

THE INTERNATIONAL  
CENTRE FOR THE STUDY  
OF RADICALISATION AND  
POLITICAL VIOLENCE



# Perspectives on Radicalisation and Political Violence

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Papers from the First  
International Conference  
on Radicalisation and  
Political Violence

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London, 17–18 January 2008

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# Foreword

**E**ighteen months ago, we had the idea of establishing the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR). It was enthusiastically supported by our four funding institutions: King's College London; the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya; the Regional Center on Conflict Prevention at the Jordan Institute for Diplomacy; and the University of Pennsylvania. As a partnership of these four institutions – rooted in different countries, different cultures and different political environments – ICSR was unique from the start. ICSR is also the first instance of public collaboration between Arab and Israeli academic institutions in this field.

It may sound like a cliché, but radicalisation and political violence are global challenges, which require global responses. Yet, until recently, there was no independent and truly global centre for knowledge, research, debate and advice on responses to these challenges. ICSR has been formed to fill this gap. By bringing together cutting edge thinkers from academia, policy making and business – who will combine scholarly insight, political foresight and business acumen – ICSR intends to devise innovative strategies to counter the growth of radicalisation and political violence. Anybody who is in any doubt about the relevance of our undertaking need only listen to the news reports about extremist led violence in Pakistan, Iraq, Sri Lanka and, most recently, the tragic hostage crisis in Colombia.

Many of you attended our launch event, the First International Conference on Radicalisation and Political Violence. A conference by definition is a 'talking shop', but ICSR is not just about holding conferences. Rather, the mission of ICSR is to bring together knowledge and leadership. It has become clear that the problems associated with radicalisation and political violence cannot be resolved by governments alone. It is equally clear that academic papers, however well conceived, will not make a difference unless the experts make an effort to be listened to and governments are prepared to listen. That is why we at ICSR stress the importance of bringing policy makers and business leaders into the debate.

We have prepared a number of projects that we expect to initiate during the next year. Before ICSR authorises a project, we ensure that it is designed to produce a result within twelve months, and that its output has been designed to make a meaningful contribution to countering the growth of radicalisation and political violence.

Researchers who work on ICSR projects will be selected by our founding institutions as leading experts in their area. They will originate from Britain, the United States, Israel and the Arab countries, and they will be invited to work as part of our team in London as well as in the field. Through diversity, ICSR aims to achieve maximum impact.

We understand that the objectives that we have set for ICSR are ambitious, but with the world faced with a phenomenon that has the capacity for mass destruction and loss of life, we and the many others addressing the issues of radicalisation and political violence, must do whatever we can.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the individuals, businesses and foundations whose generosity has enabled us to successfully launch ICSR, and to appeal to all of those who are concerned about the threat from the growth of radicalisation and political violence for continued support.

Henry Sweetbaum  
*Chairman, ICSR*

# Introduction

By Peter R. Neumann

**T**his booklet is the result of the First International Conference on Radicalisation and Political Violence, which took place in London on 17-18 January 2008. The purpose of the conference was to bring together policymakers, senior practitioners and leading experts, and provide them with an opportunity to exchange and develop their ideas on how best to counter the growth of radicalisation and political violence.

If the mission of ICSR is to make responses to radicalisation and political violence more intelligent, we are clearly off to a good start. I was particularly impressed by the number and quality of exchanges which took place between policymakers and experts, with politicians and officials eager to tap into the wisdom of some of the world's best thinkers. Needless to say, our conference did not deliver the *one* solution that would end all problems associated with terrorism and political violence. But there can be no question that it helped many of the most influential voices in the current debate to learn from each other and advance their own thinking. I strongly believe that it is through this kind of process – not by hoping to engineer a 'big breakthrough' – that responses to radicalisation and political violence will gradually become more effective.

While transcripts and video from all the keynote speeches and public panel discussions at the conference are available on our website ([www.icsr.info](http://www.icsr.info)), this booklet aims to shed some light on the thoughts developed – and conclusions reached – by seven expert working groups whose discussions were held under the Chatham House Rule in order to facilitate the frankest possible exchange of views.

Before introducing the papers, it is useful to explain the broader context within which these discussions were taking place. The idea of radicalisation is a relatively recent one. As late as the early 2000's, hardly any reference to radicalisation could be found in the academic literature on terrorism and political violence. The term was used casually, but little was done to systematically develop it into a conceptual tool through which to understand the process that may lead individuals to support violent extremism. Even now, the term continues to lack definition. It may come as no surprise, then, that some critics have voiced their concern that the idea of radicalisation could be used to criminalise protest, discredit any form of 'radical thinking' and label political dissent as potentially dangerous. For example, in a recent congressional debate about the Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Act of 2007, Dennis Kucinich described the proposed legislation as a 'thought crime bill'.

