter-terrorism in Nigeria: Responding to Boko Haram,*[14] have analyzed the various steps that the Nigerian state could take to contain Boko Haram, they suffer from one important shortcoming. Most counterinsurgency (COIN) works on Boko Haram fail to

define the nature of the conflict and assumed that Nigeria was waging a "war on terror". This operational and conceptual misnomer has hampered analysis. Even in the medical sciences, the correct diagnosis of any ailment or disease is the first step towards effecting a cure. A wrong diagnoses or prescription would exacerbate the condition or might even kill the patient. The assertion here is that for Nigeria to be able to develop a more effective anti-Boko Haram strategy, it is important to recognize the nature of the conflict in the North-Eastern part of the country. This article seeks to demonstrate that the war between the Nigerian state and Boko Haram is not strictly a terrorist campaign and a war on terror, but rather an example of 'Hybrid Warfare'. [15]

Hybrid Wars

What is hybrid warfare (HW)? Hybrid wars involve a range of different models of warfare that include conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorism in its various manifestations (such as kidnappings, beheadings and suicide-bombings) and criminal activities.[16] It incorporates multi-modal activities that can be conducted by separate units, or even the same unit, but are strategically directed, connected and coordinated within the contested zones to achieve synergistic effects.[17] The space where Hybrid Wars take place is called the contested zone (CZ).[18] It is that space where the opposing forces meet, trying to realize their economic, political, social and religious objectives by means of force and psychological operations. These CZs generally include generally include, but are not limited to, the dense urban centres (the scene of urban warfare), jungles, borderlines and mountains (the scenes of guerrilla warfare), and attacks on religious, cultural and educational centres (through acts of terrorism).[19] In the conflict zone, hybrid warfare combines two modes of warfare–conventional and asymmetric warfare–simultaneously and synchronously. These forms of conflict waging are used interchangeably as the situation demands. Hybrid wars bring together some of the lethality of state conflict waging with the unrestained violence of asymmetric warfare. In such conflicts, adversaries (state, state-sponsored groups, mercenaries, terrorist groups, freedom fighters) exploit access to modern and sophisticated weapons and communication technologies to wage protracted conflicts.

Hybrid wars are different from conventional warfare, combining tactics, methods, weapons and strategies of conventional and unconventional warfare.[20] Engaging in such wars involve the use of ambushes, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), suicide-bombings , sexual assaults as well as targeted assassinations. While the two modes are operationally integrated and tactically fused, the irregular component tends to become operationally decisive rather than just protract the conflict (as in guerrilla war), provoke overreactions (as with terrorism) or extend the cost of security for the defender (as in a counter-insurgency). A recent example of hybrid warfare is the blistering run of the Islamic State (IS) over Tikrit and Mosul in Iraq in 2014.[21] Islamic State fighters made use of an array of sophisticated weapons (M1A1 Abrams battle tanks and M198 towed howitzers) coupled with a well-trained militia force that used both conventional and unconventional modes of warfare, to engage and dislodge the U.S.-trained Iraqi army.[22] Apart from the use of quasi-military formations and modern military tactics (learned from officers from Saddam Hussein's armed forces), the fighters of what was soon to become the Islamic State also made use of suicide-bombings, IEDS and ambushes.

Hybrid wars come in three sub-types:

i. *Fourth Generation Warfare* has at its core the idea that the weakening of the state as an
    organizing and governing mechanism results in the rise of non-state actors willing and able to
    challenge the legitimacy of the state.[23] The role of political will and internal social cohesion is

central to the construct. The 4GW actor uses a range of conventional and unconventional means, including terrorism and disinformation disseminated in cyberspace, to undermine the will of those defending the existing state, to de-legitimize its government and to stimulate an internal breakdown of the social fabric.[24]

ii.   *Compound Wars (CW)* are those major wars that have significant regular and irregular components which exist next to each other but under unified direction.[25] It occurs when a considerable degree of strategic coordination exists between state and non-state forces in a CZ. The complementary effects of CW are generated by the ability to exploit the advantages of each component.[26] The non-state part attacks weak areas and forces a conventional opponent to disperse its forces.

iii.   *Unrestricted Warfare* involves the synchronous mobilization of all the resources and assets at the disposal of one or both opposing forces in the CZ.[27] It is warfare beyond the traditional military domain. The concept refers to the extensive and deliberate use of the totality of the national resources and assets of a state in such warfare, including financial, trade, religious, social, cultural and virtual (cyberspace) resources and human resources (conscripted children and under age fighters).

In the light of these new manifestations of hybrid warfare, let us revisit some phases of the armed conflict between Boko Haram and the armed forces of Nigeria.

Boko Haram: Origin, Tactics and Strategy

The Arabic name of Boko Haram is *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad* ("People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad.")[28] The group became best known by its Hausa name 'Boko Haram'. It was a local radical Salafist movement which morphed into a Salafi-jihadist terrorist organisation after 2009.[29] It is based in the northeast of Nigeria, in the areas predominantly populated by the Kanuri people. [30] Boko Haram is believed to have its origin as far back as 1995 in a movement named 'Sahaba' which was led by one Abubakar Lawan.[31] When he travelled to study at the University of Medina in Saudi Arabia, he conceded leadership of Mohammed Yusuf.[32]

Yusuf soon abandoned some of the old cleric's doctrines, reorganized Sahaba and changed its name in 2002. Between 2002 and 2009, Yusuf successfully managed to gain a huge followership, comprised of youths, mostly from poor families, aged between 17 and 30 years.[33]He had established a religious complex that included a mosque and a school in the northern city of Maiduguri for the propagation and indoctrination of the group's belief system. The bulk of the students were from Borno in northern Nigeria and the country's neighbours Niger, Cameroon and Chad.[34] Yusuf succeeded in extending his following in some other states in northern Nigeria such as Bauchi, Gombe, Kano, Katsina and Yobe. In 2004, the complex was relocated to Yusuf's home town Kanamma in Yobe state near the Nigerian-Niger border.[35] In Kanamma, his militant base was called "Afghanistan".[36] Boko Haram initially fought for the establishment of a Sharia government in Borno State but after Yussuf's death in 2009 its goal extended towards the Islamization of all of Nigeria despite the fact that about half of Nigeria's population are non-Muslims.[37]

Before 2010, Boko Haram had no apparent strategy on how to achieve its objectives in Northern Nigeria.[38] It used occasionally guerrilla tactics of hit-and-run to harass and oppress Nigerians in its area of operations. Its weapons were rudimentary: clubs, machetes, Molotov cocktails, knives, swords and locally made guns. Boko Haram militants sometimes shot sporadically from 'okada' (local slang for motorcycle) at their targets–both civilians and police officers–before speeding away.[39] This, however, began to change after 2010 as the group started using bombs and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) on strategic locations.[40] Boko

Haram's tactics also include suicide bombings; on August 26, 2011 a suicide car-bombing in Nigeria's capital directed against the UN builIding killed 21 persons and injured 73 others.[41]. Boko Haram's arsenal now includes AK-47 rifles, grenades, rocket propelled grenades, automatic rifles, surface-to air- missiles, vehicle mounted machine guns with anti-aircraft visors, T-55 tanks, Panhard ERC-90 'Sagaie' and explosives such as Semtex.[42] Tactics have become more sophisticated, both in response to increased security operations by the military and in an effort to stir sectarian conflict. The first attacks in 2010 were predominantly shootings, but IEDs began to be used by December, especially in the run-up to the 2011 elections.[43] After those elections, the movement turned to vehicle-borne IEDs (VBIEDs). These cars were typically packed with several propane cylinders or explosives-filled oil drums. Furthermore, in order to disseminate its ideology and to reach a wider audience, Boko Haram began to make effective use of the Internet. Youtube has been particularly effective in showcasing Boko Haram's exploits and confrontations with the Nigerian army.

Government Responses to Boko Haram

At the initial stage of the conflict between the security forces of Nigeria and Boko Haram, the state made use of its police force in an effort to check the activities of the group. Before 2010 Boko Haram's activities consisted mainly of civil, social and religious acts of disobedience to established local norms. The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) made extensive use of roadblocks and mass arrests to curb and contain Boko Haram's activities.[44] NPF's inability to check the militant sect forced the government to form a Joint Task Force (JTF) in 2003. By this period, the group had begun to actively target and burn down police stations in Yobe. [45] In 2007, the JTF launched 'Operation Flush' to arrest and contain the activities of the Boko Haram in the northeast.[46] By 2009, the JTF succeeded in killing the founder of the Group, Yusuf. His death generated serious controversy both in local and international media; Yusuf was captured alive and briefly held in police custody before he 'mysteriously' died.[47] It has been argued that it was this unlawful killing of Yusuf that pushed Boko Haram to embrace a more combative approach. With the death of Yusuf, Abubakar Shekau took over the leadership of the Boko Haram.

With the ascension of this new leader the conflict then entered a more virulent phase. After a year of preparations, Boko Haram began to employ new tactics and methods, including suicide-bombings.[48] This forced the Nigerian government to establish the Special Military Joint Task Force (SMJTF) in 2011.[49] It consists of personnel from the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), the Department of State Security (DSS), the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) and the Defence Intelligence Agencies (DIA). Moreover, the new level that Shekau took the conflict to, brought about two important changes. The first was that it pushed Nigeria to fully mobilize its armed forces (totaling 100,000 soldiers) to confront the security challenge. Secondly, it forced the government to adapt its counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency strategies. In May 2013, Nigeria declared a state of emergency in the three north-eastern states of Yobe, Adamawa and Borno. The three states have not only become the main CZ of the war but also Boko Haram's stronghold in Nigeria. During this period, Nigeria also established a Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) to complement the efforts of the military in degrading Boko Haram.[50] The CJTF is composed mainly of vigilante groups, hunters, farmers and youths in the areas most affected by the activities of the Boko Haram. In addition, Nigeria created a new military formation, the 7th Division, in Maiduguri with a mission to contain and rout Boko Haram.[51] To give legal backing and effective coordination to these measures, Nigeria fast-tracked the passage of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2013.[52] The Acts stipulates, among other provisions, death penalty sentences for terrorists and insurgents and the destruction of suspected terrorist enclaves. At the same time, the Nigerian state also made an offer to engage in a strategic dialogue with Boko Haram.[53] However, Boko Haram steadfastly rebuffed this offer.

In December 2015, the new president of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, declared that Boko Haram has been 'technically defeated'.[54] In January 2016, the president announced that Boko Haram was now on 'fall-back'.[55] By late 2015, the State had indeed retaken much of the territories in the CZs previously controlled by Boko Haram. As a result of this, it has now become impossible for Boko Haram to launch conventional attacks against federal troops in the CZs. It has fallen back onto its stronghold, the Sambisa forest in Maiduguri, a mountainous border region difficult to penetrate. Nigeria was able to turn the tide mainly because of the engagement of troops from neighbouring countries and, what is less well known, with the help of white South African mercenaries known as STTEP (Specialized Tasks, Training, Equipment and Protection).[56] These soldiers of fortune, veterans of bush warfare in South Africa, trained elite counterterrorism troops in Nigeria and conducted sorties against the Boko Haram.[57] Using a tactic of 'relentless pursuit' to match Boko Haram's hit-and-run tactics, an effective counter-offensive against Boko Haram began to take shape.[58] By the time the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) came to the aid of Nigeria in late 2015, the STTEP had succeeded in putting the Boko Haram on the defensive. Yet it was only when troops from Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Benin, under the command of the MNJTF, were introduced to the war in late 2015 that the counteroffensive yielded more permanent results.[59] Battle-hardened troops from Chad and Niger played crucial roles, advancing, in some instances, into Nigerian territory to dislodge the Boko Haram insurgents.[60] However, the war is not over. Boko Haram has gone back to guerrilla tactics, eschewing open and conventional confrontations with the military. Since January 2016, it has been hitting counter-value targets in the CZs, making heavy use of underage suicide bombers in its bid to further destabilize Nigeria's northern states.

The External Dimensions to the War

The Nigeria-Boko Haram conflict has its origins in Nigeria. The main theatre of operations of the war is northern Nigeria. However, the activities of the opposing forces have extended the War beyond the borders of Nigeria. The reasons for these extensions are obvious. All belligerents assumed that external involvement was to be crucial to achieve their overall strategic objectives. To Nigeria, externalizing the conflict ensured international support to check the insurgency. Crucially, externalizing the conflict, especially couching it in terms of a war on terror, has allowed Nigeria greater access to foreign military hardware, know-how and funds.

To Boko Haram, externalizing the conflict ensured foreign assistance in the form of funding, fighters, weapons and technical know-how in bomb-making, obtained from like-minded jihadi groups such as al-Shabab and Al-Qaeda. It also gave Boko Haram global attention and recognition. Externalizing the conflict makes it more difficult for the Nigerian government to contain Boko Haram's activities. Even if the government should succeed in checking the Boko Haram's operations within the country, choking off the local pool of materiel and manpower, the external links are likely to allow Boko Haram to sustain the insurgency at a low-level. In 2011, Boko Haram had attacked the UN building in Nigeria.[61] However, this attack failed to give Boko Haram the international recognition it craved for. It was the kidnapping of more than 200 girls from their school dormitory in Chibok, Bornu state, that finally pushed the group and its practices into the international limelight.[62] This single act guaranteed Boko Haram a global audience. It was part of an atrocity campaign that in terms of casualties, matches or even surpasses those procduced by the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.

In 2010, Boko Haram had tried to forge links with established jihadi organizations such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Al-Qaeda Central in Pakistan.[63] Such alliances supplied Boko Haram with the needed technical expertise in asymmetric warfare. For example, after pledging allegiance to the IS

(Islamic State), there was a noticeable improvement in the quality of the video and audio productions of Boko Haram.[64] This suggests that the IS must have provided some technical expertise to Boko Haram in media productions. External links also made it possible for Boko Haram to access international sources of jihadi financing, fighters and weaponry.

Apart from forging links with other jihadi groups, Boko Haram, through its activities in the territories of Nigeria's neighbours, also externalized the war territorially. The group is also active in Niger, Chad and Cameroon. For example, Boko Haram attacked a police station in Kousseri and a Chinese-run engineering company in Cameroon in 2014.[65] It also launched a devastating attack on Ngouboua in Chad in February 2015.[66] The reasons for the extension of the war into these countries are also strategic. On the one hand, the group wanted to show to Al-Qaeda Central and later IS that its reach covers the whole of West Africa [67] Finally, extending its operations into neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger ensured the continuous supply of men and materiel from the Maghreb, particularly Libya. The extension of the war across borders also offered Boko Haram a safe haven beyond the reach of Nigerian troops [68]

The Nigerian government, on its part, externalized the war for two strategic reasons. The first was to compel its neighbours at the frontline of the war, especially Cameroon, to help in policing its porous borders and to prevent Boko Haram from attacking Nigeria from across the borders. The second, more important, reason was for Nigeria to garner international military and political support against Boko Haram. To this purpose, the Nigerian government signed bi- and multi-lateral security agreements with its neighbours and with select strategic partners beyond them. For instance, in February 2012, Nigeria had signed a security treaty with Cameroon.[69] The treaty secured, among other things, Cameroonian assistance for Nigeria's fight against Boko Haram in the border areas. In October 2012, Nigeria had signed a similar treaty with Niger, establishing joint security patrols along the borders.[70]. In addition, Nigeria signed a strategic 20-year security-training pact with Britain in 2015, providing it with counterterrorism and COIN training.[71]

Using multilateral mechanisms, Nigeria was able to expand the scope of operations of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to include tackling the Boko Haram in the West African sub-region. However, the establishment of the MNJTF predated the Nigeria-Boko Haram war. It originally came into being in 1994 to combat trans-border banditry in the northern part of Nigeria and comprises troops from Cameroon, Niger, Chad and Benin.[72] The emergence of the Boko Haram expanded the scope of operation of the MNJTF's to include counter-terrorism.[73] The headquarters of the MNJTF, which was initially at Baga, Bornu state in Nigeria, had to be relocated to N'Djamena in Chad, following the coordinated attack launched against it by Boko Haram in January 2015.[74] In September 2015, from its new base in Chad, the MNJTF launched a well-coordinated attack against the Boko Haram in Bornu state.[75] Through this offensive, the Boko Haram lost swath of territories that it has hitherto held on to and from where it had resorted to guerrilla tactics to undermine northern Nigeria. Additionally, in June 2014, Nigeria signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) establishing an External Intelligence Response Unit (EIRU) with the United States, Britain, France, Benin, Chad, Cameroon and Niger.[76]

The Nature of the War, 2010-2015

The conflict with Boko Haram has gone through three different iterations. In the beginning, the Nigerian government perceived it to be a form of civil unrest when it reared its head between 1995 and 2002.[77] Subsequently, it came to be seen as a religious uprising between 2002 and 2009.[78] Between 2010 and 2015, the war took its final form. It became a war on terror on the one side and an insurgency on the other.[79] It is from this final form that the true nature of the war can be gleaned. It is the contention of this article that

the war is not a mere terror campaign but amounts to hybrid war. This assumption is based on, among other things, the tactics and strategies, aims and objectives and the choice of weapons used in prosecuting the war by the adversaries.

A war has some basic definable features. Although its contemporary definition now encompasses asymmetric warfare, it still has some generally accepted characteristics.[80] One of these is the observance of established rules of engagement. Normally, the combatants take special care during engagements to shield non-combatants from the violence of war. Proportionality is also an established norm. Terrorism does not have such rules of engagement. Boko Haram only graduated from occasional attacks to irregular warfare in 2010. Why 2010? It is an established fact that the conflicts between Nigeria and the group went as far back as early 2000. It is worth recalling that the founder-leader of the group, Mohammed Yusuf, was killed in 2009 along with over 900 of his followers by Nigerian security forces.[81] The group subsequently dispersed to re-organize. By 2010, the new leader Abubakar Shekau escalated the conflict and took it to a more dangerous and unrestricted phase. In addition to seeking revenge, a major factor responsible for this escalation was the desire of Boko Haram to Islamise Nigeria as a long-term objective. Since 2010, there has been a noticeable difference in Boko Haram's tactics in its confrontations with the Nigerian state. For the first time, the Group carried out a series of carefully coordinated and deadly bombing campaigns in Nigeria, directed against both religious and secular targets. The bombing campaigns took four major formats: suicide bombings, VBIEDs, roadside IEDs, and vehicle-borne suicide bombings (VBSBs). By this period, the CZs of the war were clearly defined. The major CZs are Adamawa, Yobe, Borno, Gombe and Bauchi states. Other targeted zones in the HN include Abuja, Plateau and Kano states.