In order to avoid such accusations, it is important to clarify why we decided to make 'radicalisation' the theme of our conference. It is well-known that the term radical

derives from the Latin word *radix*, which means root. And indeed, there is a long and well-established discourse about the ‘root causes’ of terrorism and political violence that can be traced back to the early 1970s. Following the attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001, however, it suddenly became very difficult to talk about the ‘roots of terrorism’, which some commentators claimed was an effort to excuse and justify the killing of innocent civilians. Even so, it seemed obvious (then) that some discussion about the underlying factors that had given rise to this seemingly new phenomenon was urgent and necessary, and so experts and officials started referring to the idea of ‘radicalisation’ whenever they wanted to talk about ‘what goes on before the bomb goes off’.

In the highly charged atmosphere following the September 11 attacks, it was through the notion of radicalisation that a discussion about the political, economic, social and psychological forces that underpin terrorism and political violence became possible again. In making radicalisation the theme of our conference, we wanted to capitalise on this ongoing desire by both governments and experts to have a systematic as well as wide-ranging discussion about the factors that underlie terrorism and political violence. Our motivation, therefore, was completely different from what the critics suspect. Rather than using the notion of radicalisation in order to discredit legitimate forms of political dissent, our aim was to engage policymakers in a debate with which – until recently – they felt uncomfortable. Indeed, I remain convinced that, despite all its obvious limitations, the notion of radicalisation represents the best possible vehicle through which to bring experts and political leaders from all the different sides of the argument to the table and move the debate forward.

Another misunderstanding is for the concept of radicalisation to be located within the academic discipline of psychology. At first sight, such a narrow definition of the idea would seem obvious, given that it is the process through which *individuals* become attracted to, and involved in, violent extremism that forms its core. Nevertheless, allowing psychologists to monopolise the debate about radicalisation would be a serious mistake. Human beings do not exist in a vacuum. Their decisions are shaped by the social, economic, cultural and political environment in which they operate. Mapping what Louise Richardson calls the ‘enabling environment’ in which political violence and terrorism become attractive can be as critical to understanding the process of radicalisation as it is to analyse individual histories and group processes. In fact, the study of terrorism and political violence has benefited enormously from a multi-disciplinary approach, and the same is likely to hold true for research into the phenomenon of radicalisation.

The papers contained in this booklet were written by the coordinators of the seven working groups at our conference. Not all our coordinators were academics. Those who were come from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds. As readers will see, they have approached the issue of radicalisation from a number of perspectives, and have dealt with vastly different issues. It would be nonsensical, therefore, to pretend that the papers in this booklet amount to a settled consensus on the question of radicalisation. The opposite is true. They are meant to be honest as well as thought-

provoking snapshots, reflecting the state of the debate with all its inconsistencies and disagreements. Indeed, in my view, they provide an excellent impression of how multi-faceted and sophisticated the discussion has become.

The working groups – on whose contributions the papers are based – were populated by nearly 100 experts, community leaders and policymakers, including several former Prime Ministers and Presidents. This enabled the coordinators to draw on the widest possible range of views and experiences, yet it also made it impossible to achieve a full consensus. As a result, while the papers in this booklet are based on the discussions in the working groups, it is worth keeping in mind that they do not necessarily reflect the views of every single participant.

Olivier Roy’s paper on radicalisation and de-radicalisation shows clearly where the fault lines in the current debate about Islamist militant radicalisation lie, and that – depending on one’s analysis of the problem – the prescriptions for how best to pursue a successful policy of de-radicalisation can be very different. In Roy’s view, Al Qaeda puts forward not so much a fully-developed ideology but, rather, a simple narrative which articulates the suffering of a virtual nation, the *Ummah*. It appeals to individuals who are torn between competing identities, and for whom the idea of becoming an ‘avenger’ of the *Ummah* provides a sense of power, meaning and identity. Counter-radicalisation, then, needs to focus on counteracting this narrative by showing that those attracted to, and engaged in, terrorism are not the heroes as which they like to see themselves.

Nick Fielding, who chaired the working group on the role of the media, illustrates the extent of the challenge set out by Roy in describing how skilfully Al Qaeda has managed to exploit the media in order to promote its narrative. His paper provides an extraordinary insight into the sophistication and professionalism with which Al Qaeda has run its media operation, drawing especially on the power of the Internet to disseminate messages without having to rely on ‘established’ channels of communication. The massive propaganda effort undertaken by Al Qaeda has not been matched – nor indeed has it been properly understood – by Western governments. As Fielding shows, governments’ responses have been dithering, if not counter-productive. He concedes, however, that there are some real dilemmas, for example when it comes to the question of how and whether to close down web sites.