From 2010 onward, Boko Haram started launching a series of attacks on security structures and military installations in the North-Eastern part of the country. For example, on September 7 2010, Boko Haram attacked and overrun a prison in Bauchi, freeing over 700 inmates in the process.[82] Between 2010 and 2015, Boko Haram attacks became more daring and brazen. Never in the history of political violence in Nigeria had any group deliberately targeted not just military structures but military formations and barracks in the CZs. The attacks launched on Giwa barrack and Baga military base in Bornu in 2014 and 2015 are cases in point.[83] In the two encounters, over 500 lives were lost. What became noticeable in the course of the confrontation was that the adversaries simultaneously employed asymmetric and conventional tactics and strategies in waging the war. This is why the Nigeria-Boko Haram conflict can be described as a form of hybrid warfare.

The Nigeria-Boko Haram war has gone through the different phases earlier enumerated above. Elements of *unrestricted warfare* could be seen in the use of girls (as young as 10 years old) as suicide bombers.[84] This is apart from the fact that the group uses men and women in carrying out conventional suicide bombings and VBSBs. A good example was the deadly suicide attack in Borno that killed 58 and injured over 139 people in March 2015.[85] During this phase too, Boko Haram actively targeted Nigerians of different religious persuasions. Vulnerable groups such as the old, the infirm, women and children were not accorded any protected status. Churches, mosques, pastors and imams, traditional chiefs, universities, secondary schools, markets, car depots and restaurants became legitimate targets. Boko Haram also became very adept at using cyberspace. It has effectively communicated via *YouTube, Twitter* and *Facebook* during its war against the Nigerian state. The group made use of every tangible and intangible resource at its disposal to wage war. During this phase, the Nigerian state also used considerable resources to wage war. The military used tactics and strategies such as the declaration of a state of emergency in the CZs, arrest and intimidation of spouses and relatives of known Boko Haram members while deliberately flouting humanitarian rules of engagement. This was the reason why Human Rights Watch (HRW) wrote a critical report about the activities of the

Nigerian forces in the CZs and its treatment of prisoners in the course of the war.[86] The point being made here is that during the *unrestricted phase*, the adversaries used conventional and unconventional techniques in prosecuting the war. The responses of the opposing forces were disproportional and civilian countervalue targets were actively sought and destroyed.

In the *Fourth Generation warfare* phase, which occurred within the same period, the group effectively tried to undermine the sovereign integrity of the Nigerian state. It tried to achieve this through incessant and ubiquitous attacks on civilian and military structures in Nigeria. The aim was to demonstrate to Nigerian citizens that the government did not have the capacity to protect them. This was probably also the main reason why the group carried-out the brazen kidnapping of more than 200 Chibok girls from their school in Borno in 2014.[87] The repeated attacks against military infrastructure targets (such as barracks and munition depots) were designed to show the citizens that the Nigerian military even lacked the capacity to protect itself. The Internet played a crucial role in the propaganda efforts of the group. Since the government could not effectively censor what was posted on-line, Boko Haram used YouTube to disseminate its threats against the Nigerian state. The exploits of the group against Nigeria in the CZs as well as its administration of the localities under its control were posted online. All these efforts were geared towards the delegitimization of the authority of the State in what amounts to acts of psychological warfare.

During the *compound warfare phase*, the opposing forces deployed asymmetric and conventional tactics and strategies simultaneously in the CZs. In some cases, there were even instances of role reversal with the military taking up the guise of the insurgents and the insurgents doing vice-versa. Nigeria established a special Counter Terrorism Squad (CTS) the aim of which was to go into Boko Haram territory in the CZs and complement the efforts of the military forces.[88] Militants from Boko Haram in turn sometimes posed as regular Nigerian forces in order to make it easier for them to launch surprise attacks on the villages in the CZs. This was what happened when Boko Haram attacked Gwoza Local Government Area in Borno state in 2014.[89] Moreover, Boko Haram adopted a conventional military mode to confront the Nigerian forces during this phase. A prime example was the attack on Baga military barrack in January 2015. A video released by Boko Haram of the confrontation shows how it attacked the military barrack frontally, using vehicle-mounted machine guns and lots of AK-47-wielding infantry foot soldiers. This is not unlike how a regular army would attack its opponent's base in a conventional war. On the Nigerian government's side, the CJTF played crucial roles during this phase of the war. It acted as the unofficial intelligence-gathering unit of the SMJTF and, in many instances, acted also as the first line of defense against the insurgents.[90] In March 2014, the SMJTF was able to foil a bomb attack on an Internally Displaced Persons' camp in Maiduguri due to the timely intelligence provided by the CJTF. On several occasions the involvement of the CJTF in actual combat operations was decisive to defeating Boko Haram attacks in the CZs.[91] Thus, the simultaneous and synchronous use of conventional (JTF) and unconventional (CJTF) forces and the use of conventional and unconventional tactics qualify the situation as being one of *compound warfare*.

Conclusion

To bring any major armed conflict to an end, it is important to understand the nature of the war. The South African mercenaries were effective against Boko Haram because they had a better understanding of the nature of the war in northern Nigeria. Hence, their adoption of the tactic known as 'relentless pursuit'. Nigeria has variously referred to the conflict with Boko Haram as a terrorist campaign, a religious war and an insurgency. In line with this reasoning, the government had tried various strategies which did not fit the kind of warfare being fought by Boko Haram. The army's own approach had failed to quell the activities of Boko Haram, partly for lack of fighting motivation of the soldiers, partly due to the corruption and incompetence

of their superiors and partly – as has been argued above – because the government misread the nature of the war.

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II. Interview

In Conversation with Morten Storm:
A Double Agent's Journey into the Global Jihad

Interviewed by Stefano Bonino

This interview with former double agent Morten Storm can serve as a unique case study for academics and security practitioners wishing to understand the turbulent path that led a young Danish man to turn into a Muslim, later on embrace violent jihad, and ultimately work for four different Western intelligence agencies in the War on Terror. The interview identifies the struggles of a man in search of identity and belonging. It provides unique insights into the world of violent jihad and offers an understanding of the key role played by double agents in disrupting international terrorist networks. The interview further highlights the operational challenges inherent in cooperating with different Western intelligence agencies and the personal challenges underpinning undercover operations.

About Morten Storm

Morten Storm was born in Korsør, Denmark, on 2 January 1976. He was raised in a turbulent family and quickly became immersed in the criminal world: drugs, armed robberies and prisons were a daily reality for the young Dane. A member of the *Bandidos* motorcycle gang at 19, two years later he converted to Islam in a Danish prison, moved to England and then traveled to Yemen, where he learnt Arabic and was drawn into jihadism. Between 1997 and 2006 Storm divided his time between Denmark, England and Yemen and befriended some of the most senior leaders of al-Qaeda (such as Nasir al-Wuhayshi and Anwar al-Awlaki), the radical preacher Omar Bakri Mohammed, 9/11 terrorist Zacarias Moussaoui, the 'Shoe Bomber' Richard Reid and many other violent jihadists. A sudden change of heart led Storm to privately abandon Islam in 2007. Yet, publicly, he maintained his jihadi persona while working on joint missions for Danish, British and American intelligence agencies: the Politiets Efterretningstjeneste (PET); the Security Service (MI5) and the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6); and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Storm travelled the world, gathering information on al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab and other terrorist groups and helped Western authorities prevent several murderous attacks. Storm's most important task involved helping the CIA track and assassinate his friend Anwar al-Awlaki. After securing a $250,000 reward for setting up al-Awlaki with a Croatian wife but failing to lead the CIA to al-Awlaki, in 2011, Storm went on his last mission, worth a $5 million reward. Storm was to help the CIA track al-Awlaki by arranging meetings with al-Awlaki's couriers. Al-Awlaki was eventually killed on 30 September that year but the $5 million reward never materialized. Storm claims that it was his intelligence that led to the death of al-Awlaki. In October 2012 he went public with his story in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*. In 2014 the International Spy Museum in Washington opened an exhibit on Morten Storm. Today, Storm is hiding in fear for his life.

Stefano Bonino (SB): Can you tell me a bit about your story in terms of your path from being a member of the 'Bandidos' to converting to Islam?

Morten Storm (MS): I grew up with no dad and always felt frustrated and angry. In my teens, I took up boxing, took drugs and started committing armed robberies for the adrenaline. In 1995, at 19, I joined the *Bandidos* in Denmark. In 1997, I was the president of the *Bandidos* in Korsør and Slagelse: I ended up in jail for six months for assault. I was rearrested while on remand for armed robbery but the charges were dropped. I decided that I wanted to become a better person so I left the biker gang and went to Milton

Keynes in England. I became a Muslim. At that point, in 1997, I was someone who did not have an identity, who did not have a higher purpose in life. What attracted me to Islam in the first place was the need to belong to something, as I did not have a good family. The turning point for me was reading a book on the life of the Prophet Mohammed that I found in the library in Milton Keynes. It made so much more sense than Christianity because God was not portrayed as a human and there was no Trinity. It was the monotheistic concept behind Islam that attracted me. For the first six months after I converted to Islam, I was so happy. Finally, I had a purpose in life. Praying everyday made me feel like I was forgiven for my sins. There was a family there for me: I belonged to a global community of 1.6 billion Muslims. They make you feel that you are one of them: the Pakistani community was a bit reserved but the Arabs and the Somalis were much more open. But if I had to say what motivated me to convert the most, I would say that, in the beginning, it was the 'social' aspect of Islam. Islam is a complete way of life. Everything is decided for you. When you use the toilet, you need to use it in a certain way. When you eat and drink, you need to do it in a certain way. When you have sex with your wife, you have it in a certain way. So everything is totally decided for you. A Muslim aims to do everything that the Prophet Mohammed did in his life and to emulate him. You have to imitate him. Later on, my motivation to be a Muslim changed when religion and faith took over the social aspect.

SB: And then what happened?

MS: During my time in England, I started attending Regent's Park Mosque. At the time I was not yet a fundamentalist Muslim, but Regent's Park Mosque was one of the reasons that turned me into one. The mosque is partly funded by Saudi Arabia and they follow Salafism or an orthodox form of Islam that adheres to the Hanbali school of thought. In North Africa there are the Maliki; in Asia there are the Hanafi; in Yemen there are the Shafi. They are all different schools of thought but they are all fundamentalist. A Saudi imam working at Regent's Park Mosque suggested that I should go to Yemen to study Islam. At that time, I was still quite ignorant about Islam: all what I knew was that there was a difference between Sunni and Shia Muslims! I accepted the offer and off I went to Yemen to study Islam in Dammaj. I quickly realized that there was more to Islam: it is based upon both the Koran and the Hadith. The Hadith explains how to understand the Koran. So I studied the six books of the Hadith. I became a fundamentalist: I started doing everything in life following the Koran and the Hadith. For me they were based on evidence rather than worship. I also learnt that a Muslim cannot like disbelievers even if they are his own parents. That is what I read and what I studied with others in Yemen. I learnt that the highest goal of Islam is to love for the sake of Allah and to hate for the sake of Allah. Everything that you do in your beliefs must be pure. Faith – or *iman* – must be manifested in your speeches and actions, not only in your heart. Once you are in there, it is so easy to become a fundamentalist. You become like a robot with no emotions. It is very easy especially if your previous life lacked a daily routine: Islam will make it for you. That is fundamentalist Islam. The two authentic books of the Hadith are followed by most of Muslims. After four months in Dammaj, I went to Sana'a where I met several Yemenis who had trained with al-Qaeda militants in Afghanistan. I also met one of Osama bin Laden's couriers. So I really started to know al-Qaeda members. In 1998, I moved back to Milton Keynes and attended hard-core mosques across London: I met Zacarias Moussaoui and Richard Reid, for example. Later, I started preaching to non-Muslims (*da'wah*). I used to preach in street corners, such as Oxford Street in London. I always used the argument that the Koran had never changed and had been protected against all contradictions while the Bible contradicts itself in many places and had been changed. That was my basic argument and I converted many people. For me, reading the Koran literally encouraged hatred, discrimination, intolerance and incitement to violence. I returned to Yemen in January 2001 to study in Sana'a and just a few months before 9/11 I received an invitation from Osama bin Laden to join him up in the training camps in Afghanistan. I did not go to Afghanistan but later in 2002, I named my son Osama in honor of bin Laden: he was someone who dared to challenge America. I understood before 9/11 that violent

jihad is part of Islam: it is the highest action you can perform. There is nothing compared to jihad in Islam. I knew that jihad was part of Islam but it was really after 9/11 that two camps emerged: Muslims became split between those who were practicing and those who were non-practicing. In Yemen, people were cheering for the attacks on America. Later, I raised money and recruited people to fight for the Taliban during the war in Afghanistan. In 2002, after my son was born, I returned to Denmark and then I moved to Luton with my family and started mixing up with followers of Abu Hamza, Abu Qatada and Omar Bakri Mohammed. So, for example, I burnt the American flag outside the American Embassy in London in 2005. I celebrated the bombings on London in 2005, although I was not too convinced about the killings of civilians. Then I met Anwar al-Awlaki in Yemen in 2006. He was very different from the preachers in England. He convinced me to join the real jihad.

SB: Surely you must have seen a difference between the non-violent fundamentalists and the violent ones?

MS: We called the non-violent fundamentalists 'Saudi Salafis' because they were not 'real' Salafis. In 2005, I even wrote a book titled 'Exposing the Fake Salafis.' We made an e-book and distributed it all over. These 'fake' Salafis would quote the Hadith but not the full meaning of it. They would never speak about jihad. We considered the Saudi Salafis who opposed jihad to be hypocrites because they only wanted to believe some parts of the Koran. The 'real' Salafis and the jihadists would accept the Koran in full. But I definitely saw people from rich Saudi families who wanted to blow themselves up. They could not wait. They were seeking martyrdom. This is different from Japanese kamikazes or the Tamil Tigers who did it for nationalistic reasons. Jihadists do it for religious reasons.

SB: How were violent jihadists recruited?

MS: Initially, in the 1990s, jihad was mostly confined to Chechnya and there were training camps in Afghanistan. The big jihad had not started yet. People got recruited via books and imams, and especially via contacts, such as people who were linked to Osama bin Laden and to Afghanistan and to the mujahidin. These were people like Zacarias Moussaoui, Richard Reid and other people whom I befriended at the mosque. They were like-minded people who were fundamentalist and accepted violent jihad as part of Islam. You just met them in the mosque and had a few debates, a few talks. Then you wake up and realize that the Saudi Salafis only gave you half of the story. You have the full meaning of the Koran and the Hadith. All of the beheadings and all of the success stories of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Fallujah and other places were an incredible boost. Early on, we were a bit discouraged when the Taliban were pushed out of Kabul to the mountains. It felt as a defeat but now you look back and they are still fighting. It was just a tactical move. So many years later, it was a proof to the believers that the prophecy would be fulfilled and that an Islamic State would happen. Anwar al-Awlaki used to lecture about the fact that jihad in Syria would be revived and come back to life. At that time, in 2006, it was impossible to think that there would be an Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. Sure, in Iraq there was Abu Musab al-Zarqawi but in Syria Bashar al-Assad was too strong. But it happened. In 2006, al-Awlaki was saying it would happen and indeed it happened.

SB: Did the violent jihadists that you met have direct links with established terrorist groups?

MS: You do not necessarily need to have a direct link with a terrorist group to act. You only need to be motivated. Some of the people whom I knew would follow Abu Hamza al-Masri or Abu Qatada. Others would follow Somali imams. Others would go to the Saudi Salafis. But in a defensive jihad, you do not need an *emir*. That is one of the rules of jihad. You do not need to ask permission from a leader, from parents or from anyone. You can go and fight jihad. Some of the people whom I met never said anything. Taimur Abdulwahab al-Abdaly, an Iraqi Swedish man whom I knew in Luton later went to Sweden and blew himself

up. We used to study the Koran together during lessons and he was actually against jihad and al-Qaeda. I used to look down on him because I felt that he was a hypocrite. Then a few years later, he blew himself up. This was a time when so much literature was available that people were not excused by those like me for being ignorant: they could easily self-radicalize.

SB: How did al-Qaeda operate when you were involved in it?

MS: Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula was fairly hierarchical. You had an *emir* at the top. When I pleaded allegiance to al-Qaeda, I did it to Nasir al-Wuhayshi, the leader of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. There is a hierarchy. In European groups, if there were three people, an *emir* had to be appointed. These were trusted people who spoke and acted on behalf of al-Qaeda. It was a connected network. The main goal of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula was to eventually establish a Caliphate worldwide. Anwar al-Awlaki used a Hadith that talks about the 'army' of Yemen, which would rise, enter Rome and build an Islamic State. Al-Awlaki used to say that we were in a defensive jihad and we had to fight by any means necessary. There was no 'contract of peace' in place and any such contract between the Muslim world and the West would be invalid anyway. Muslim leaders who had made agreements with the West were considered to be traitors as they had no authority over Muslims. The goal was also to weaken the economy of the Western world: for example, the attacks on London in 2005 cost a fortune to the British government. For many of us, taking welfare benefits from the British government was also part of jihad because it weakened its financial system. We were also encouraged to take money from the disbelievers. Breeding and outnumbering the disbelievers was part of a strategy and a long-term project too. For us, it was about having a foot in the country, expanding mosques, converting people to Islam and one day eventually Islam would spread like a cancer and take over the country.

SB: How much talk was going on about Western military involvement in Muslim countries during your time spent in Yemen?

MS: Jihad came up because of Western involvement in Muslim lands. Verses of the Koran were recited when Afghanistan and Iraq were being invaded. The Koran orders a reaction to invasion. Most of the *khutbah* or Friday prayers mentioned Israel or the American invasion of Iraq. They also discussed the atrocities of women and children being killed. Then there were the scandals of Abu Ghraib, people being randomly killed and so on. Islam would be used to justify the fact that those deaths warranted jihad. That is where religion says that it is an obligatory duty to fight jihad and protect Muslim lands from transgressors. The Prophet Mohammed promised punishment for those who do not go forward. It is in the Koran. For these people, it is a matter of being rewarded in the hereafter. The justification is that if you attack a Muslim country, you attack Islam.

SB: Going back to your own conversion to Islam and your path to fundamentalism, why did you decide to disengage and leave Islam in the end?

MS: I had a big problem with Islam: the idea of preordained divine destiny was always nagging me throughout. It was one of the reasons that made me question Islam in the end. At that time, in 2006, I also wanted to join jihad in Somalia. President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed had just been overthrown and sharia law was being implemented. Somalia was to become the first real Islamic state and so it was the duty of every Muslim to support the cause. Jihad is the noblest cause and Muslims would be punished for not taking part. Many Danish and American friends had gone there to fight. So, I gathered military supplies in Denmark and said goodbye to my children. But just a couple of days before departing, they called me from Somalia saying that they lost the airport in Mogadishu to Ethiopian troops and I could not go any longer because it was too

dangerous. I was so angry and I thought 'why would Allah stop me?' I felt so betrayed: the incident made me seriously question Islam. It made me question the religion. I googled 'contradictions in the Koran' and, to my surprise, I found hundreds of them. What shocked me even more is that the Koran had been changed and had been corrupted from its origins. I lost all faith in Islam immediately.

SB: But you did not just leave Islam. You switched sides and ended up working for four different Western intelligence agencies. Why did you do that?

MS: I switched sides because I left Islam. I had been approached by intelligence agencies several times and refused their offers. Chapter 5, verse 51 of the Koran says: 'O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are allies in one another.' There are many other verses in the Koran that tell Muslims not to cooperate with non-Muslims. But, I understood how much hatred and intolerance were in Islam. Jihadists would have killed me if they had known that I was no longer a Muslim. But for me, it became a duty as a human being to fight the jihadi ideology so I contacted the Danish intelligence. They had already tried to recruit me. I called the same phone number and we arranged a meeting. I told them that I was no longer a Muslim. I told them that I wanted to eat some bacon and drink a beer—they could not believe it!

SB: Was money a factor in your decision to work for intelligence agencies?

MS: Money was not my motivation. Many spies who work for intelligence agencies do it for the money. My drive was to see change and do something good. At the beginning, the pay was about $1,500 a month, about 10,000 Danish Koruna. I used a company called Storm Building Construction as a cover for the income. The payments that I received barely did more than cover my bills but I never complained: I knew that I was doing the right thing. Knowing that I was making a difference was my real reward.

SB: And what exactly was your role?

MS: I believe that my role was both (1) collecting and passing information and (2) disrupting terrorist groups. We prevented terrorism, we prevented people from travelling to Denmark, we prevented shooters from spraying bullets like recently in France, we stopped a plot in the United Kingdom. We had information on the plans of both al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula because I was a facilitator in Somalia and Yemen. We knew what they were planning and we had an idea of what they would do next. But I was also an analyst for the intelligence agencies. When I was not abroad, I would sit with experts from intelligence agencies and teach them the ideology and methodology of the different groups, such as the difference between the Taliban and al-Qaeda. You need to understand that the Taliban follow the Hanafi school of thought, while al-Qaeda follows the Hanbali school of thought. Rules for jihad are different between different schools of thought.

SB: But how did you see your role in the grander scheme of things? Did you think that you were playing a central role in the operations in which you were involved?

MS: When your intelligence reaches President Obama, you know that you are reaching high levels. Several people whom I knew in Somalia, Kenya and other places in Africa were terrorist leaders. Especially after 2009, when we took out Saleh Ali Nabhan, the one who was behind the terrorist attacks on the American Embassy in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998, I understood that I had significant power to change things and take revenge for people who had been hurt. So I felt that my work was reaching very high levels. I never returned home without information. It was from my mobile phone and my house that I linked al-Shabaab with Anwar al-Awlaki. This is written in the history books now. Without my knowledge about how these people think, we would not have been able to predict things. When you have to make people in Somalia or

al-Awlaki speak, you have to manipulate them. And you can only do that if you know their mentality and what they believe in. I studied Islam and I knew what motivated and drove these people. It all depends on what you want them to do. I would argue with al-Awlaki in our email communications. I would call some people disbelievers while he would call them believers. It was challenging because I could have fallen out with him but I needed to do it to show that I had my own opinions. The CIA said that I could not do it but my way turned out to be much better. The CIA and most intelligence agencies do not have real knowledge. You only have real knowledge when you live with these people and are part of the group.

SB: How easy was it to penetrate al-Qaeda's highest command?

MS: For me, it was relatively easy because I was already trusted and tested. The weird thing is that I had done things and managed to bump into people whom I later discovered were quite high-ranking. I had met the mujahidin in 1998 much before I met Anwar al-Awlaki through mutual friends in Yemen in 2006. I already had my name out there and never had to prove anything. That was one of my benefits. I never had to change myself. As an agent I later pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda. I was playing a game. They knew that I had conditions. For example, I had difficulties with killing civilians and that is when Nasir al-Wuhayshi told me that if he were given a choice between civilians or military targets, he would choose military targets. Infiltrating an intelligence officer is much more problematic than using insiders because he would be tested. In Western countries we can use human intelligence and train agents to infiltrate terrorist cells. But, for an intelligence officer to infiltrate terrorist groups abroad, there would be some tests: being sent to the frontline, killing people and so on. It is very dangerous for an outsider to enter a terrorist group and work his way up to the ranks. He needs to participate in terrorist activities. The *Islamic State* is one of the most difficult terrorist groups to penetrate. Once you are out there, you are not allowed to get back. So most agents who travel over there think that they will come back but they will not. A Danish friend of mine, a Muslim convert, who decided to work with Danish intelligence, was killed. He was sent to the frontlines, to the worst places, where it is most likely that you get killed. That is a way to test if you are a true believer. You can certainly train people in the West to infiltrate the *Islamic State* but, if you want to really protect minorities in the Middle East, military intervention, not espionage, is the only real solution.

SB: What other tactics do you think that work well in the field?

MS: Female spies are very useful because they can speak to the female members of a terrorist network. This gives you a complete understanding of any person that you want to target. So, for example, a female spy talking to Anwar al-Awlaki's wife would be able to offer a picture that complemented my own assessment of him. It enriched my understanding of the man. Intelligence agencies rarely have both angles of the personality of a key terrorist. Also, foot soldiers are never told the plans before they are ready. A facilitator – the role I played – is in a better position to get information. Leaders need to see a benefit in you as a facilitator and, unless they can do that, they will not speak to you about anything. But once they ask you for something, you can find out what their plans are. When al-Awlaki asked me to bring some hexamine tablets, we knew that these were to make detonators.

SB: How did you end up targeting Anwar al-Awlaki?

MS: In the beginning the task with Anwar al-Awlaki was just to collect information. In fact, the CIA were not interested in him. Later, they realized how dangerous al-Awlaki was and that my predictions were accurate and my work useful. I predicted a jihadi uprising in Lebanon. I helped to identify terror suspects in Denmark. I delivered a bugged blackberry to Saleh Ali Nabhan [*an al-Qaeda operative wanted for his suspected role in the 1998 US Embassy bombing in Nairobi*] who would be killed three months later. The

mission moved from collecting information to taking al-Awlaki out. The CIA sent me to meet up with him in Yemen in October 2008, a month after the attack on the American Embassy in Yemen. I had to bring him a laptop, solar panels and a night-vision goggle that he requested: some were planted with spy software. I also gave him $5,000 cash from the CIA. Al-Awlaki asked me whether he could buy guns with the money and I said 'yes.' My Danish handlers later told me that I had been tested and passed the test. Refusing him to use the money to buy guns would have been an indication that the money was from an intelligence agency: terrorists know that intelligence agencies cannot pay for weapons. I stayed in touch with him by email. We shared an email account where we would save messages as draft to be read but not sent so as to avoid intelligence agencies reading them. When I met him back in 2009, he was more concerned about security. He would not use electronic tools, such as the Internet or mobile phones. He asked me to use encrypted message software called 'Mojahedeen Secrets' which was used by al-Qaeda members around the world. On another stay in Yemen in 2011 there were two couriers involved in passing messages to him: al-Awlaki trusted them but they were low rank and expendable.

SB: That is very interesting. How much operational independence did you have in the field?

MS: British intelligence, for example, had to tick boxes. They would tell me 'when you go to Yemen you have to do A, B and C.' They wanted to tell *me* what to do in Yemen! I would fold their paper and throw it away. I would do the exact opposite. They would tell me 'when you go out of the airport, turn right.' I would turn left and that would generate the best intelligence. I was acting totally independently. I improvised. I designed, planned and executed the missions. More or less I did whatever I wanted to. At the beginning the Danes just gave me two plastic bags with mobile phones saying 'here are your mobile phones.' I knew nothing about mobile phones – I could hardly use a laptop. I had to pretend to sell drugs and had to make a fake drugs sale in front of some of my mates to show my source of income. But it was myself improvising it. All what I had from the intelligence agencies was approval and funding. I could do anything I liked. Sometimes there were goals in terms of collecting certain information or meeting an operative, and I always did it and came back with more. Not only would I come back confirming that two people were connected but I could tell the whole story. I could also train and recruit people. I trained a former British Royal Marines reserve and made him become a Muslim. He wanted to make a difference. Initially, I did not tell him who I was. I asked him 'are you sure that you want to make a change?' He said 'yes.' I checked his mentality and I thought that he could definitely be used in the War on Terror. I suggested that he infiltrated groups and became a useful person for the intelligence agencies. So, I spent my own money to train him. There was no authorization. It was all my own initiative and, in fact, the Brits stopped it in the end.

SB: What other operational liberties did you have?

MS: If I was in Yemen and I was asked to execute a prisoner to prove my loyalty, I was given permission by British intelligence to do it. I was also trained in weapon handling by the Danish Special Taskforce. I was not trained to shoot al-Qaeda members but government soldiers. The only reason you have to refrain from shooting is if you face American soldiers. But I could shoot Yemeni soldiers even if they were fighting the same exact war against al-Qaeda. If I did kill an American Muslim, I needed to do a so-called 'elevator meeting', where I had to disclose the killing but I would not be prosecuted. I had in these respects a license to kill but I was not there to actively kill people.

SB: And did you encounter any particular operational challenge?

MS: A main challenge was traveling through checkpoints. I had to negotiate at each checkpoint. I am not talking about bribes but I had to argue. My wife would be with me so we would say that we had to visit her

family. I had travelled illegally through Yemen and in outlawed areas before meeting my wife. But it was easier with her. Also, when I arrived to a Muslim country and had to wear Middle Eastern clothes it was very weird. So stepping in and out of character was quite difficult. On the airplane on my way from the UK to Yemen, I would listen to Metallica to wind myself up. But as soon as I arrived in Yemen, that music would be off and I would step into the character. Sometimes, I had three or four characters in one single day: being Murad; being a dad to my kids, so not influencing them in an Islamic way; being a bushcraft instructor; and, then, being a husband. It was like trying to find out who I was. Sometimes it was really difficult. The easiest of all of the four identities was being a Muslim because that is what I had been for ten years. It was the easiest side of me but, at the same time, it was an act because I did not believe in it any more. In fact, it was just a memory. It was hypocritical when I said *Inshallah, Alhamdulillah* or *Subhan Allah*, which have a religious meaning and purpose. I also had to pray. Imagine when I had to pray with other guys. I just did not believe in it at all in my heart. I did the movements and totally acted. But I think that I did very well in maintaining cover. You need to maintain a certain interest in these people or they will know that you are a spy. Often spies make a mistake because they are not fully integrated in the beliefs of these people. I could argue with al-Qaeda members but I would do it in a religiously sound way that would be justified and would give me some space.

SB: Did you face any particular personal challenge as a double agent?

MS: My real difficulty was to find who I was in my private life. I had to live with that emptiness of never believing in myself. I had different personalities and different names: Morten Storm, Murad Storm, Abu Osama, Abu Mujahid, Polar Bear, Dalmar and so on. It is a crazy lifestyle. It was very difficult in the beginning but now I am totally comfortable. Things have settled. But at that time, from going to believe that there is certainty in your life the day after, to afterwards not believing it, it was very empty. The double life was very difficult and very stressful. Especially after terrorist groups started launching attacks in the West, it was very difficult to realize that you are responsible for another human life. I am proud of what I did but I do not feel happy about people being killed. You ask yourself the question: is there anything I could have done to prevent the attacks? I could only speak with one psychiatrist from MI5 but he did not really do much for me. I started using cocaine to numb the reality of my life and I developed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Instead of getting higher, I would get low on cocaine, otherwise my brain would overdrive. It was self-medicating. Every time that I drove my kids back to their mother, I did not know whether I would see them again. If I had died, they would have thought that I was a terrorist. These are some of the things that continue to haunt me today. You are an agent but you receive no recognition or respect in the end.

SB: Did you ever tell anyone that you were working as a double agent?

MS: I told my mother, two of my best friends and two friends from my outdoor company to whom I paid a salary every month with my own money. My mother believed it but my friends thought that it was a lie. I wanted them to know that I was no longer Murad and I was Morten. But they were non-Muslim because I would never trust Muslims, even if they were non-practicing. I could not afford to 'gamble' with Muslims. I introduced one friend to my radical network in Denmark and they thought that he was just a guy who was working for me. I asked him to mention that the outdoor company was going really well and he did it.

SB: Who else knew about your undercover work?

MS: The only other people who knew about me were my handlers and the chiefs of intelligence plus some IT experts from the CIA whom I met in Copenhagen. Also, a few people within IT in the British intelligence knew me because they wanted to teach me some things with the laptop: for example, how to hide information

so that it could not be found unless you know how to do it. A few instructors in the Danish military intelligence also knew who I was although they did not know the details of my mission. But they are clever because you do not exist: on the receipts my name was 'Ali G.' and people in the system would not know who I was. If I were killed in the field, they would have no reference.

SB: How did you actually manage to work with four different intelligence agencies at the same time?

MS: I did not have loyalty to any intelligence agency or country. I am a free-thinking human being and I myself judge what is right and wrong. For this reason, intelligence agencies understood that I was a loose cannon. They understood that I would not be loyal. As much as they were using me to gather information, I was using them to combat evil: I could not do it all on my own. But I was not there to dance to the music. I was there to deliver sound information and make serious change.

SB: But how could they trust you?

MS: The security services never had any doubt. I never lied to them because we would end up in a situation where we lacked trust. I was so honest that, if I made a mistake, I would correct myself. I genuinely believed that this was my call. But after calling the Americans 'terrorists' during a meeting with CIA and MI6 in Copenhagen because of a strike that had killed civilians, the Americans asked the Danes whether I was at risk of reverting to Islam again. I was just honest about my opinions and I did not want to be a hypocrite. But during almost six years of work with intelligence agencies, they became like a family. I constantly had three handlers from Danish intelligence and two handlers from British intelligence. I could call them round the clock to speak with those to whom I wanted to speak. The Americans were never directly in contact unless we were meeting up in Denmark or in the UK.

SB: Did the four intelligence agencies have different priorities?

MS: There were differences in how to proceed and how to achieve the goals. The Americans are cowboys, if I can say so. I really mean it. They think that they can buy your loyalty with money. They have no knowledge about the things that they do. Their interest is to get people killed and to buy loyalties. Once they have what they want from you, they drop you out. The methods of reaching those goals would even include sending people into danger. The Brits are more calculating and patient. It is much more about gathering information, analyzing and preventing. The Danes were a joke. They were just there to party. They feel important about sitting at the important tables but they were just there to serve coffee during meetings with the CIA and the Brits.

SB: But did they operate differently?

MS: Well, when the Brits pulled out of the mission with Aminah [*details below*] and Anwar, the Danes told me that I should go with the Americans. 'Forget the Brits, it is more fun with the Americans', they said. These intelligence agencies used to bad mouth each other the whole time. The Brits hated the Americans. The Danes looked down on the Brits because they are too formal and too bureaucratic while they [*the Danes*] were more freestyle. The Americans were into money and it was more like an action movie. But these intelligence agencies do not trust each other. It was difficult for me because I really liked the Brits more than the others. They never broke one promise. They would never promise something that they could not fulfill and they would never say 'yes' unless they meant it. They were interested in me getting a career out of it unlike the other agencies that just wanted to use me and considered me disposable. I chose the Americans because of the Danish government and because of the opportunities of an adventurous experience. If I had chosen the Brits, I would probably still be working for them. They spent money to train me. They never

trained me with weapons, which the Danes did. But the Brits trained me in roleplaying, which was more useful. But there were some operational differences. It was a big experience to see the difference between the various intelligence agencies. Certain things were not allowed by the Brits but were allowed by the Danes because they worked with the Americans. So, I had to go to Denmark to do this kind of things. For example, once the Brits gave me a laptop to provide to a terrorist so that information could be extracted, but when I arrived in Denmark the Danes took the laptop away and gave me an American laptop. They were almost working against one another.

SB: Was there any aspect that you particularly enjoyed about your work?