An altogether different line of inquiry was pursued by Anatol Lieven’s working group, which investigated the impact of economics on radicalisation. Lieven makes it clear that the link between poverty and radicalisation is ‘not straightforward’. Rather than absolute poverty, the critical variables are failed expectations and the persistence of *relative* poverty, which can create the conditions in which radical ideologies flourish. In Lieven’s view, ‘the unemployed or underemployed graduate is one of the most dangerous of all political actors’. However, current efforts to help Muslim countries develop their economies pale into insignificance when compared to the amount of economic aid that was pumped into Western Europe under the Marshall Plan. Not only do Western countries need to increase the volume of assistance, they also

have to change their trade policies in order for sustainable indigenous economies in the Muslim world to grow.

What connects Lieven's paper with Mustafa Ceric's contribution on 'the use and abuse of religion' is the emphasis on truth and justice. Lieven argues that the effects of neo-liberal trade policies have been perceived as unjust in the developing world. Likewise, Ceric believes that a sense of unfairness and injustice has given rise to victimisation, fuelling grievances in the Muslim world which were then framed in religious terms. In Ceric's view, religion is rarely the cause of terrorism and political violence but rather provides the narrative and language through which political conflicts are expressed. In fact, religion can be a force for good, but this will require everyone to take responsibility for moral failures and confront the 'hard questions' which one would rather want to avoid.

The paper put together by Jack DuVall's working group – which was co-hosted by the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict ([www.nonviolent-conflict.org](http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org)) – returns to the question of narrative, confronting the alleged effectiveness of violence as a means of effecting political change. The assumption that fundamental political change can only be accomplished through violent means underpins any strategy of terrorism, yet – in DuVall's view – it is fundamentally flawed. As he points out, civil resistance based movements have been shown to be far more successful at 'overthrowing dictators' than terrorists, but the power of such non-violent strategies is frequently ignored not just by the 'radicals' themselves but also by the governments and international institutions in whose interest it would be to counter the 'myth of violence'. It would be vital, therefore, that the counter-narrative to be promoted by governments and civil society emphasises the human costs of violence and also – and importantly – the availability of more effective alternatives through which to pursue lasting political change.

By contrast, the starting point for Yezid Sayigh's paper is at the opposite end of the 'radicalisation cycle'. Rather than seeking to dissuade disaffected groups from taking up violence in the first place, he looks at how to engage violent extremists in negotiations and peace processes. He distinguishes between talking, which should be the norm, and formal negotiations, which require both partners to accept 'some scope for reciprocity and compromise'. In either case, it will be necessary for those engaged in communication with radical groups to clearly define their aims and make an effort to understand those who are sitting on the opposite side of the table. Indeed, to 'study radical groups carefully' is one of Sayigh's key recommendations, not least because the dynamics of factional politics may be critical to isolating the hardliners and achieving a cessation of violence.

The call for better analysis is echoed in Daniel Benjamin's paper which deals with the question of how states should use their 'hard power'. He argues that 'tactical counterterrorism is an empirical science' in which success depends on sustained investment (especially in technology), the systematic and ongoing study of best practices, improved analysis, and – significantly – the need to 'maintain a shared sense of the legitimacy of government policy'. All these factors

will have to be accounted for when determining the appropriate mix of military means, covert capabilities, policing and prosecution in confronting terrorist threats. According to Benjamin, one of the great success stories of the post-9/11 period are the improvements in international cooperation amongst government agencies. However, in order to build on the progress in this area, it will be necessary to further institutionalise cooperative behaviour and strengthen efforts at capacity-building.

This booklet demonstrates the extraordinary range of topics and issues that need to be tackled in confronting the growth of radicalisation and political violence. It also shows that there are no ready-made solutions. Nearly everyone now recognises that it will not be possible to kill or capture every terrorist or insurgent, and that attempting to do so may be counter-productive. Donald Rumsfeld, the former U.S. Secretary of Defence, once remarked that success in the 'War on Terror' depended on whether the number of terrorists killed or captured was greater than the number of those newly recruited. By that measure, victory seems distant. Indeed, if there is one theme that emerged from all the papers, it is the need for a compelling counter-narrative and, more generally, for the challenge of radicalisation and political violence to be addressed at the level of ideas. For that reason alone, conferences like the one we hosted in London in January are as critical as the development of any new weapons system. In fact, I strongly believe that it is in the 'laboratory of ideas' that the solutions to the current crisis will be found. Yet the conversation has only just begun.

# Radicalisation and De-radicalisation

By Olivier Roy

Our working group discussed the problems of radicalisation and de-radicalisation. It represented a range of opinions, which cannot easily be reconciled. I will therefore attempt to summarise the different positions and then state my own views.