MS: The good parts were going back and giving information, seeing the enjoyment and surprise on the faces of my handlers, how they got excited because they could see that we were getting higher and higher. But I also liked the excitement of travelling to different countries. I also found it amusing when low-ranking counter-terrorism officers at airports stopped me: I used to play around with them. They would not know who I was. Once, I was returning from Yemen and they tried to interrogate me: they wanted to recruit me without knowing that I had already been recruited. I sat in an interrogation room where they were telling me that Islam is a peaceful religion and I told them 'no, you are absolutely wrong!' They were very surprised and then they asked me to help. I responded 'no' [laughs]. The government never told these lower-ranking people that I was working for them because they were scared that the information could spread. The funding is also unlimited. If I wanted to justify going to Kenya or to Thailand or to Indonesia, they would just fund it without questioning. To see the Americans and the Brits fight over me, flatter me, try to buy me with trips to the ice hotel in Iceland, just to see how desperate they were to have me on their team – that was very empowering.

SB: Did you ever have any doubt about your covert work?

MS: I was never in doubt about my covert work, but I had two issues. I had to lie to people whom I used to call friends and I worked to have them killed. About thirty people were killed. You do not arrest these people. It was difficult for me because I understood why they did those things. I understood their motivations. They believed those were the right things to do. When you are on their side you know how generous they are. They would give their lives to protect you. It hurts a lot to betray them. The other difficult thing for me was to work with the government and the police. I come from a background where we would never speak with the police but deal ourselves with problems within our own community. In my pre-Muslim life with the *Bandidos,* I never answered police questions. They had tried for six years, but I never ever said a single word to them. I had difficulties in explaining to myself that I was cooperating with Danish authorities.

SB: Did you have many frictions with the intelligence agencies that you were working with?

MS: Sometimes, they were naïve. I set up al-Awlaki with a third wife, a Croatian Muslim convert called Aminah. The CIA's plan was to plant a tracking device in her luggage so that it would lead them to al-Awlaki in Yemen. When I had to meet Aminah in Vienna, the Americans had set me up with all surveillance ready into a pub. They had no clue. She is a Muslim and the CIA asked me to meet up with her in a pub. I changed the plan and took her to a McDonald's instead. The CIA were really angry and thought that I went rogue. But in the end, it went well and we took her to Yemen. I was paid $250,000 from the CIA for that mission. I spent half of the money setting up my covert outdoors company, Storm Bushcraft. I wanted to run something in Kenya and similar places where I could still be semi-involved but not 'full-time.' Perhaps we could have prevented the Westgate attack because my contact there – Ikrimah [*a top al-Shabaab commander whose real*

name is believed to be Abdukadir Mohamed Abdukadir] – was later involved in it. I used the rest of the money to buy cocaine because I could not deal with the stress.

SB: *How did your relationship with intelligence agencies deteriorate in the end?*

MS: The Americans refused to speak with me for six months after Aminah's plan failed. I managed to get her to Yemen, but she was told by al-Qaeda operatives to dump the suitcase before she met with al-Awlaki. So, the CIA did not manage to track al-Awlaki. Six months later, the Danes texted me saying that they had completely lost track of al-Awlaki and the Americans needed my help again. They promised a $5 million reward for eliminating him. But after we took him out, the CIA said that his death was not due to my work. My Danish handler, Klang, sent me a message saying 'I'm so sorry but it wasn't us.' Several days later, I picked up a copy of *The Telegraph*. It said that al-Awlaki was tracked by capturing a low-level errand-runner. The dates, the time-period when he was arrested, and the fact that the courier was a young man all matched with my mission. I was very angry! Danish intelligence offered me £225,000 to keep silent. I was poor and did not know how to survive but I still refused. I remained poor, but at least I kept my dignity. I made up with Danish intelligence a few months ago but then fell out again after they failed to deliver on a promise that they had made.

SB: *What sort of support have you received since leaving the field?*

MS: I receive no personal support or security details. In the summer of 2013, members of the Islamic State shot at pictures of myself and other five Danes in Syria. I cannot move back to Denmark, because it is too difficult. I cannot get a name protection or any protection from the Danish government. You can pay £5 and you get access to protected addresses, so I would be dead within six months if I moved back to Denmark. The UK is much safer, because you do not have to register where you live. I live under different names anyway.

SB: *Morten, thank you very much for this interview.*

About the interviewer: **Stefano Bonino** *is a Lecturer in Criminology at Northumbria University and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.*

Interviewer's Notes

This interview formed part of a Northumbria University approved project entitled 'Disrupting Terrorist Groups: An Agent's Perspective.' The original face-to-face interview was conducted at an undisclosed location in the United Kingdom in November 2015. Parts of the interview were subsequently re-arranged and integrated with publicly available information included in the CNN Special Report '*Double Agent Inside al Qaeda for the CIA*' aired on 16 September 2014 and in the article '*Morten Storm: A Radical Life*' published in The Telegraph on 3 December 2012. Morten Storm confirmed the resulting, edited interview presented here to be an accurate description of his experiences and views in January 2016.

Morten Storm's story has been neither confirmed nor denied by the Politiets Efterretningstjeneste, the Security Service, the Secret Intelligence Service and the Central Intelligence Agency. The interviewer and author of this text, Stefano Bonino, was not in a position to establish contact with any of these intelligence

agencies to verify the claims made in this interview. However, the book *Agent Storm: My Life Inside al Qaeda and the CIA*, which Morten Storm co-authored with Paul Cruickshank and Tim Lister for Atlantic Monthly Press in 2014, provides evidence for several of Storm's claims. Readers wishing to explore some episodes referred to in this interview in more detail are advised to consult the book.

III. Research Note

If Publicity is the Oxygen of Terrorism – Why Do Terrorists Kill Journalists?

by François Lopez

Abstract

This Research Note examines why some terrorist organisations, which depend on the "oxygen of publicity" provided by the news media, would target journalists. Journalists have long been the targets of attacks by terrorist organisations and this Research Note analyses why this has been the case by focusing on two case studies of one 'old' and one 'new' terrorist organisation; ETA and IS respectively. The research is centred around three hypotheses: (i) terrorist groups target journalists for collaborating with 'the enemy'; (ii) terrorist groups target journalists in response to 'negative' portrayal and reporting in the media; and,(iii) new terrorist organisations do not require the 'oxygen of publicity' provided by the news media since they can count on the Internet and social media to serve this purpose. The findings suggest that hypotheses (i) and (ii) can be confirmed while hypothesis (iii) can be partly confirmed. The findings also reveal that the distinction between 'old' and 'new' terrorism can be questioned when examining the rationales of both terrorist organisations for killing journalists.

Keywords: *media; terrorism; journalism; Islamic State (IS); ETA; propaganda.*

Introduction

Speaking in front of representatives of the American Bar Association at the Albert Hall in the UK in July 1985, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher warned that the news media was playing into the hands of terrorists. Attracted by the violence and the atrocities of terrorists attacks, Thatcher claimed, the news media was providing "the oxygen of publicity" on which terrorist organisations depend.[1]

The problematic relationship between journalists and terrorist organisations has been labelled a 'symbiosis' by some academics.[2] On the one hand, terrorist organisations depend on the multiplier effects of the media to spread fear or draw attention to their cause. They follow a 'propaganda by the deed' strategy, which allows relatively small-scale acts of violence to be witnessed by very large audiences.[3] As Walter Laqueur put it, "publicity is all" for the terrorist.[4] On the other hand, the news media also profit from the human drama, individual grief, personal tragedy, and collective panic which terrorism provides and which guarantees mass audiences. The news media thrives on the television-like 'entertainment' and real-life drama provided by terrorist attacks.[5] Terrorist organisation therefore count on the media for publicity, while the news media benefits from terrorist organisations' ability to create fear which can be sold to anxious readers, listeners, and viewers.

Despite the apparent symbiosis between terrorism and journalism, terrorist groups have actively targeted their source of publicity. Attacks on journalists by terrorists have been on the increase in recent years.[6] The following graph, based on research by *Reporters Without Borders*, reveals that 932 journalists were killed between 2002 and the end of 2015.[7]

Journalists Killed Between 2002-2015
According to RWB
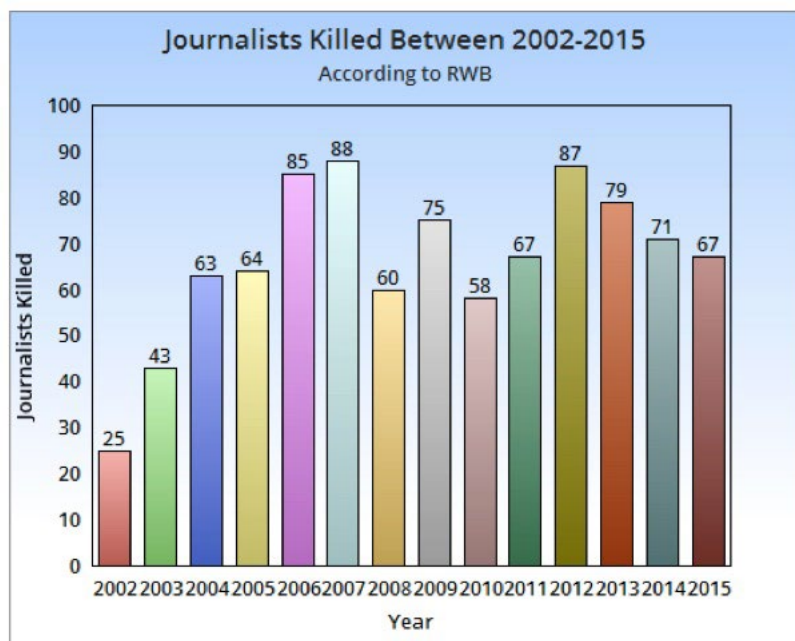
The Global Terrorism Database (GTD) of START at the University of Maryland - which has recorded attacks by terrorist groups from 1970 onwards - demonstrates that attacks on journalists by terrorists are not a new phenomenon.[8]
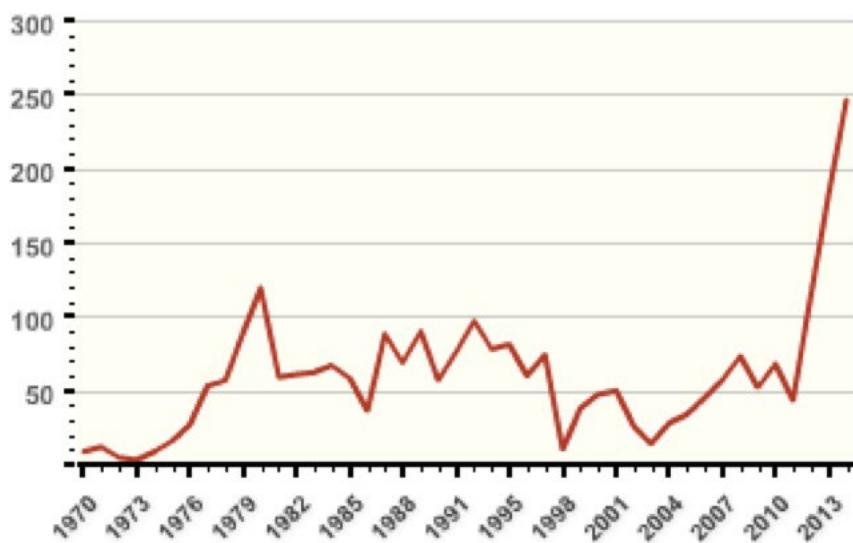
However, the graph also reveals that since 2011 there has been a dramatic increase in the number and frequency of attacks on members of the news media by terrorist organisations. This Research Note summarises the findings of a Master's Thesis which sought to answer the research question: *Why would terrorist organisations, which depend on the "oxygen of publicity" provided by the news media, target journalists?*

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Taking into account the distinction between 'old' and 'new' terrorist organisations [9], the thesis examined one case study of an old terrorist organisation–*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (Basque Homeland and Liberty) or ETA–and a new terrorist organisation–*ad-Dawlah al-Islāmiyah fīl-Irāq wash-Shām*, better known as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria or IS.

Two theories were chosen to guide the research, namely rational choice theory and communication theory. The former suggests that terrorist organisations are rational actors and use terrorism to achieve political ends, aiming to influence the behaviour of governments through their actions.[10] The latter suggests that terrorism is an act of communication aiming to send out a message to a specific audience.[11] By using terrorism as an act of communication, terrorist organisations implement the strategy of 'propaganda by the deed' to attract the news media, which will in turn disseminate their message.[12]

Together, the theories suggest the following:

> Terrorists are rational actors and their actions are strategic;

> Terrorists aim to modify the behaviour of opponents through violence;

> Terrorists want to send out a specific message to a specific audience through violence-generated publicity.

The thesis aimed to answer the research question through document analyses. In the case of ETA, open-source documents such as press releases, statements, and official documents of the organisation were selected. Regarding IS, open-source statements published on social media, the organisation's English-language magazine *Dabiq*, and reports by non-governmental organisations and news media outlets were chosen. Three hypotheses were devised to answer the research question:

> *Hypothesis One*: Terrorist groups target journalists for collaborating with 'the enemy'.

> *Hypothesis Two*: Terrorist groups target journalists in response to 'negative' portrayal and reporting in the media.

> *Hypothesis Three*: New terrorist organisations do not require the 'oxygen of publicity' provided by the news media since they can count on the Internet and social media to serve this purpose.

Findings of the Research

Hypothesis One

The findings revealed that both ETA and IS targeted journalists for collaborating with the enemy. The news media were regularly portrayed by ETA as collaborators of an oppressive Spanish state, and journalists accused of being "traitors" or "accomplices of the oppressors of the Basque Country".[13] The news media was included in what a former ETA leader defined as the Spanish state's apparatus of domination–the government, the education system, the economy, and the mass media.[14] ETA portrayed the news media as "an effective instrument of war against Basque resistance" [15], and accused journalists of being "at the forefront of the Interior Ministry's campaigns (…) to prolong the conflict permanently" and "to impose their Spanish project through force".[16]

IS is convinced that the Western news media and its local "allies" are engaged in a media and "propaganda war" [17], launched by Western journalists representing "media opposition to the Islamic State from the coalition of the cross".[18] It claims that it is facing "a media and military campaign" from the Western world. [19] In October 2015, *Reporters Without Borders* published a report on the "major persecution campaign targeting all types of media workers" by IS in Mosul, revealing that IS was actively arresting and killing journalists for leaking information as well as for "treason and espionage".[20] International Media Support reported that "IS treats all journalists as 'enemies' or potential traitors collaborating with the enemy".[21] Unfortunately, sufficient evidence in IS's English language documents to support this hypothesis was lacking. The author of this Research Note was unable to find additional evidence in English. Research regarding this hypothesis was also limited due to lacking language skills in Arabic. Nevertheless, it appears from the above that there is some evidence to support this hypothesis for IS as well.

Hypothesis Two

The findings based on the study of documents revealed that both ETA and IS target journalists in response to 'negative' portrayal and reporting in the media. Jose Maria Portell was the first journalist to be targeted and killed by ETA, right amidst Spain's transition process from Francoism to democracy. ETA released a statement following his death, stating that J.M. Portell had been "a specialist in intoxication" and charging him of "using his prestigious career, as well as his privileged methods, to discredit, calumniate, and ultimately attack ETA".[22] In 1995, an internal document originating from the *Koordinadora Abertzale Sozialista,* the Socialist Patriotic Coordinator (KAS) [23], entitled '*Txinurriak*' or Basque for 'ants', referred to journalists as '*Txakkuras*' or 'dogs'.[24] In effect, *Txinurriak* was an open suggestive invitation for the assassinations of journalists, blaming the media for hiding "the reality of the suffering in the Basque country at the hands of the State", and for their "constant harassment and destruction of the independence movement".[25]

IS regularly accuses the media of lying about its military operations and of deceiving readers by reporting false information, and it has ordered its fighters to eliminate journalists who "damage the image of the group for the benefit of the Iraqi government".[26] Western media are accused of failing to report IS victories and of exaggerating the strengths of IS's enemies, such as the Peshmerga in Iraq "portrayed by the crusader media as a fierce ground force that can fend off IS (…) yet, they continue to take a beating at the hands of the mujahidin".[27] The terrorist organisation also targets the media for reporting "lies" and "fabrications".[28] Referring to IS's attack on the Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmouk outside Damascus in April 2015, *Dabiq* stated, "following the mujahidin's liberation of Yarmouk, the media jumped on cue and began disseminating lies against the Islamic State [29] (…) Due to the major propaganda war and the deceitful media claims, there was great fear from the Muslims of the Yarmouk camp, as the image conveyed about the Islamic State was that they love killing and slaughter and that they kill people based on suspicions".[30]

There was ample evidence that hypothesis two could be confirmed.

Hypothesis Three

The findings revealed that this hypothesis could partly be confirmed. As an old terrorist organisation, ETA depended on the oxygen of publicity provided by the news media. Robert Clark argues that "considerable evidence" suggests that ETA planned its attacks based on their symbolic and communicative value.[31] As Paul Wilkinson explained, "the terrorists' own organs of propaganda generally have very limited circulation", which does not extend beyond militants and some sympathisers.[32] Consequently, the news media was crucial for ETA, illustrated by the assassination of former Spanish Prime Minister Luis Carrero Blanco in

December 1973, a propaganda coup which allowed ETA to reach "the front pages of mass media around the world".[33] In the aftermath of this attack, ETA released a statement to the media claiming responsibility and through which they "made the world aware of their fight for independence".[34] Furthermore, ETA organised a press conference "to which they had brought a group of blindfolded journalists".[35] The relationship between ETA and the news media was entirely symbiotic, and ETA planned its attacks based on the coverage these would attract locally, nationally, and internationally.

Unlike ETA, however, IS has practiced widespread repression against the news media and has purged territories of news media personnel. The research further suggests that IS can afford to kill journalists due to the Internet and social media. The Internet–cheap, accessible, decentralised, and mostly unregulated [36]–allows IS to spread its message and propaganda on an immediate basis and to report on its own actions.[37] The "unprecedented level of direct control" over the information it communicates "considerably extends their ability to shape how different target audiences perceive them".[38] Whereas old terrorist organisations "had to grasp the attention of the mass media" to successfully attract press coverage, IS can "sidestep these gatekeepers and interact straightforwardly" with its audience.[39]

IS also "demonstrates a masterful understanding of effective propaganda and social media use".[40] The vice-president and director of photography of the Associated Press, Santiago Lyon, argues that "everybody who has access to social media is in effect a publisher now. Everybody who was previously obliged to interact to some degree with the traditional media in order to reach the audiences now has their own path to do that".[41] Unlike the 'one to many' model provided by traditional news media, social media allows 'peer-to-peer' communication, which enables IS to "reach out to their target audiences and virtually knock on their doors".[42]

The terrorist organisation's "highly productive media department" [43], described as "the most potent propaganda machine ever assembled by a terrorist organisation", has been a crucial factor.[44] IS's media branch is structured according to three levels: central media units, provincial information offices, and the broader membership/supporter base of IS.[45] Each level disseminates and promotes "the image of the organisation" [46] and shares large amounts of online material "that fit the narrative that the group wishes to convey".[47] Moreover, IS's supporter base–the "media mujahideen" [48]–recycles and disseminates content created by IS's central media units, in turn expanding IS's audience exponentially.[49] IS greatly takes advantage of and benefits from its network of online supporters, which "is larger than anything that has been seen before" from a non-state terrorist organisation.[50]

IS has been "more strategic online, demonstrates greater social media sophistication, and operates in cyberspace on a larger scale and intensity than previous terrorist groups".[51] It is mainly through its supporter base that IS swarm-casts its propaganda and can share its message with the greatest audience.[52] The "swarm" of IS accounts on Twitter can be simply reconfigured when accounts are deleted by administrators, allowing IS to maintain its resilient online presence.[53] Gabriel Weimann further revealed that IS has made use of 'narrowcasting'–the antonym of 'broadcasting', which consists of targeting the broadest possible audience with one distinctive message to all–on social media.[54] Narrowcasting enables IS to "slice the target audiences into small subpopulations" based on criteria such as demographics, gender, age, or education, and suggests that IS can tailor specific messages to distinct audiences, making different appeals to different sub-populations.[55]

Despite the means provided by the Internet and social media, the news media has not become completely redundant for IS. The terrorist organisation still needs the traditional news media in several ways.

Firstly, the terrorist organisation is exploiting local journalists in Syria and Iraq by forcing them to produce prescribed content.[56] Journalists who have refused to join IS have been executed.[57] Aside from exploiting local journalists, IS has made use of captured freelance British journalist John Cantlie, who has been held hostage since November 2012. Articles purportedly written by Cantlie were published in *Dabiq*, criticising Western governments [58], and describing IS's "rapid consolidation and shrewd governance of its territories". [59] Cantlie has also been reporting for IS from cities which the organisation has conquered, describing military advances and life within the Islamic State.[60] Until his disappearance, Cantlie was also used by IS in the 'lend me your ears' series, talking about IS's expansion and seeking to show how Western media "twists and manipulates" the "truth" about life in the Islamic State.[61]

Secondly, IS is able to attract media coverage worldwide by taking and holding foreign journalists hostage, which "increases the drama".[62] Realising that targeting journalists "nearly guarantees media coverage" [63], IS has 'successfully' managed to exploit the news media's thirst for coverage that is "cinematic, emphasising dramatic scenes, stylised transitions and special effects".[64] Regarding the hostage situation involving Japanese journalist Kenji Goto in early 2015, IS set out demands and initiated a 72-hour countdown [65], effectively luring the news media into a trap.[66] IS provided the news media with the images they are hungry for and the news media contributed to sharing IS's message.

Thirdly, IS still orchestrates large-scale attacks to attract the attention of the traditional news media, such as the bomb onboard a Russian passenger plane, or the bomb attacks in a Shia neighbourhood in Beirut in late 2015. The aftermath of both attacks illustrated IS's use of 'propaganda by the deed', reflected in IS statements claiming responsibility for both attacks and publicising its message that it is defending its 'Caliphate' and Sunni Muslims from the aggression of external powers.[67] It should also be emphasised that IS may be strategically claiming responsibility for attacks with which it has no direct connection, seeking additional coverage and publicity in the news media.

Lastly, IS relies on its supporters to create an online "buzz" on social media which the traditional news media will pick up and disseminate its messages further.[68] IS tailors the content of some of its videos–excluding gruesome beheadings–in order to guarantee that the news media will broadcast its videos after picking up the 'buzz'.[69] In this way, the terrorist organisation can be sure that its videos will be shown without much censoring on television by the traditional news media, further maximising the reach of its message.[70] IS may be struggling to publicise its message online as "Western governments have successfully prodded a growing number of social media carriers to make much more serious efforts to weed out and block accounts sympathetic to IS."[71] As a result, thousands of IS-related accounts have been deleted by Twitter while Youtube is now actively removing IS videos from its website.[72] The terrorist organisation has thus turned to the "'dark web', a hard-to-trace part of the Internet largely inaccessible to ordinary web browsers."[73] This suggests that it will continue to use the traditional news media as a source of publicity.

Discussion of Findings

Killing Journalists - Rational and Strategic

Targeting journalists was a strategic choice for ETA for two reasons. Since ETA's hoped-for changes were not implemented and the government refused to negotiate, the terrorist organisation turned to violence. By targeting journalists, ETA was also targeting the Spanish state. Journalists who supported the government and the newly-drafted Constitution became targets of the terrorist organisation. Targeted journalists were

also the victims of a campaign of violence by ETA which had as its objective to force the state into submission by killing large numbers of people.

ETA did not initiate its most violent campaign against the news media before the late 1990s. The arrest of key members of ETA's leadership in 1992 had been a devastating blow to the terrorist organisation [74], forcing it to turn to the strategy of 'socialising the suffering', which included targeting and killing familiar public figures in the Basque Country.[75] Influential journalists were included on ETA's hit-list.

For ETA, targeting journalists was a rational move with strategic benefits. Journalists who openly supported the democratic transition and the Spanish Constitution were seen as opponents of Basque independence and had to be eliminated. Critical voices threatened ETA and its struggle as they undermined ETA's image and legitimacy in the Basque Country. By targeting public figures, ETA sought to force the Spanish government into negotiations and, in turn, to influence the political process. In addition, targeting the news media was effectively "propaganda by the deed" as it sent a message to other journalists that they would be killed for opposing ETA's struggle.

Killing journalists has also been strategic for IS since it portrays itself as a 'state' and as the protector of Sunni Muslims, IS strives to eliminate those who unmask the violence behind the terrorist organisation. Although IS itself shares videos of atrocities on the Internet and social media, notably to attract the attention of the news media, to intimidate its enemies, and to "provoke irrational reactions", the organisation also broadcasts videos and images of life in the Islamic State showing, alternatively, well-stocked markets [76], playing children [77], social justice [78], or healthcare provision.[79] These are essential aspects of IS's propaganda. These stories are rarely broadcast in the Western news media, unlike those about the terrorist organisation's brutality. Journalists are considered legitimate targets for their negative portrayal of the terrorist organisation.

IS also wants to be seen as constantly on a war footing–expanding the borders of its 'Caliphate', as prescribed by its slogan "remaining and expanding".[80] However, Charlie Winter noted that IS "depicts only the successes of its offensives, while almost entirely excluding its defensive operations".[81] Information suggesting defeats is damaging to IS and sources of that kind of information are eliminated. Targeting news media personnel is thus a strategic choice for IS and killing journalists is also an act of "propaganda by the deed". It sends out a message to all the news media that journalists will be killed for any coverage that is damaging to the image of IS.

Old vs. New Terrorism - A Disputable Distinction

The findings above reveal that the rationales of ETA and IS for targeting the news media are very similar. Indeed, both terrorist organisations have:

- targeted the news media for collaborating with the enemy and for negative portrayal;

- released statements which explained their justifications for their attacks on the news media, as well as publicised their struggle;

- made use of the news media for similarly strategic reasons, namely to disseminate their message to a broad audience and as propaganda by the deed; and

- aimed to attract the attention of the news media in order to spread their message.

Consequently, it can be said that there are many similarities in the relationship between the news media and old terrorist organisations, and the relationship between the news media and new terrorist organisations. In this regard, the assumption that there is a distinction between old and new terrorism must be questioned.

The third hypothesis postulated that new terrorist organisations do not need the news media to the same extent as old terrorist organisations do, due to the presences of the Internet and the social media. The traditional news media, however, is holding on to its "marriage of convenience" with terrorists.[82] Indeed, as Brigitte Nacos argues, there has been an "increased availability of the sort of oxygen Mrs. Thatcher warned of".[83] This situation is somewhat paradoxical: new terrorism's reliance on the news media has dwindled, but the news media continues to search for content posted by new terrorist organisations on social media and to broadcast it.

IS's reliance on social media suggests that, for the first time in the history of terrorism, a terrorist organisation is capable of bypassing the gatekeepers of the traditional news media. IS is able to reach the audiences it wants with the message it wants and in the context it chooses. Yet, it has also become apparent that the traditional news media is not satisfied with this development, regularly picking up content posted by IS on social media in order to re-broadcast it. Not only does the traditional news media continue to provide terrorists with publicity but IS regularly and, most importantly, effortlessly manages "to hijack the news system" in the process.[84] One may therefore wonder whether the symbiotic relationship between the news media and terrorism has been changed by the rise of social media and the Internet, into one where the news media needs terrorism more than terrorism needs the news media.

Conclusion

The thesis' findings summarised in this Research Note make clear that ETA and IS share similar rationales for targeting the news media. Both organisations considered that the news media was actively collaborating with their enemies, either in the form of spying or as accomplices of the oppression they faced. Both ETA and IS killed journalists for spreading "lies" and "calumnies" and both targeted the news media for misrepresenting their terrorist organisation, as well as for critical comments or 'false' information regarding their struggle, tactics, or violent campaigns.

These findings suggest that old and new terrorist organisations target journalists for similar reasons, questioning the validity of distinguishing between 'old' and 'new' terrorism. With regards to targeting the news media, such a distinction does not make sense as both ETA and IS used identical rhetoric to justify killing journalists. More research including additional terrorist organisations would need to be conducted to further substantiate these findings and to suggest whether or not the findings can be generalised.

The research summarized here also revealed that the traditional news media has not become completely redundant for IS. Not only does IS exploit local and foreign journalists to work for its media department, but it appears that 'propaganda by the deed' remains a key aspect of IS's strategy. The terrorist organisation still needs the news media to publicise its message and IS still orchestrates attacks or hostage situations to attract the attention of the news media and by providing coverage that can be sold to anxious audiences. IS has not yet completely relinquished its symbiotic relationship with the news media.

The findings call for further research on the changing "symbiotic" relationship between the news media and terrorism. It was argued that the news media today may need terrorism more than terrorism needs the news media; consequently, research should address whether this relationship can indeed still be characterised as a

symbiosis. As the findings are limited to two case studies, additional research would need to be conducted to determine whether the findings presented in this Research Note can be generalised.

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Notes

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IV. Resources

Counting Lives Lost – Monitoring Camera-Recorded Extrajudicial Executions by the "Islamic State"

by Judith Tinnes

Abstract

The "Islamic State" (IS / ISIS / ISIL / Daesh)'s visually documented executions, particularly those involving Western victims, have been receiving tremendous attention by international mass media. Yet, much of the Western reporting focuses on the barbaric nature of the displayed violence (neglecting other important aspects of the propaganda technique) and disproportionately covers executions of Western victims, while similar killings of local people are under-reported. No regular monitoring of camera-registered extrajudicial executions covering all locations of the group's geographically scattered provincial system is available to date. Aiming to fill this gap, the author initiated a census project based on continuous monitoring of IS execution visuals.

For accessing the statistics, visit:

http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/483/DATA

Background

Terrorism is a combination of violence and propaganda. Camera-recorded executions for public display are an integral part of the Islamic State's strategy of terror. With over 1,000 captives killed in front of a rolling or still camera in 2015 alone, the notorious terrorist organization has brought this propaganda technique to a new level, dwarfing in quantity and graphic content similar atrocity campaigns of its Iraqi predecessor organizations and those of other Jihadist groups [1]. The visual depiction of excessive, counter-normative, often sadistically "innovative" violence has emerged as a signature element and key feature of the IS' "brand" of terrorism, distinguishing the group from other jihadist and secular terrorist actors throughout the world.[2]

From the Islamic State's perspective, the unique, highly-choreographed visual releases fulfill several tactical and strategical aims. The most important are:

i. Securing the attention of the mass media to exploit them as free-of-charge multipliers for their propaganda message,

ii. demonstrating religious justification and governance capacities (e.g., by the swift application of Sharia "justice"),

iii. deterring international and local adversaries,

iv. demonstrating power over life and death and portraying supremacy,

v. outraging local and international audiences,

vi. provoking Western governments to (over-)react,

vii. recruiting new members to its ranks, and

viii. satisfying revenge feelings of members and supporters (e.g., by retaliatory acts against adversaries).

Usually, a typical visual release fulfills several of these objectives at the same time and is carefully calibrated for particular audiences. In many instances, the depicted violence is accompanied by a verbal religious justification by the propagandists to neutralize possible counterproductive blowback among its followers.

This display of visual violence has proven highly effective, particularly in regard to reaching high levels of mainstream media attention. Many mass media outlets – most notably tabloids – show unashamed voyeuristic fascination with execution footage, often ignorant of the full (much broader and complex) spectrum of ideological messaging. Mass media's preoccupation with the violence-centered subset of IS total propaganda output overshadows other important aspects of the group's messaging, thereby forestalling a holistic understanding of its media strategy. Counterbalancing this lop-sidedness, empirical research demonstrated that narrative themes of state-building, utopianism, victimhood and militarism play a far more substantial role in IS overall media output.[3]

Though research focusing on the non-lethal aspects of IS propaganda is urgently needed, the phenomenon of IS on-camera executions also deserves special empirical examination, because loop-sidedness likewise applies to the violence-centered subset of IS propaganda. Much of the news reporting covering on-camera executions tends to focus on the barbaric nature of the displayed violence and its perpetrators and neglects other important facets of the propaganda technique [4] (e.g., IS attempts to justify its extrajudicial killings by references to – its own interpretation of – Islam), thereby getting in the way of a more balanced and objective assessment and understanding. In addition, Western news reporting tends to be characterized by a striking bias when it comes to the citizenship of victims of such extrajudicial executions: while visually documented executions of Western foreigners generally receive saturation coverage in international mass media, similar on-camera killings of local people more often than not go under-reported or are totally ignored. The extent of such neglect remains noticeable even if one takes into account that obtaining background information on domestic captives is difficult because independent journalism has become virtually impossible in IS-controlled areas. However, this cannot serve as a full explanation for the lack of attention to local victims: when it comes to on-camera executions, visuals are generally available and can be used as a basis for reporting and monitoring, even if in-depth coverage is often not feasible.

Aims, Scope, and Methods

This monitoring project aims to provide academics, journalists, practitioners, policymakers, human rights activists, and other researchers with empirical data on visually documented executions which the IS terrorist organization has perpetrated since January 1, 2015. The two main objectives of this project are:

1. Providing quantitative information based on a long-term data collection effort in order to offer a fact-based, aggregated, and granular insight into IS' notorious media technique of camera-recorded executions.

2. Counterbalancing the Western media's reporting bias against executions of non-Western victims by offering data irrespective of victims' country of origin.

A long-term monitoring approach was chosen for three reasons: a) to provide representative data, b) to measure changing dynamics, and c) to counteract IS' efforts to manipulate perceptions of its actions through short-term tactical propaganda stunts, which misrepresent overall realities on the ground (e.g., while the group tries to create the image that its henchmen are highly active in many locations all over the world,

aggregated data reveal its limited reach by showing that the majority of executions was carried out in its shrinking core territory in Iraq and Syria).

The monitoring effort is based on a data collection of execution visuals (videos, photo reports, and images) that were officially released by the IS (i.e., produced and distributed by its official media outlets). With a few exceptions, unofficial releases (i.e., unbranded visuals published by non-official sources) were excluded from the data set. Such materials were included only if they had been distributed or re-posted by several pro-IS social media accounts and if the displayed execution incidents could be verified by alternative sources. The data set was restricted to executions of captives (including locals who were executed by illegitimate Sharia courts for social, religious, or other civilian "crimes"). On-the-spot killings, such as battlefield killings, drive-by-shootings, or assassinations are not included in the data corpus. Aftermath-only visuals (i.e., videos or pictures that displayed captives' remains, but neither showed them alive nor their executions) were only included if a sufficient amount of information on the related incident could be found. Executions claimed in text- or audio-only statements were excluded as well. It should be noted that large-scale massacres (incidents with 100+ victims) were excluded from the data corpus, as such outlier records documenting an extraordinary number of victims executed in a single incident would cause statistical distortions of the general data pattern. However, while excluded from granular calculations, these incidents are part of the monitoring effort and are textually noted in the results file.

To build up the data corpus, IS execution visuals (videos, photo reports, images) were systematically collected by tracking official and unofficial IS social media accounts in different languages on *Twitter* and *Telegram* – *IS'* favorite social media outlets. Although the IS decentralized media distribution system is characterized by high content redundancy, at least 15 accounts were visited twice a day to avoid missing releases due to account suspensions.[5] All relevant releases were retrieved in original file quality, indexed, and archived. In addition, a number of – mainly English-language – secondary sources (such as websites or social media accounts of researchers, activists, journalists, think tanks, and news outlets) were regularly consulted to retrieve further information and ascertain or correct facts if necessary. All relevant information gathered from primary and secondary sources was aggregated, categorized, and condensed in a data sheet, and results are presented in tabular overviews. It should be pointed out that despite the author's effort to identify as much information as possible on each execution, information provided by IS was often the only information available for some or all categories of an incident – hence it could not be independently verified (e.g., the "charges" against a victim provided by IS to justify an execution). This is particularly true for executions of non-Westerners.