There was a consensus that Al Qaeda exists, that the leadership has a strategy and that it recruits among a large array of disenfranchised youth. The panel recognised the multiplicity of causal pathways producing radicalisation, and it agreed that countering terrorism begins with the de-legitimisation of extremist messages. The differences concerned the roots of radicalisation, and hence the policy of de-radicalisation. One position (Group A) was that Al Qaeda is a political organisation with a specific religious ideology and that its recruits are motivated by this ideology. The conflicting position (Group B) held that Al Qaeda's potential recruits are far more motivated by the promise of action than by any specific religious view or ideology. As will be shown, the differences between these opinions have a direct impact on the strategy (or strategies) to be employed in the process of de-radicalisation.

## Two approaches

### *Group A*

Group A believed that Al Qaeda is a revolutionary organisation in the tradition of the Islamist movement (especially the Muslim Brothers, Sayyid Qutb, and Osama Bin Laden's deputy, Ayman al Zawahiri). Its strategy is defined by a well-articulated ideology: Its goal is to topple the existing regimes in the Middle East and replace them with a Caliphate based on *sharia* law. Islam is at the core of its legitimacy and thinking. It plays on the Muslim community's nostalgia for a Golden Age, and its centre of gravity lies in the Middle East. Furthermore, ideology is the key to Al Qaeda's recruitment: people join Al Qaeda because they share its ideology and political goals, which means that indoctrination provides the foundation for its recruitment efforts. Based on this analysis, Group A believes that, in order to counter Al Qaeda, one should address the political grievances of its sympathizers. However different our

ideas about a settlement of the conflicts in the Middle East, there will be no de-radicalisation without substantial improvements of the political situation in that region. Moreover, a global war on terrorism makes sense because similar trends and ideas are at work among most of the Muslims involved in both local and global conflicts.

### *Group B*

The second group believed that there is a difference between Islamo-nationalism (as represented, for example, by Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran) and the global de-territorialized jihad of Al Qaeda. The latter has no real political programme of establishing a territorial Islamic state based on *Sharia* law. Its references to Islam are aimed at creating a narrative rather than for the purpose of establishing a genuine political agenda. Zawahiri is an exception (he is the only Al Qaeda member to originate from the elite of the Muslim Brothers), and he is consequently seen as the group's 'ideologist.' Instead of promoting a territorial Caliphate in the Middle East, Al Qaeda is committed to a global struggle against the dominant world power (the United States of America) in the continuation of the radical anti-imperialist struggles of the 1960s and 1970s. It stresses political activism and addresses a wider audience than just the Muslim community, which explains the prevalence of converts.

Al Qaeda does not serve as a vanguard or play a leading role in the conflicts of the Middle East, but – instead – is trying to impose its agenda, even if this is against the wishes of local Islamists (for instance, Hamas). Consequently, Western governments should deal with the problem through conventional political means and be careful not to emphasise the ideological dimension. Indeed, ideology plays little role in the radicalisation of the jihadist internationalist youth. Recruits are attracted to Al Qaeda by a narrative rather than an ideology, and any process of de-radicalisation should therefore be aimed at addressing the needs of young people.

### *Policy prescriptions*

If we follow the positions expressed by Group A, then the Middle East is at the centre of the process of radicalisation and, therefore, should be at the centre of any de-radicalisation policy. According to this view, there is no real difference between Islamo-nationalist movements, such as Hamas, and the internationalist jihadists of Al Qaeda. Radicalisation can be studied, and should be dealt with, at the leadership level.

If we adopt the position articulated by Group B, de-linking territorialized and nationalist conflicts from supra-national jihadism is a first step towards de-radicalisation, because it is assumed that ideology has little to do with radicalisation.

Furthermore, we need to consider the issue of radicalisation at the level of the individual, addressing the reason why young people not linked with any specific conflict join Al Qaeda. In this vein, the main objective of any de-radicalisation policy is to destroy Al Qaeda's narrative rather than provide an ideological or theological alternative.

### **Territorialized and de-territorialized violence**

In my opinion, it is necessary to view terrorist actions within their political and strategic contexts. If we consider terrorist activities in the Muslim world, there is clearly a difference between territorialized violence (for example, the conflicts in Palestine and Chechnya) and de-territorialized violence (Al Qaeda). The first is linked with a struggle for national liberation and is part of the broader use of politically motivated violent means with a precise objective: to free a territory from what is perceived as foreign occupation. This violence does not spill over into other countries, except into the territory of the occupying country. It is accompanied by other forms of violence (from *intifada* to guerrilla warfare) and is related to a precise political agenda.