Limitations

While the monitoring effort is based on a large data corpus, there are several limitations which need to be kept in mind. First, as the data collection was started only in January 2015, the census does not provide a full account of IS on-camera executions since the group's declaration of its "caliphate" on June 29, 2014 – in other words, the first half year of the "caliphate" has not been covered.

Second, the census only covers camera-recorded executions and does not provide an account of all executions perpetrated by the IS on the ground. Country-based execution statistics released by human rights organizations which rely on a network of local activists, such as the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), provide execution numbers much higher than those of the corresponding country subsets of the present monitoring effort, which means that the IS publicizes only a fraction of its extrajudicial executions. Readers should therefore be cautious in extrapolating the data pattern of IS on-camera executions to

generalize about IS's general killing activities. There is a discrepancy between IS's self-portrayals and actual events on the ground. For instance, while human rights activists have documented a significant amount of executions of women and children [6], on-camera killings of females and minors are rare. Moreover, it is important to realize that the IS does not publish every on-camera execution it has recorded. Defectors gave accounts of incidents where the group visually documented executions but subsequently withheld publication of the recorded footage [7] – presumably for tactical reasons.

Third, as mentioned before, it is often impossible to verify the claims made by the IS in its execution visuals. Therefore, part of the information may well be inaccurate – including deliberate deception efforts by the group.

Fourth, the present census is limited to statistics-only information. However, if an in-depth understanding of IS on-camera executions is to be achieved, an additional qualitative analysis contextualizing the quantitative findings is required (for example, the reasons given by IS to justify such executions should be analyzed against the background of the group's ideological claims and strategic objectives as revealed in captured documents from its archives).

Despite these limitations, the new statistics of camera-recorded extrajudicial executions provide an unprecedented quantitative insight into the phenomenon of IS media-oriented executions. The author encourages academics, journalists, and other researchers to use the census (which is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License) as an auxiliary instrument for their own research.

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Notes

[1] See for example: Tinnes, Judith (2010, November): Counting Lives in a Theater of Terror – An Analysis of Media-Oriented Hostage Takings in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 4(5), pp. 3-21. URL: http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/120

[2] Cf. Zech, Steven T.; Kelly, Zane M. (2015, May): Off with their Heads: The Islamic State and Civilian Beheadings. *Journal of Terrorism Research*, 6(2), pp. 83-84. URL: http://ojs.st-andrews.ac.uk/index.php/jtr/article/view/1157 For the subject of "branding", see also Ligon, Gina S. et al. (2014, November): *The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant: Branding, Leadership Culture and Lethal Attraction.* Report to the Office of University Programs, Science and Technology Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. URL: https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_ISIL%20Branding%20Leadership%20Culture%20and%20Lethal%20Attraction_Ligon_Nov2014.pdf

[3] See for example: Winter, Charlie (2015, October): *Documenting the Virtual "Caliphate".* (Quilliam Report). URL: http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/FINAL-documenting-the-virtual-caliphate.pdf ; Zelin, Aaron Y. (2015, August): Picture or it didn't Happen: A Snapshot of the Islamic State's Official Media Output. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 9(4), pp. 85-97. URL: http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/445 ; Tarabay, Jamie et al. (2015, March 20): To its Citizens, ISIS Shows a Softer Side. *Vocativ.* URL: http://www.vocativ.com/world/isis-2/to-its-citizens-isis-also-shows-a-softer-side

[4] See for example: Tinnes, Judith (2015, February): Although the (Dis-)Believers Dislike it: A Backgrounder on IS Hostage Videos – August-December 2014. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 9(1), pp. 76-94. URL: http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/403

[5] In spite of these efforts, it is conceivable that the author missed a small number of incidents, as IS often integrates execution footage in longer, multi-topic releases (compilation videos). Due to the high amount of video footage released by IS on a daily basis, it was not feasible to watch every multi-topic video from start to finish. While such videos were systematically downloaded and skimmed, a small number of short-duration segments might have been overlooked. However, as pro- and anti-IS social media users tend to refer to executions in their postings – which raises the probability that unnoticed cases come to the author's attention – the number of missed incidents should be very low.

[6] See for example: Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) (2015, December 29): *More than 2,000 Syrian Civilians Executed by IS during 18 Months since Declaring its Alleged Caliphate.* URL: http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=41663

[7] See for example: Miller, Greg; Mekhennet, Souad (2015, November 20): Inside the Surreal World of the Islamic State's Propaganda Machine. *The Washington Post.* URL: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/inside-the-islamic-states-propaganda-machine/2015/11/20/051e997a-8ce6-11e5-acff-673ae92ddd2b_story.html

Bibliography: Northern Ireland Conflict (The Troubles)

Compiled and selected by Judith Tinnes

Abstract

This bibliography contains journal articles, book chapters, books, edited volumes, theses, grey literature, bibliographies and other resources on the conflict in Northern Ireland (The Troubles). Though focusing on recent literature, the bibliography is not restricted to a particular time period and covers publications up to December 2015. The literature has been retrieved by manually browsing more than 200 core and periphery sources in the field of Terrorism Studies. Additionally, full-text and reference retrieval systems have been employed to expand the search.

Keywords: *Bibliography; resources; literature; Northern Ireland Conflict; The Troubles; Irish Republican Army; IRA; PIRA*

NB: All websites were last visited on 23.01.2016.–See also Note for the Reader at the end of this literature list.

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Note

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V. Book Reviews

Michael Morell. *The Great War of our Time. The CIA's Fight Against Terrorism, from Al Qa'ida to ISIS*. New York: Twelve, 2015; 362 pp.; US $ 28.00. ISBN 978-1-4555-8566-3.

Reviewed by Brian Glyn Williams

The author of this memoir, Michael Morell, spent 33 years at the CIA, ultimately rising to become it deputy director. Many of the details in his surprisingly candid (and even self- critical) account of his tenure at the CIA are new and of importance to those studying the war on terror. For example, the sections dealing with the Agency's greatest blunder, the "groupthink" mistakes on Iraq's non-existent WMD program will be of interest to those who want to learn more about how the Agency assessed its mistakes. While President George W. Bush (whom Morell briefed on terror threats for much of his career) comes off as well-meaning, Vice President Cheney and his chief of staff Scooter Libby are described in a negative light as attempting to shape CIA intelligence on WMDs to fit their political agenda. Morell describes efforts by Libby to intervene in decisions at the Agency as "the most blatant attempt to politicize intelligence that I saw in thirty-three years in the business" (p. 87). Morell is particularly critical of the fact that Cheney and his aides continued to publicly discuss intelligence linking Saddam Hussein to Bin Laden—a narrative that had previously been debunked by the Agency—in order to convince the American public of the need for war.

This does not mean that the CIA was successfully goaded into producing false intelligence; Morell genuinely believed that Iraq had WMDs prior to the invasion. He describes the shock that he and others in the Agency felt when the weapons of mass destruction failed to materialize after the invasion and they realized they had been involved in "one of the largest intelligence failures in the history of the Agency" (p. 99). In one of the most important statements in the book, Morell directly apologizes to former Secretary of State, Colin Powell, for providing him with the bad intelligence on Iraqi WMDs. It was this intelligence that provided the basis for Powell's powerful February 2003 presentation at the UN which convinced many doubters, including Senators Hillary Clinton and John Kerry, to support the war (page 98).

Morell attributes much of this intelligence failure to an inability on the part of the CIA to penetrate Saddam Hussein's inner circle. He states that, for his part, Hussein thought American intelligence agencies had in fact penetrated his government/military and understood he had no WMDs. The whole debacle was, in Morell's words, "[a] perfect storm of imperfect intelligence" and he openly admits that the "bottom line for the intelligence community and the Agency was that we got the vast majority of the judgments on Iraq and WMD wrong" (p. 105 & p. 91).

There were other misunderstandings between Hussein and the US. Of Saddam Hussein's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, Morell has the dictator saying to Charles Duelfer (who led the failed WMD hunt after invasion of Iraq) "why didn't you tell me you would deploy five hundred thousand troops, six carrier battle groups, fourteen hundred combat aircraft and a coalition of thirty-two countries. I'm not crazy. If you had simply told me I would not have gone to Kuwait" (p. 106).

Morell also weighs in on more recent events, such as the Arab Spring. While many analysts initially felt that the Twitter-driven revolutions in Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Syria and Yemen were a rejection of Al-Qa'idaism, in actuality the Arab Spring was a "boon to Islamic extremists across both the Middle East and North Africa" (p. 180). The overthrow of long-ruling secular dictators in the region allowed Islamic militants access to new weapons and previously inaccessible routes to power.

This was certainly the case in Libya, a country that Morell states that President Obama personally decided to commence an aerial war against at a White House meeting he attended. America's involvement in overthrowing Gaddafi indirectly led to the subsequent killing of the US ambassador to Libya, Christopher Stevens, in Benghazi by local militants. However, Morell vehemently rejected the "politicized" claims made by Republicans in Congress on the Agency's subsequent analysis of this tragedy and describes the Benghazi controversy as "the poster child of the intrusion of politics into national security." (p. 213).

Morell also discusses future threats and it is telling that he sees AQAP (Al Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula) as far more capable of carrying out a mass casualty terror attack on the United States than ISIS. He goes so far as to state "[t]o put it bluntly, I would not be surprised if AQAP tomorrow brought down a US airliner traveling from London to New York" (p. 309). Nonetheless, he worries about the demonstrative effect of ISIS's slick media campaign which calls on home-grown "lone wolf" extremists to carry out smaller terror attacks that are harder to uncover and prevent.

Morell, not surprisingly, also supports the CIA's drone campaign in the tribal regions of Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia as a preventative counter-terrorism tool. He boldly states on the drones' disruptive impact on Taliban and Al Qa'ida terror plots in Pakistan: "There is no doubt in my mind that these strikes have prevented another attack on the scale of 9/11. They have decimated al Qa'ida's core leadership in South Asia" (p. 137). As for those drone opponents who criticize these remotely piloted aircraft for being "impersonal killers" when compared to more traditional weapons, he defends them as being no more impersonal than a cruise missile or B-52 bomb, only far more accurate. To make this last point, he shares a vignette about an incident where he met with a journalist who was writing an investigative story on the purported large numbers of collateral damage civilian deaths from drones. He tells how he systematically proved to her that her sources were wildly exaggerated (she ultimately decided to "walk away" from the story) to make his point that civilian deaths attributed to drone strikes have been inflated by their critics (p. 139).

Morell also provides a rigorous defense of what the Agency called EITs (Enhanced Interrogation Techniques) and what critics call torture. He emphatically rejects the notion made by many who are suspicious of the CIA that the interrogation program was "some rogue CIA operation that might be depicted in a Hollywood movie" (p. 269). For starters, he explains that President Bush and members of Congress were regularly briefed on the program, which was approved by the Department of Justice and deemed not to be torture (i.e. a violation of domestic law or US treaty obligations). He even references members of Congress, such as Senator Jay Rockefeller, who criticized the Agency for being "risk averse" when it came to interrogations (p. 269).

Second, he states emphatically that "there is no doubt in my mind that enhanced interrogation techniques were effective" (p. 271). He cites several examples, including the enhanced interrogation of 9/11 plotter Khalid Sheikh Mohammad (KSM) to prove his point. Before he was interrogated/tortured, KSM was highly uncooperative and even belligerent, but after his enhanced interrogation (waterboarding in this case), he talked freely and even helped thwart a plot he had been involved in to blow up the Brooklyn Bridge by informing on an important co-conspirator (p. 271).

While critics of the program, such as Senator John McCain who came out strongly against EITs, will be displeased by the way Morell glides over the moral implications of the Agency's use of enhanced interrogation/torture, the author also goes on to provide the example the case of Abu Ahmed (the courier who was tracked and led the CIA to Bin Laden in Abbottabad) to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program. He states "there is no doubt in my mind that information generated by EITs led us to push Abu Ahmed to the top of the list of leads we were pursuing on Bin Ladin.…To put it bluntly; without the overall detention program, we would have not caught Bin Ladin the way we did" (p. 272).

As for CIA "black sites" established in allied countries in Eastern Europe and the Middle East to allow the Agency to interrogate terrorists without having to grant them the benefits of the US judicial system (such as reading them their Miranda Rights), Morell bemoans only the fact that the US betrayed and embarrassed the host countries by revealing the existence of the secret program itself. As with EITs, Morell firmly believes the black sites were essential to saving American lives. There is little real reflection on the possible negative ramifications to America's reputation abroad as a beacon of law and democracy from such practices. At the end of the day, Morell sees himself primarily as a front-line fighter in the war against the lethal terrorist network that caught the CIA unawares on 9/11. Preventing another mass casualty catastrophe was his and the Agency's primary mission, not winning hearts and minds or promoting America as an example of a law-abiding democracy.

There are many other important nuggets in this insightful history of the CIA as the Agency made its transition from being an organization focused primarily on spying and counter-espionage to one waging counter terrorist operations. Morell states of this extraordinary process: "Never before had CIA refocused so abruptly and dramatically as we did after 9/11. The number of officers working on terrorism—including contractors—more than tripled, and the dollars flowing to the terrorism problem jumped even more" (p. 73). But the overall impression one gets from this memoir is that the Agency is run by professionals like Morell who, for all their mistakes on WMDs or use of what most of the world considers torture, are genuinely concerned about keeping the country safe from its enemies and trying to avoid the pitfalls of politics as they go about their jobs.

About the Reviewer: **Brian Glyn Williams** *is Professor of Islamic History at University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth and author of 'Predators. The CIA's Drone War on Al Qaeda'.*

Counterterrorism Bookshelf:

Twenty New Publications on Israeli & Palestinian Issues

Reviewed by Joshua Sinai

This column consists of capsule reviews of recent books about Israel, the Palestinians, and related subjects from various publishers. This special focus is intended to help analysts to better understand the trends in the histories of Israel and the Palestinians, the internal and external terrorist challenges facing them, and the components that may be required to formulate effective counterterrorism and conflict resolution strategies to solve their long conflict.

Simon Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920s to the Twenty-First Century* (Havertown, PA: Pen & Sword/Casemate, 2014), 240 pp., US $ 50. [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-783-46218-6.

This is a detailed, extensively researched, and comprehensive account of Major General Orde Wingate (1903-1944), one of the most influential and controversial military commanders in the British Army during the period between the First and Second World Wars. Basing his account on Wingate's official and private papers, as well as those of his contemporaries, the author provides a guide to Wingate as a military commander within the larger context of how his theories about strategy and tactics, insurgency and special operations are applied to contemporary military warfare doctrines. Numerous fascinating details about Wingate's personal life and their influence on his military career are revealed, including that T.E. Lawrence (also known as "Lawrence of Arabia"), considered one of the originators of the use of guerrilla warfare by regular armies, was his distant relative through his father's side (p. 29) Wingate served in Palestine from 1936 to 1938, beginning as a British intelligence officer (GSO I) and eventually becoming commander of the irregular Special Night Squads (SNS), which he was responsible for establishing, and which cooperated with the Jewish *Haganah* in fighting the Palestinian insurgents. One of Wingate's doctrinal innovations during this period was to replace the *Haganah's* previous doctrine of "static defence of [Jewish] settlements…by one of pre-emptive action against the terrorists," which he accompanied by "'moving ambushes' of British troops and JSP [Jewish Supernumerary Police]…" (p. 68) Recognizing that "counter-insurgent operations, more perhaps than any other type, are driven by intelligence," Wingate's 'Night Squads' ultimately proved effective at reducing the rate of Palestinian Arab attacks against Jewish and British targets, including dislocating their "gangs from their village bases…" (p. 88) The author concludes that it was through Wingate's doctrinal innovation in forming specialist forces and 'government gangs' that became "standard counter-insurgent practice in several armies," particularly the British and Israeli special operations forces (p. 88).

Jon Diamond, *Orde Wingate: Leadership, Strategy, Conflict* (Long Island City, NY: Osprey Publishing, 2012), 64 pp., US $ 18.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-84908-323-2.

This well-written and concise account of the life and military operations of Major General Orde Wingate also includes numerous illustrations. With regard to Wingate's innovative guerrilla/counter-guerrilla tactics, the author writes that Wingate believed that by employing "cunning and deception, coupled with a tendency towards the unorthodox," "Given a population favourable to penetrate, a thousand resolute and well-armed men can paralyze for an indefinite period, the operations of 100,000 [larger military force]," culminating in "obtaining superiority at the decisive point" to overcome an adversary's "numerical advantage" (p. 56).

Samuel M. Katz, *The Ghost Warriors: Inside Israel's Undercover War Against Suicide Terrorism* (New York, NY: Berkley Caliber, 2016), 432 pp., US $ 27. [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-59240-901-3.

This is a fascinating, highly detailed insider account of the roles and operations of Israel's elite special forces' largely undercover war against Palestinian terrorists between October 1, 2000 and April 30, 2008 (also known as the al Aqsa Intifada). One of the especially noteworthy contributions of this book is the author's revelations (while abiding by Israeli censorship guidelines) about the nature, leadership, composition, weapons, and operations of these undercover units, which included three types of special forces: (1) the Arabic-speaking undercover units known as 'Mista'aravim' ("Speakers"), who stealthily infiltrate Palestinian areas dressed as local inhabitants in search of high-value Palestinian targets wanted by Israeli intelligence; (2) an IDF undercover unit, known as Duvdevan (Hebrew for "Cherry"), some of whose paratrooper operatives were also fluent in Arabic; and (3) the *Ya'mas* (Hebrew acronym for undercover unit) units of the Border Guard, the paramilitary arm of the Israel National Police. Much of the book focuses on the work of the *Ya'mas* units, which operated separately in three different regional sectors: one in the West Bank, another in the Jerusalem region, and the third in the Gaza Strip. What is especially interesting about the *Ya'mas* units is that they included specialized conscripts as well as officers from Israel's minority communities of Druze and Bedouins, who were native Arabic speakers and understood the Palestinians' "customs, mind-set, nuances, and vulnerabilities." (p. xii) The counterterrorist operations of these special forces units, with the activities of the *Ya'mas* units especially highlighted, are discussed in dramatic fashion in their areas of operations in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. In a postscript, the author concludes that one of the primary contributions of Special Forces, such as the *Ya'mas*, "in the forefront of Israel's counterterrorist efforts" was "to provide the political echelon the quiet and the capacity for make decisions from a position of strength"(p. 371). Although the book's coverage focuses on the period of the al Aqsa Intifada, its discussion of these Special Forces units is highly relevant to understanding how they likely operate in the current period, where the Palestinian Intifada has assumed a completely different character, with the Internet's social media sites playing a larger role in radicalization, recruitment and mobilization of their relatively young terrorist operatives. The author is a New York City-based veteran journalist on Middle East security issues, including terrorism and counterterrorism, having published more than twenty books on these subjects.

Shlomo Avineri, *Herzl's Vision: Theodor Herzl and the Foundation of the Jewish State* (Katonah, NY: BlueBridge, 2014), 304 pp., US $ 22.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-933-34698-4.

This is one of the finest political biographies of Theodor Herzl, (1860–1904), an Austro-Hungarian journalist, playwright, and polemicist (in the best sense), who was one of the founders of modern political Zionism. Among his greatest contributions to Zionism was his publication of *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State) in February 1896. This was followed by his leading role in establishing the World Zionist Organization at the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, which was held in August 1897, as the organizational vehicle to promote Jewish migration to Palestine in order to establish a Jewish state. As discussed by the author, when The Jewish State was published, its "radical, sweeping" message aroused great international acclaim, but also controversy, as it argued that due to pervasive anti-Semitism and other factors, the Jewish people should leave Europe for Palestine, their historic homeland, where they would create a state of their own (although Argentina was also proposed as a possible state). While many secular Jews who were part of revolutionary movements allied themselves with Herzl, it also "frightened and even revolted" many Jews. (p. 113) Among its strident opponents were the "Establishment Jewry," who opposed his radical and utopian ideas as a threat to their efforts to further integrate Jewish communities in Western

societies, and also the ultra-Orthodox Jewry which regarded his Zionist program as an apostate rebellion against God, since only God's will would guide Jewish destiny.

As a political biography, the book primarily focuses on Herzl's political writings and diplomatic efforts to bring about the establishment of his envisioned Jewish State. Herzl's greatest contribution, the author writes, was his transformation of "the idea of a Jewish state from one bandied about by a small coterie of educated but marginal Jews to an item on the international political agenda, a position which it keeps to this day" (p. 259). The author, Shlomo Avineri, a Professor of Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, is one of Israel's leading political philosophers.

Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State* (New York, NY: Penguin Books/Great Ideas, 2010), 112 pp., US $ 6.98 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-141-19290-1.

To understand the ideological origins of Zionism, it is essential to read its founding books, articles and pamphlets. The Jewish State is one of the Zionist movement's most influential pamphlets – yet, interestingly, it is also little read or understood in the contemporary period, which is unfortunate because, firstly, its arguments for the need of a "Jewish State" are still relevant to the current period, and, secondly, they are so "liberal" in the best Western sense that they need to be highlighted in order to understand the disparity between what the State of Israel was intended to be, according to Herzl's original vision, and what it has become over the years. Of particular interest is Herzl's advocacy of a state that would be based on "the best modern constitution possible," which he envisioned as "a democratic monarchy and an aristocratic republic," (p. 84) and would be guided by the "theory of rationality" (p. 77) and "the application of scientific methods." (p. 80) In what is especially pertinent to the current period of intense conflict in Israeli society between secular forces and far-right, ultra-nationalist religious extremism, Herzl called for eliminating any theocratic tendencies, because "Faith unites us, knowledge gives us freedom. We shall therefore prevent any theocratic tendencies from coming to the fore on the part of our priesthood. We shall keep our priests within the confines of their temples in the same way as we shall keep our professional army within the confines of their barracks….But they must not interfere in the administration of the State which confers distinction upon them, else they will conjure up difficulties without and within" (p. 87). With regard to dealing with potential neighboring enemies once the Jewish State is established [i.e., in Palestine], Herzl, as a utopian, believed that its economic prosperity would diminish their opposition to such an entity in their midst (p. 96).

Ahron Bregman, *Cursed Victory: A History of Israel and the Occupied Territories* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2015), 352 pp., US $ 15.43 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-141-01723-5.

This comprehensive account of Israel's conflict with the Palestinians covers the period from the June 1967 War, when Israel defeated its Jordanian, Syrian and Egyptian adversaries to conquer the territories of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula, until 2014. With Israel giving up the Sinai Peninsula as part of its 1979 peace accord with Egypt, and with Israel unilaterally withdrawing from the Gaza Strip in August 2005, much of the discussion focuses on Israel's approach to managing the conflict with the Palestinians in the West Bank, although the wars with Hamas in 2008-09, 2012, and 2014 are also covered. With regard to the Israeli counterterrorism campaign, the author criticizes it for overly relying on coercive measures, "by forcing [the Palestinians] to live in squalor and without hope, Israel hardened those under its power, making them more determined to put an end to the occupation by violent means…" (p. 308) To resolve the conflict, the author recommends "direct

negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, whereby the parties agree to establish a Palestinian state to live side by side in peace with Israel." (p. 314) To influence the Israeli government to adopt more conciliatory responses, the author recommends that the Palestinians launch "a non-violent Gandhi-style third intifada against the occupation" which would be accompanied by international "boycotts on products and services emanating from Jewish settlements on the occupied territories" (p. 315). Dr. Bregman is a professor in the Department of War Studies, King's College London.

Ari Shavit, *My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel* (New York, NY: Spiegel & Grau, 2013), 464 pp., US $ 28.00 [Hardcover], US $ 17.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-385-52170-3.

This is a highly interesting and well-informed account by a veteran Israeli journalist of what he perceives to be some of the external and internal trends affecting–and, most importantly, also transforming–the state of Israel after being some 65 years in existence. As he explains, despite great economic, technological, and military progress over the years, now "Many Israelis [are] not at ease with the new Israel that [is] emerging" (p. xiii). This is expressed in five different core apprehensions: "the notion that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict might not end in the foreseeable future; the concern that Israel's regional strategic hegemony is being challenged; the fear that the very legitimacy of the Jewish state is eroding; the concern that a deeply transformed Israeli society is now divided and polarized, its liberal-democratic foundation crumbling; and the realization that the dysfunctional governments of Israel cannot deal seriously with such crucial challenges as occupation and social disintegration" (pp. xiii-xiv). These "core apprehensions" are discussed through the author's journalistic tour of modern Israel, including interviews with leading Israeli intellectuals and politicians.

Yuval Elizur and Lawrence Malkin, *The War Within: Israel's Ultra-Orthodox Threat to Democracy and the Nation* (New York, NY: The Overlook Press, 2013), 240 pp., US $ 15.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-4683-0825-9.

This is a comprehensive account of the internecine conflict in Israel between the country's largely secular society and minority ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities over the character of the state from its establishment in 1948 until the current period. The ultra-Orthodox Jewish community (also known as "Haredim" – those who "tremble at the word of God") number an estimated 800,000 in Israel (about 15 percent of the Jewish population), but, as discussed in this volume, they regard themselves as the only authentic adherents of the Jewish religion so they rigidly resist any infringement on their strict religious observances, including having their educational institutions incorporate modern subjects such as mathematics, science, literature or history, as well as refusing to serve in the country's compulsory-based military – all the while continuing to receive state subsidies for their religious institutions and population. To elaborate on these issues, the volume's chapters cover topics, which are highly contentious in Israeli society, such as their demographic concentrations in Jerusalem and their aggressive actions against the city's non-observant Jews; their resistance to increasing the role of civil legal institutions (such as civil marriage and divorce, religious conversion into Judaism, and the enforcement of religious regulations over food and groceries, etc.) at the expense of their favored theocratic-based laws; the enforcement of transportation restrictions on the Sabbath; their refusal to abolish their discriminatory laws against women; their refusal to allow more modern interpretations of Jewish religious laws to be officially practiced (and, thereby, also funded) by less Orthodox movements, and the increasing involvement by some of their adherents in far-right, militant, and anti-State settlement activities in the West Bank. In the concluding chapter —"How Will the War End?"—the authors observe that several factors are already serving to

weaken the ultra-Orthodox community, such as new laws that permit what are termed 'Modern Orthodox' rabbis to also perform marriage ceremonies, the increasing entrance of ultra-Orthodox men into the country's labor force and certain higher educational institutions that teach modern subjects, and resistance by the secular political parties to continue subsidizing their religious studies as their primary form of "employment."

Hillel Frisch, *Israel's Security and Its Arab Citizens* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 228 pp., US $ 110. [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-107-01097-0.

This well-researched book examines the relationship between the Israeli Jewish state and its Arab minority (estimated at numbering 20 percent of the overall population) through an exploration of how the Jewish state has treated its Arab minority against the background of regional and local threats facing Israel. As the author explains, "I will try to justify the argument that Israel's relationship to its Arab minority is largely informed by a sense of threat and security fears. These emanate from the strategic environment in which the dominant community is a majority within its own state yet a threatened precarious minority in the region" (p. 3). To examine these issues, the book's chapters cover topics such as an historical overview of Israel's security profile and the relations between the state and its Arab minority; the impact of Israel's victory in the 1948 War on its Arab citizens (e.g., what the Arab community considers as their *Nakba* – "Day of Catastrophe"); the nature of the Arab community's domestic politics; the involvement of militant activists in the Arab community in extra-parliamentary organizations and terrorism; the relations between the Arab community and their Palestinian counterparts, including their attitudes towards the larger Arab world; and the balancing by Israel of the Arab community's political demands vis-à-vis its security requirements. Although one might disagree with one of the author's conclusions that over time "Israel's relationship with its Arab citizens has become more liberal, due in large part to the unintended consequences of economic liberalization," or that "Israel's quest for security, which has mandated the liberalization of its economy and its technological prowess, has paradoxically had positive ramifications on Israel's Arab citizens" (pp. 181-182), because since this book was published the relations between Israel and its Arab citizens have deteriorated to one of the lowest points in recent years, the conceptual framework and the topics discussed in this book still serve as an important contribution to the analysis of these issues in the current period. The author is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Studies and Middle East Studies at Bar-Ilan University and a Senior Research Associate at its BESA Center for Strategic Studies.

Robert Slater, *Rabin: The Biography – 20 Years After* (KIP – Kotarim International Publishing, Ltd., 2015), 480 pp., US $ 21.50 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-965-7589-13-7.

In 1977, Robert Slater, an American journalist who immigrated to Israel in 1971, wrote his first biography of Yitzhak Rabin, one of Israel's great military commanders during the periods of pre-independence and early statehood (including serving as IDF chief-of-staff during the June 1967 War and as Defense Minister from 1984-1990 in the National Unity Government), and as Prime Minister (1974-77; 1992-1995). In this updated biography, which draws on extensive interviews with Rabin's associates and family, the author covers Rabin's political career up to his assassination by a far-right wing Jewish extremist in November 1995, including assessing his lasting impact on Israeli politics and national security. In terms of Rabin's contribution to Israeli national security, the author discusses his role in countering and sinking the *Altalena* on June 21, 1948 – the ship that the former right-wing Jewish underground's militants had sailed to the shores of Israel with an illegal shipment of arms – which the newly established Israeli state had regarded as

an attempted *putsch* against it – which Rabin, as the site's military commander, "never had any doubt about the correctness of the government's action in taking up arms against fellow Jews. To him, the principle of statehood was at stake, and the *Irgun* was challenging the principle. The *Altalena* had been a threat to the legal government and that could not be tolerated" (p. 90).

Interestingly, while being regarded as Israel's "Mr. National Security," Rabin was also a peacemaker, with his first peace initiative occurring in October 1976 when, as Prime Minister, he made a secret visit to Morocco "to encourage King Hassan to persuade Egypt to enter peace negotiations with Israel over a permanent arrangement" [which eventually resulted in the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in 1979] (p. 266). Rabin's approach to countering the first Palestinian intifada, which began in 1987, also underwent change, as Mr. Slater writes that "Despite tough measures, Rabin was growing increasingly frustrated at their ineffectiveness," because "the unrest was no passing phenomenon; something far more deeply rooted was occurring in the territories," and that [also echoing the current period of impasse between the right-wing Israeli government and the Palestinians] "This time the unrest reflected genuine Palestinian despair, in not being able to end Israeli rule" (p. 338). With the Rabin-led Labor Party winning the June 1992 Knesset elections, Rabin was then able, together with his ally Shimon Peres, the Foreign Minister, to enter into secret talks with the Yasir Arafat-led Palestine Liberation Organization that resulted in the signing of the historic Oslo Peace Accords in September 1994. As a pragmatist, Rabin understood that despite the PLO's history of terrorism, "peace you make with your enemies, including despicable enemies….but I have to see also the comprehensive picture. We have to take risks" (p. 438). After completing his manuscript, Mr. Slater died in March 2014 in Jerusalem, several months before the book was published.

Dan Ephron, *Killing A King: The Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and the Remaking of Israel* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2015), 304 pp., US $ 27.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-393-24209-6.

This is a comprehensive, detailed and authoritative account of the two-year-long plot that led to the assassination by Yigal Amir of Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's Prime Minister, on November 5, 1995, within the larger context of Rabin's efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the Oslo Accords, and the impact of the assassination on future prospects for peace between the Israelis and Palestinians. There is much to commend in this excellent journalistic account, such as the biographical and religio-psychological profile of Amir as a conflict- and guilt-ridden individual who was torn "between [his] longing for sensual and emotional satisfaction and his commitment to a religious and ideological way of life" (pp. 36-37), which ultimately drove him to regard himself as "empowered…to judge for himself – to 'fathom God's Will' – whether political leaders were honoring the Bible or violating it" (p. 39). Also interesting is the revelation that Amir's brother [who was also imprisoned for his role in the assassination plot] had recommended his reading of Frederick Forsyth's thriller *The Day of the Jackal*, which was "a fictional account of a right-wing group's effort to assassinate French President Charles de Gaulle over his decision to end the war in Algeria and withdraw French forces" (p. 93) – which influenced his own assassination plot.

Of special interest to counterterrorism tradecraft is the author's detailed account of how the Jewish Division of the Shabak (Israel Security Agency – Shin Bet) was aware of the general threats posed by the country's militant Jewish extremists. In response, the Shabak planted two types of informants within this extremist community: professional career agents, who are trained in undercover work, but whose "infiltration" of militant groups takes time, and "purchased" informants, "people recruited from within particular communities or political groups whose credibility as activists was already established. These insiders would often deliver much better information but they could be difficult to control" (p. 139). The author then discusses how Shabak had tried to use these two types of informants to gather intelligence about potential

terrorist plots against Rabin and other mainstream leaders, with Avishai Raviv, one of their "purchased informants," and others who were close to Amir, picking up "noise" about his assassination intentions, yet somehow the security service was not able to "connect the dots" in order to preemptively arrest him.

Rabin's assassination, according to the author, played a large role in reversing the achievements of the Oslo Accords, since "The Israeli settlement movement, which had viewed Rabin's Oslo Accord as an act of treachery, had more than doubled in size since his assassination and greatly expanded its political power" (p. 244). Politically, the Israeli parliament "also included a record number of Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jews – who form the country's two fastest-growing communities and whose views on the issues of war and peace are consistently hawkish" (pp. 244-245). The author, who lives in New York City, had previously served as the Jerusalem bureau chief for *Newsweek* and the *Daily Beast*.

Asaf Siniver, *Abba Eban: A Biography* (New York, NY: Overlook Duckworth, 2015), 464 pp., US $ 40.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4683-0933-1.

This is a well-written and extensively researched biography of Abba Eban (1915-2002), one of Israel's greatest and most erudite diplomats and politicians, who had served (among his numerous positions) as the country's Foreign Affairs Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Ambassador to the United States, and Ambassador to the United Nations. A Cambridge University graduate and a don (by the age of 23), he also served as a major in the British Army in Egypt and Palestine during World War II, and settled with his wife in Palestine when the war ended. Eban was also a prolific author of highly-acclaimed books on diplomacy affecting Israel, including an autobiography. Eban's assessment of the nature of Israeli society and the impact of its occupation of the West Bank in the late 1980s was especially prescient in its relevance to the contemporary period. As described by the author, "wherever Eban turned he saw doom and gloom. He blasted the permeation of superstition, intolerance, and xenophobia in Israeli society and politics. He warned that the continuing occupation of 1,500,000 Palestinians weighed no less heavily on the rulers than the ruled" (p. 352). The most feasible solution, according to Eban, was "partition of the land" into two states, Israel and Palestine (p. 353). Finally, in a prophetic warning issued in 1998, after Benjamin Netanyahu had been in Prime Minister for two years and the peace process with the Palestinians had stalled, Eban concluded that "I do not say that the success of the peace process will lead to utopia. I do, however, declare that the failure of the peace process would lead to an inferno of explosive antagonisms and volcanic hatreds. Generations might have to pass before anybody would attempt such a peace project again" (p. 357). The author is an Associate Professor in International Security in the Department of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Birmingham, UK.

Charles D. Freilich, *Zion's Dilemmas: How Israel Makes National Security Policy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 336 pp., US $ 49.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-8014-5104-1.