The other form of terrorism, and the one on which I will now focus, is defined by the following criteria:

- The terrorist action is not part of a broader spectrum of political and military actions, but is relatively isolated from the wider political context in which it takes place.
- There is no concrete political agenda, though – as will be shown – there may be a strategy of confrontation with the dominant power
- The individual terrorists are not rooted in a given society, even if they are integrated into one. This means they do not fight in their country of origin (with the possible exception of Saudi Arabia) and are often torn between three countries: the country where their family comes from; the country of residence and radicalisation; and the country of action (though the last two may coincide, as was the case with the London bombings in 2005).

### **Al Qaeda as a global de-territorialized movement**

The position of Group A, which views Al Qaeda as the ultimate stage of an ongoing Islamist revolutionary movement that strives to create Islamic states in Muslim countries, suggests that Al Qaeda has 'gone global' because there was no way for it to defeat the 'near enemy' (the secular Arab regimes) as long as the distant enemy (the West, particularly the United States) was not checked or destroyed. Yet, in reality,

few of the current generation of Al Qaeda members have ever been involved in radical activities in their country of origin (with the notable exception of al Zawahiri). In fact, Bin Laden himself turned against the Saudi monarchy *after* joining the global jihad. The testimonies of the volunteers who joined Al Qaeda show that almost none of them had a previous record of political activities in their home countries (except, as usual, the group of Egyptians who joined the global jihad under the leadership of Zawahiri). Simply put, they joined for jihad and martyrdom, not for an Islamic State or *Sharia*.

Contrary to members of Hizb ut-Tahrir, who always formulate their political or ideological positions in elaborate ideological terms, Al Qaeda recruits do not usually articulate their ideas either before or after being caught. We should not dismiss the ideological approach out of hand, but it does not seem to be the main motivation for joining Al Qaeda. Terrorists operating in the West are mostly home-grown terrorists. If they have a foreign background, it is generally North African, Pakistani, East African or Caribbean. However, there is also a significant proportion of converts. Al Qaeda, which according to varying estimates counts between 9 and 20 percent converts among its ranks, is not the only 'Muslim' political organization to have a very high level of converts, but it is the only one to give them positions of responsibility. Many converts in the United Kingdom and France are of Caribbean origin, and what they find in the Islamist milieu is a social network free from racism in addition to an opportunity to fight against their former colonial powers. A good example is that of the convicted British terrorist Dhiren Barot, who embodies the perfect illustration of the de-territorialized jihadist: he was born a Hindu to parents who left East Africa to settle in Britain, travelled to Kashmir, married a Malay woman from Thailand, and was involved in terrorist plots in London and New York.

Incidentally, the idea of de-territorialization may also provide an explanation for new forms of radicalisation among Middle Eastern Muslims. For instance, the third generation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, such as those living in the Nahr Al Barid refugee camp, has experienced what I would call a process of de-Palestinization. They are no longer focused on Palestinian politics and have no hope of returning to that land, but neither have they acquired a new identity or citizenship. As a result, they have 'switched' from a desperate national struggle to identification with the global *Ummah*. In future, if the hope of having a viable state is receding, the phenomenon may occur in Palestine itself – something borne out by the recent growth of Hizb ut-Tahrir.

### **Al Qaeda as a youth movement**

A 'transversal' approach, which compares youth violence among non-Muslims with Al Qaeda recruitment, seems more fruitful in explaining the process of radicalisation than a vertical approach which looks at radicalisation through the lens of Islamic theology from the Koran to Ibn Taymiyya and Sayyid Qutb. This becomes clear when we

consider the following factors, which are widely regarded as critical in the process of radicalisation:

- Generational conflict: most of the radicals have broken with their family or become estranged.
- A sense of alienation, which is rarely related to their socio-economic circumstances.
- The predominance of activism over ideological and intellectual indoctrination: the time span between religious re-conversion and recruits' involvement in action is very short.
- Individualization: radicals tend to act outside traditional community bonds, such as family, mosques and other associations.
- The group effect: the process of radicalisation takes place in the framework of small groups of friends who possibly knew one another before and may have had a common place of meeting or been part of a network of petty delinquency.
- The recasting of traditional leftist anti-imperialism in Islamic terms.

Indeed, in my view, Al Qaeda could be regarded as a left-over from the era of ultra-leftist radicalism. Not only are its targets – US imperialism and symbols of globalization – similar to the traditional targets of the ultra-left. When Bin Laden, in his video message from September 2007, referred to the Vietnam War rather than the Koran, he was consciously addressing an audience more sensitive to the political dimension than to the religious one. Likewise, when Al Qaeda in Iraq executed Western hostages, it staged the execution in exactly the same way in which the Italian Red Brigades killed Prime Minister Aldo Moro in the 1970s.

Yet, this is still only a partial explanation. Even if we understand the roots of the 'youth wrath', the question remains as to why they opt for jihad with Al Qaeda. More precisely, why do those who choose political violence instead of other forms of violence (such as gangsterism) join Al Qaeda? Why, for example, has there been no resurgence of the ultra-left?

### **Al Qaeda and recruitment: the power of the narrative**

Al Qaeda provides not so much an ideology as a narrative. The first part of that narrative relates the suffering of the *Ummah*. But this *Ummah* is a virtual community: all crimes, often depicted through gruesome videos, committed against Muslims anywhere in the world are seen through the same lens. The stories are not contextualized and, thus, the picture of a tortured man could come from Bosnia,

Chechnya, Kashmir, or anywhere else. In other words, the *Ummah* is presented as an undifferentiated whole.

The second part of the narrative revolves around the individual, who is cast as the hero who avenges the sufferings of the imagined community. The appeal of this part of the narrative results from the combination of two factors:

- Self-image: all personal humiliations or shortcomings are redeemed by the act of terrorism. The death is staged as is the individual's new persona, hence the prevalence of videos, declarations, last wills and testaments.
- Salvation and death: there can be only one definite action that will turn the suicide bomber into a permanent icon – death is the self-evident and ultimate conclusion to the story.

The religious 'Qutbist' dimension plays its role here too, with jihad presented as a personal duty, and the idea of a vanguard made up of a few outstanding and devoted heroes for whom salvation is found through sacrifice and death.

A third part of the narrative is less religious. It is the enactment of the fight against the global order. To people not specifically motivated by religion, Al Qaeda is the only organization currently on the market that seems to be effective in confronting 'evil'. The fact that it is constantly presented as the biggest threat to 'our way of life' only adds to its attractiveness in this regard.

Considering the three dimensions of the narrative, it is clear that the impact of Al Qaeda would not be as great without the amplifying effect of the media and its constant identification of the group as 'evil' and as the principal 'enemy of civilization.' Indeed, Al Qaeda consciously uses the dominant discourse on the clash of civilizations by inverting its meaning. Its messages perfectly fit with the division of the world in two competing principles, 'good' and 'evil'.

### **How to fight... or fuel terrorism**

We know what does not work: fighting a de-territorialized organization by holding territory, such as in Afghanistan or Iraq. No armoured division ever arrested a top Al Qaeda leader. Instead, intelligence and policing have provided the best tools against an organization like Al Qaeda.

Another failure has been in the area of counter-propaganda. Most of the measures taken to de-legitimize Al Qaeda have had the opposite effect:

- Reshaping the Middle East in order to counter terrorism supposed that Al Qaeda is the vanguard of the forces fighting against the US presence and encroachments in

that region. The failure of such attempts only enhanced the claim of Al Qaeda to be the only alternative to Western imperialism.

- Promoting 'good Islam' means that the 'other Islam' (or 'bad Islam') is what the West fears most, and it therefore unwittingly promotes Al Qaeda's claim to be the only alternative to Western globalization. The consequent de-legitimization of pro-Western Islamic thinkers has made 'bad Islam' the supposedly authentic one. In my view, we should let Muslims define what Islam is rather than attempting to encourage some sort of feminist, gay-friendly and (hence) peaceful Islam. Successful integration is a political and social issue, not a theological one.
- Addressing the issue of Islam through the prism of 'how to counter violence' has had the effect of putting violence at the core of Islam.

By contrast, effective counter-propaganda aims at 'destroying' the positive image of the terrorist – not by telling him that he is 'bad', but rather by illustrating that he is not a hero. I believe we should stop referring to the 'Global War on Terror', because it is ineffective, irrelevant and enhances the claim of Bin Laden to be a 'global' leader. Most importantly, we should speak of a dialogue of cultures instead of a clash of civilizations. To speak of the latter only concedes the point that there are two different civilizations and enhances Al Qaeda's claim to represent the Islamic one.

# Al Qaeda's Propaganda War

By Nick Fielding

**W**hen the US military commander in Iraq, General David H Petraeus, delivered his report to Congress in mid-September, he said that 'the war is not only being fought on the ground in Iraq, but also in cyberspace'. It was a belated recognition of the extent to which Al Qaeda and its allies have harnessed the power of modern technology to organise, recruit and instruct their followers online.

A few weeks later the US military gave out further information, announcing that since June, its forces in Iraq had captured six 'media centres' in the country and arrested twenty 'propaganda leaders'. Whether these 'centres' were anything more than internet cafes or computer terminals in a back bedroom, is not known, but the raids illustrate the seriousness with which the military now takes the threat of Al Qaeda propaganda.