This is an innovative theoretical conceptualization of national security decision-making processes in Israel, which is applied to a series of case studies. As discussed by the author (a former deputy national security advisor in the Israeli Prime Minister's Office, and currently a Senior Fellow at the Belfer Center, Harvard Kennedy School and a political science professor at both Harvard University and Tel Aviv University), his model "is structured around three primary causal factors, or independent variables, which result in five major decision-making pathologies, the dependent variables." (p. 2) The independent variables are the external threat environment facing Israel, the country's proportional representation electoral system (which causes political fragmentation and generally unstable coalition governments), and the weak nature of the

country's decision-making bureaucratic institutions. The dependent variables' five pathologies consist of (1) an excessive focus on a short-term rather than a medium and long term planning process, which results in "an absence of sufficient forethought and policy planning"; (2) a highly politicized decision making at the cabinet level; (3) a "degree of semiorganized anarchy" in government, with a relatively weak Prime Minister granted "few formal prerogatives" in his ability to govern; (4) an informal and "highly idiosyncratic" decision-making process, with insufficient coordination and integration between different ministries; and (5) "an unusual degree of influence" on the process of national security decision-making by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), with a corresponding weakening of the civilian national security agencies (pp. 3-4). With this conceptual framework forming the book's first part, the second part consists of its application to six case studies: Camp David I's peacekeeping process with Egypt (1977-1979), decision-making over the future of production of the Lavi fighter aircraft (1980-1987), the invasion of Lebanon (1982), the unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon (2000), the second Camp David summit's Israeli-Palestinian negotiations (1999-2000), the disengagement from the Gaza Strip (2005), and the second Israel – Lebanon/Hizballah War (2006). One of the author's conclusions is that, as a result of the problems in Israel's decision-making processes, "As issues have become more complex and the cost of error has grown, Israel's ability to improvise and make decisions sequentially has decreased" (p. 245).

Yagil Levy, *Israel's Death Hierarchy: Casualty Aversion in a Militarized Democracy* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2012), 269 pp., US $ 60. [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-8147-5334-7.

Using Israel as a case study, this is an innovative conceptual framework for analyzing what the author terms as a "death hierarchy," which concerns how a state prioritizes the risking of its soldiers in battle according to their social placement in society. This "death hierarchy" is prioritized in three ways. In the first, the author begins with the basic assumption that it is the responsibility of a state to protect itself from violent threats by managing "its citizens' lives and deaths by encouraging individuals to be willing to sacrifice their lives for their country" (p. 5). Still as part of the first prioritization, the author hypotheses that Israel's formulation of a "death hierarchy" has changed over the years from risking "the lives of soldiers drawn mostly from the secular middle-class groups" to protect its citizens to the emergent category of soldiers drawn from the lower classes (p. 6). This "devaluation of the right to protect" the country by those in a "privileged social position," the author contents, has been caused by "the decline of external threat [and] the ascendancy of a market society that devalued military sacrifice," resulting in a "drop in the motivation to sacrifice among the privileged groups," and thereby increasing the rate of "lower classes" in the fighting ranks. (p. 8) In the second prioritization, the author hypothesizes that with the "increasing legitimacy to use force and decreasing legitimacy to sacrifice, the IDF's ethical code of conduct in the fight against terror was modified" (p. 164) with protecting Israeli soldiers' lives "given higher priority than the obligation to avoid injury" not only to the disadvantage of enemy combatants but to their civilians, as well. This led to a vast leap in the ratio of adversary fatalities, for example, from one to nine in the Al-Aqsa Intifada to one to nineteen or one to thirty-three in later Israeli military campaigns (p. 165). In a third prioritization, as part of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), the IDF has been transformed into "a technology-intensive force," with weaponized drones, as one example, used to remotely target adversary forces, thereby reducing the risk of fatalities and injuries to the ground forces.

With regard to changes in the social composition of the IDF, the author points out that it is being realigned, with the country's religious elements attaining greater representation in the combat units. The impact of this development is discussed in the author's new book, *The Divine Commander,* reviewed below.

Yagil Levy, *The Divine Commander: The Theocratization of the Israeli Military* [In Hebrew] (Tel Aviv, Israel: Am Oved Publishers Ltd., 2015), 448 pp., US $ 36.90 [includes shipping] [Paperback], ISBN: 978-965-13-2524-3. [Available from http://www.ludwigmayer.com/booknav-The-Divine-Commander-Levy-Yagil-ARTS-31396.html]

This is an important analysis by a leading Israeli expert on civil-military relations (who serves as a professor of political science and sociology at the Open University of Israel) about how the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have been undergoing a process of "religionization" and "theocratization," with the military's previously largely secular character weakening as it is accompanied by a greater intervention and pressure by religious rabbis to stamp their particular right-wing ultra-religio-nationalist ideology and practices on the military. Following an overview of how these trends have grown over the years (particularly since the 1970s), the author then explains the specific manifestations of these "religionizing" and "theocratizing" trends in the IDF. These include a deliberate attempt by religious right-wing military academies to mobilize their adherents into IDF regular and elite units, with the resultant demographic changes in the makeup of the force trending toward a greater proportion of right-wing religious soldiers and officers in military ranks; placing the right-wing rabbis into a position where they could order their adherents in the IDF to refuse orders by their commanders to evacuate Jewish settlements in the West Bank; and, in an already well integrated force, insisting on instituting "male only" military units to the exclusion of female soldiers, delegitimizing women in their professional opportunities for advancement, particularly in combat units, and even boycotting entertainment events that feature female soldiers (pp. 248- 297). Of greatest concern, the author argues, is that these "religionizing" and "theocratizing" processes are not only weakening civilian control over the military, with "the entrance of external supervisory players, in this case the rabbis of the *hesder* [religious schools that combine pre-military service training] and religious military academies, who operate directly against the military" to advance their religio-nationalist agendas (p. 363), but are also alienating the country's women, particularly if the military is seen as failing to provide them opportunities for military service equality (p. 381).

Interestingly, the author points out that this "religionization" trend is largely confined to the IDF's ground and mechanized forces, as opposed to the Air Force, which is still largely secular in its demographic composition (p. 225/p. 357).

It should be pointed out that while the IDF still retains much of its secular nature, the religious and "theocratizing" trends that the author highlights, while on the ascendancy, are the subject of numerous articles and reports in the Israeli media, and are considered to be part of the overall increasing "religionization" of Israeli politics and society, but with the secular forces still attempting to counter these worrisome trends.

Hopefully this important book, which is only available in Hebrew, will be translated into English so that a wider readership will be able to benefit from its numerous insights and findings.

Lena Jayyusi, (Ed.) *Jerusalem Interrupted: Modernity and Colonial Transformation 1917–Present* (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 2015), 700 pp., US $ 60. [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-56656-787-9.

The contributors to this richly illustrated edited volume examine the changes in the history and landscape of Jerusalem from 1917 to the present period, with a primary focus on how it has impacted the city's Arab residents. An extensive collection of archival sources (such as historical photographs, paintings, literature, crafts, attire, and newspapers), oral histories, and contemporary field work (including urban

studies), are utilized to discuss Jerusalem's rich social and cultural history from a Muslim and Christian Arab perspective, as well as their perception of how Israeli policies have affected the city's Arab character, all of which are essential in understanding the factors that need to be considered in resolving Jerusalem's component within the larger Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Further complicating any attempts to resolve the Jewish – Arab conflict over Jerusalem's future, Ahmad Jamil Azem, in his chapter on "The Israeli Redefinition of Jerusalem," observes that "internal Israeli ideological and political disagreements are themselves affecting the process of modernizing the city, and…minimize the ability of successive Israeli governments to develop the distinct political-nationalist (Zionist) identity for the city to which they have aspired. Indeed, Jerusalem has served on many occasions as a center of polarization within Israeli society, itself" (p. 312).

Michele Penner Angrist, (Ed.) *Politics & Society in the Contemporary Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013), 550 pp., US $ 35. [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-58826-908-9.

The contributors to this highly informative volume–which is intended to serve as a primary textbook for college/university courses in Middle East studies–discuss the political dynamics in the contemporary Middle East in general and country by country. Following the editor's introductory overview, the volume is divided into three parts: the first part discusses the contemporary dynamics in terms of governments and oppositions, the impact of international politics on the region, the region's political economy, civil society, and the interplays between religion, personal identity, and gender and politics. The second part presents case studies on Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Turkey, with each of these chapters organized in accordance with the first part's general themes. The final part, also by the editor, presents the volume's conclusions in terms of trends and prospects for the region.

For the purpose of this review column, the volume's chapters on Israel, by Alan Dowty, and Palestine, by Nathan J. Brown, are relevant. Why is Israeli society so polarized politically? Dr. Dowty, an expert on Israeli politics, explains that, while remaining a vibrant, competitive democracy, Israel is "deeply divided between a secular, modernizing, more dovish half and a more traditional, conservative, hawkish half" (p. 314), and that "Underneath the seeming stability, however, were signs of a basically confrontational view of politics.…" (p. 320). Finally, protest movements in Israel were similar to the "Arab Spring unrest elsewhere in the Middle East, including the importance of social networking, the predominance of youth, and the role of economic grievances" (p. 321).

With regard to Palestine (defined here as the territories of the West Bank controlled by the Palestinian National Authority and the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip), Dr. Brown, an authority on Palestinian politics, points out that while "political opposition has existed since the beginning of the PNA…. political competition is not well institutionalized," with no elections held since 2006, and that its political system "has fragile, weak, and decaying institutions" (p. 401). One of the factors contributing to the prevalence of Islamism in Palestinian political discourse, as exemplified by Hamas, is that "large Islamist social movements and sometimes political parties often form the most effective political opposition" (p. 410). As to future trends, Dr. Brown points to the "youthful Palestinian activists" who are working "to emulate Egyptian and Tunisian youth by generating a new movement that would press for political change" (p. 415).

Mustafa Kabha, *The Palestinian People: Seeking Sovereignty and State* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014), 399 pp., US$ 68.50 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-58826-882-2.

This is a comprehensive, well-informed, and balanced account of the origins and evolution of Palestinian nationalism and politics from the First World War until around 2012 (the height of the Arab Spring). Following the author's introductory overview, the chapters cover topics such as the opposition by Palestine's Arab population to Zionism and the British Mandate, particularly during the period of 1936 to 1948; the impact on the Palestinians of Israel's military defeat of the Arab forces in the 1948 War; the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in May 1964; the conflictual relations between the Palestinians (and their armed groups) and Jordan in the 1950s and 1960s (as well as with Lebanon in the 1970s and 1980s); the PLO's international relations in the 1990s; the attempted reconciliation with Israel through the Oslo Peace Accords; the struggle between Fatah and Hamas; and the impact of the Arab Spring on future trends in Palestinian politics and nationalism.

There is much to commend in this book. One is the author's formulation of a three triangles model to depict how Palestinian history has been shaped over the years: firstly, an external triangle, based on the superpowers, the Arab countries, and the state of Israel; secondly, a national identity triangle, based on a pan-regional Arab dimension, a national-Palestinian dimension, and the political-Islamic dimension; and, thirdly, an internal, social triangle, based on the traditional leading families, who are gradually being overtaken by working classes, as well as the youth (pp. 361-362). Another is its contribution to understanding new trends in Palestinian nationalism and politics–which is one of the preconditions for formulating effective counterterrorism and conflict resolution strategies. Here, the author observes that "a Palestinian reconciliation is not imminent, and neither is the reunification of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank under a single authority. Moreover, the possibility of national unity that would enable a uniform representative leadership that could negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians does not seem feasible. Each of the current leaders of the two blocs has resolved to be victorious, each pulling in their own direction, and therefore it may be assumed that only the emergence of a new leadership, free of the residues of violent struggle characteristic of the relationship between the two movements to date will be able to lead the Palestinian people toward the light at the end of the tunnel" (pp. 343-344).

The author, a prominent Israeli Arab political scientist and historian, teaches at the Department of History, Philosophy, and Judaism at the Open University of Israel.

Mark Levine and Gershon Shafir, (Eds.) *Struggle and Survival in Palestine/Israel* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012), 472 pp., US $ 34.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-520-26253-9.

The contributors to this edited volume examine the biographies of more than two dozen exemplary Israeli and Palestinian individuals who were [as explained on the book's back cover] "embedded in, but also empowered by their [respective] social and historical contexts" in order to better "understand both struggle and survival in [such] a troubled region." Although some of the volume's writing is overlaid with academic jargon, such as referring to a biographical subject as a "human agency" or their contribution to society as "marginal and subaltern voices" (p. 4), the discussion of many of their biographical subjects does reveal interesting and important insights into their respective societies over a 120 year period from the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the century until the contemporary period. The individuals whose biographies are discussed range from Haim Amzalak, a Jewish Sephardi entrepreneur and British Vice-Consul, and Wasif Jawhariyyeh, an Arab musician in "old Jerusalem" in the Ottoman period, several Palestinians who were

dispossessed by Israeli statehood in 1948–49, to Palestinians and Israelis who had expressed themselves in different ways on the conflict between these two peoples.

Of particular interest to this review column's discussion are the chapters that present the biographies of several Palestinian and Israeli terrorists. What were their motivations to conduct their terrorist operations? For two Palestinian suicide terrorists (Nael Abu Hilayel and Maher Hubashi), Bader Araj, the chapter's author, it was "a mixed religious and retaliatory motivational logic" and a means to liberate their homeland (pp. 381-382). Moreover, in what this reviewer considers as overly uncritical, Mr. Araj claims that these two suicide bombers and others he had examined "could not be characterized as suffering from any form of mental illness or psychopathology or from deprivation" (p. 382). Finally, both were not lone wolves, and the author accurately portrays their attacks as part of a "collective action, requiring the involvement of several individuals to carry out various tasks, including collecting detailed information about the target and the best time and way for the attacker to enter Israel, driving the bomber to the target, making a suicide belt, videotaping the bomber reading his or her last will, and declaring responsibility" (p. 380).

The chapter by Michael Feige on Yigal Amir, the Jewish terrorist who assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995, presents a well-rounded psycho-biography. Amir was an ultra-Orthodox/nationalistic zealot, filled with "sentiments and hatred for 'the other'"–in this case not only the Palestinians but any Israeli who promoted an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement (p. 387). Socio-economically, he was a lower-class *Mizrachi* whose family had originally immigrated from Yemen, and even despite his upwardly mobile university education, he still belonged "to the wide ethnic fringes of the [right-wing] ideological settlements" (p. 390). It was such factors that likely drove him to seek "glory" in his extremist community as Rabin's assassin.

Mark Levine and Mathias Mossberg, (Eds.) *One Land, Two States: Israel and Palestine as Parallel States* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2014), 296 pp., US $ 29.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-520-27913-1.

The contributors to this well-argued and balanced volume, who are Israeli, Palestinian, and Swedish experts on conflict resolution, examine a new multi-dimensional framework for resolving the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, based on two parallel states that would coexist peacefully with each other. This project, known as the Parallel States Project (PSP), began in September 2008, culminating in an international conference that was held in October 2010 at Lund University, Sweden, under the auspices of the Swedish Foreign Ministry, where this volume's chapters were first presented. The volume's chapters cover different aspects of the concept of parallel states as they apply to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, such as an overview of the parallel states concept, how the Israeli and Palestinian states that would emerge from the peace process would cooperate, for instance, in economic, judicial, and security matters; how the currently intransigent role of religion could be transformed from an obstacle to reconciliation; and the necessity for both Israelis and Palestinians to "think outside of the box" to conceptualize a new peaceful future for both peoples.

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VI. Notes from the Editor

TRI Award for Best PhD Thesis 2015: Deadline of 31 March 2016 for Submissions Approaching

The Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI) seeks to enhance the quality of research in the field of Terrorism Studies. For this purpose it has established an Annual Award for the Best Doctoral Dissertation on Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism. From the submissions, the TRI Award jury identifies three finalists and among them the winner. The Award for the best thesis submitted in 2013 went to Dr. Tricia Bacon (American University, Washington, D.C., USA) and the winner of the 2014 Award was Dr. Anneli Botha (Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, South Africa). With the present announcement, a call is being made for Ph.D. theses submitted or defended at an academic institution in the year 2015.

Doctoral theses in the field of terrorism- and counter-terrorism studies can be submitted either by the author or by the academic supervisor, and should be submitted in electronic form to the chairman of the jury, Prof. em. Alex P. Schmid, at apschmid@terrorismanalysts.com, together with a cover letter (1-3 pp.), highlighting the merits of the submitted Ph.D. thesis. Submissions have to be in English (or translated into English). The deadline for entries (in English, or with translation into English) is 31 March, 2016. The TRI Award jury, consisting of the three directors of TRI (Robert Wesley, James Forest and Alex P. Schmid) will evaluate and compare the submissions in the months of April and May 2016 and inform the three finalists in the course of June 2016.

The winner among them will be announced in the summer of 2016 and can expect an Award of US $1000.- plus a certificate of achievement signed by the President of the Terrorism Research Initiative, acknowledging the granting of the TRI thesis award. The other two finalists will receive a certificate of achievement. For the three finalist theses, TRI will assist the authors in finding a publisher. The winner of the 2015 TRI Award will also be invited to submit an article for publication in *Perspectives on Terrorism*, summarizing the winning thesis' main results.

About *Perspectives on Terrorism*

Perspectives on Terrorism (PT) is a joint publication of the Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI), headquartered in Vienna, Austria, and the Center for Terrorism and Security Studies (CTSS), headquartered at the Lowell Campus of the University of Massachusetts, United States of America.

PT is published six times per year as a free peer-reviewed online journal available at www.terrorismanalysts.com. It seeks to provide a platform for established scholars as well as academics and professionals entering the interdisciplinary fields of Terrorism, Political Violence and Conflict Studies. The editors invite readers to:

- present their perspectives on the prevention of, and response to, terrorism and related forms of violent conflict;

- submit to the journal accounts of evidence-based, empirical scientific research and analyses;

- use the journal as a forum for debate and commentary on issues related to the above.

Perspectives on Terrorism has sometimes been characterised as 'nontraditional' in that it dispenses with some of the traditional rigidities associated with commercial print journals. Topical articles can be published at short notice and reach, through the Internet, a much larger audience than subscription-fee based paper journals. Our free on-line journal also offers contributors a higher degree of flexibility in terms of content, style and length of articles – but without compromising professional scholarly standards.

The journal's articles are peer-reviewed by members of the Editorial Board as well as outside experts. While aiming to be policy-relevant, PT does not support any partisan policies regarding (counter-) terrorism and conflict-waging. Impartiality, objectivity and accuracy are guiding principles that we require contributors to adhere to.