The scale of the problem was highlighted recently by the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles whose *Digital Terrorism and Hate 2007* report noted almost 7,000 'problematic websites, blogs, newsgroups, You Tube and other on-demand video sites'. Another organisation, the Washington, D.C., based Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), says it has identified over 5,000 jihadi-influenced websites.

From its inception, with the declaration of the founding of the International Islamist Front for Confronting Jews and Crusaders – as Al Qaeda was called at its formal launch in 1998 – the organisation put propaganda at the centre of its operations. That meeting, for example, held in Afghanistan, was filmed and clips still circulate on the web. Since then, it has rapidly expanded its propaganda effort, in the process developing a number of new techniques to glamorise its appeal and to train its devotees. Although they may look back to the seventh century for spiritual guidance, they have adapted remarkably well to using twenty-first century technology.

Take the example of the 9/11 'martyrs' wills'. All the 9/11 hijackers recorded video wills, explaining their actions and demonstrating their loyalty to the leadership of Osama bin Laden.

These words from the dead have had an enormous impact, and the technique has been copied in Iraq and Afghanistan. Men about to die in suicide operations are shown surrounded by their comrades tearfully wishing them success and assuring them of a place in paradise. For English speakers, the video wills of the 7/7 bombers, Mohammed Siddique Khan and Shehzad Tanweer, delivered in their Yorkshire accents and praising bin Laden and his deputy Ayman Al Zawahiri, were particularly chilling.

Or look at the example of the so-called Baghdad Sniper. This unnamed member

of Al Qaeda in Iraq even has his own website where his 'kills' are systematically recorded. Each carefully planned killing of a US soldier is filmed by an accomplice and uploaded onto the site for distribution around the world. He is shown not simply lining up his targets, but also in his home, his face carefully obscured and his weapons, gloves and binoculars set out on the table in front of him. The clips are repeated in slow motion against a background of jihadist chanting.

Other forms of snuff movie, including the ritual beheading of captives such as Daniel Pearl, are also in circulation and avidly collected by young men who aspire to join the jihadis. In Iraq, the jihadis are required to film all their operations, and these are available on a daily basis on hundreds of easily viewable websites. They often show Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) exploding against Coalition vehicles.

In some cases, the disorientated Coalition soldiers who survive are shown being finished off by backup teams armed with small arms. One film shows the aftermath of a helicopter shoot-down: masked men stalk through the wreckage and shoot dead a survivor, clearly identifiable in his pilot's jumpsuit.

Not all the sites show this kind of material, but they are all part of a massive propaganda effort that appears to have no Western counterpart. They are also increasingly sophisticated. The video will of Shehzad Tanweer, one of the London bombers, released in September 2006 by the As-Sahab Media Foundation, Al Qaeda's in-house propaganda unit, includes a computer simulation of the King's Cross bombing. Another recent video will from the same source also includes a computer simulation of an unsuccessful assassination attempt on Pakistani leader, General Pervez Musharraf.

The year 2007 in particular was a record one for Al Qaeda's propaganda department, with, on average, a new video being released by the organisation every two or three days. While the first video from Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden since 2004 was released in September, his deputy, Ayman Al Zawahiri, has appeared in almost a dozen videos in 2007 alone.

Adam Gadahn, often referred to as 'Azzam the American', has also begun to appear more regularly, with many experts believing that he is now playing a major role in terms of designing videos that will appeal to Al Qaeda's English-speaking constituency.

The videos themselves are becoming very sophisticated, using Chroma-Key technology that gives the viewer the illusion of a background, when in fact they are being shot in front of a blue screen. Other footage of 'operations' have been shot using image stabilising video equipment to avoid camera shake.

As-Sahab clearly has access to the very latest video production technology. Formed in mid-2000, it was headed for a time by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the planner of the 9/11 attacks. Now, almost with each new release, it uses increasingly sophisticated techniques to get its message across.

As Gadahn, the modern-day Lord Haw-Haw, put it in one of his notorious broadcasts: 'Allah is our witness that the numerous audio and videotapes issued by Osama Bin Laden, Ayman Al Zawahiri, and other leaders of the jihad have not

been released merely to dispel rumours of their death — or, as the Americans once ridiculously claimed, to send coded messages to their followers. No, these communiqués have been released to explain and propound the nature and goals of the worldwide jihad against America and the crusaders, and to convey our legitimate demands to friend and foe alike, so that the former may join us on this honourable and blessed path...'

Take the example of the September Bin Laden video where even the method of release was professionally managed. No longer does Al Qaeda rely on Al Jazeera TV to announce its videos to the world. Instead, three or four days before the actual release, messages appeared on jihadi websites announcing that the video would be coming soon, thus building a sense of expectation.

In the next few days an unknown number of Al Qaeda supporters, mostly based in Pakistan, uploaded the video onto hundreds of different free download sites. Each upload takes time, so the whole operation is done in secrecy without allowing the links to go live.

At an agreed time, all the links went live and messages were duly posted announcing this fact. The reason behind this was because Al Qaeda is well aware that war is also taking place in cyberspace and that links to the video were being taken down - presumably through the actions of various intelligence agencies - as quickly as they could be found.

In the end, despite the fact that there was little of interest in bin Laden's words, his collaborators had created a world media event. It hardly mattered that his actual words were barely heard in the mainstream media. Everyone in the world knew that he had broadcast a new message.

And even that may not have been as clear-cut as it appears. In the 15-minute video, bin Laden only appears as a moving image for around two minutes. The rest of the broadcast is only his voice heard against a single still image. His clothing, headgear, the table at which he sits and even the camera angles are identical with the previous 2004 broadcast and he says nothing referring to contemporary events during the moments he is shown as a moving image.

The only difference is his beard — computer experts say that it could have been darkened and shortened electronically. We are thus left with the possibility that only bin Laden's words are new and that an old piece of video was doctored and re-edited to look as if he was speaking contemporaneously. In fact, one expert has identified at least six sound splices in the tape.

In marked contrast, Coalition efforts in Iraq in particular, have been substantially *undermined* by soldiers' easy access to new technology. Huge damage was done to coalition credibility by the sets of pictures taken by soldiers that leaked out of Abu Ghraib and also out of the British base in Basra. British military personnel have now been banned from contributing to blogs or websites unless they have clearance. Nothing could illustrate the contrast more clearly.

The ultimate irony about Al Qaeda's propaganda war is that it relies entirely on technology provided by its enemies. Can you imagine printing presses in England

during the Second World War publishing anti-Jewish diatribes on a contract basis for Josef Goebbels? That is almost exactly what is happening today.

Almost all the thousands of jihadi websites – and certainly the most vitriolic of them – are hosted by internet companies that are based in either Britain or America, with smaller numbers in France, Germany and Russia. MEMRI published a report in July this year that highlighted this fact. It emphasised that the jihadis use the websites for two specific reasons: to serve as a tool in the military training of jihad fighters by circulating military guidebooks on weaponry, battle tactics, explosives manufacture, etc; and second, for indoctrination and propagation of Islam. To this can also be added the fact that Islamists also engage in ‘electronic warfare’ by hacking into various sites.

All the examples given by MEMRI relate to sites that are hosted in the West. Internet companies appear to have washed their hands of any responsibility for what appears on their sites. Thus the official website of Abu Qatada, regarded by many as Al Qaeda’s spiritual guide in Europe, is hosted by British Telecom (BT). This is despite the fact that the man himself is locked up in a British prison as a threat to public safety.

In British law, it is likely that many of these jihadi websites are illegal under the terms of the Terrorism Act 2000 as they encourage and give support to terrorist organisations. If you were to print a copy of Al Qaeda’s military manual and try and sell it in a bookshop you would very quickly find yourself in front of a judge. Put in on the net and, it would seem, you are safe. To date, there has not been a single prosecution of an internet company, although the European Union (EU) announced in October 2007 its intention to outlaw sites that provide bomb-making instructions.

The strategy followed in Britain has been to prosecute a small number of young men who have been particularly active in disseminating jihadi propaganda. This may slow down and harass Al Qaeda’s propaganda operations, but there are plenty of computer-savvy young men willing to take their place.

Participants in the media and Internet working group at the ICSR conference represented a wide range of views on this issue. Aided by a brief slideshow presentation from MEMRI, workshop members were quickly apprised of the extent of the problem. Another speaker from the internet industry pointed out that billions of images and trillions of text messages are circulating at any one time, and that the total number is expanding at the rate of 20 per cent per month.

Some speakers supported a strong, legalistic attitude towards jihadi websites, while others made an argument for leaving them alone and exploiting them for intelligence. It was pointed out that in among the many thousands of such sites, only a few hundred were ‘fountain’ sites that provide material for most of the others. One speaker suggested the acronym ‘MUD’, that is, sites could either be Monitored, Used or Destroyed.

The sites can be roughly divided into groups with different roles: advertisement, recruitment, training and communications. What emerged is that information on these sites – who uses them and for what purpose – is limited. Several speakers argued that there was little evidence that sites had been used operationally, that is, no-one has yet prepared for terrorist attacks using instructions found on the internet. The 7/7

London bombings, for example, were organised by two members of the cell who had received practical training in Pakistan.

In response, it was pointed out that the websites are not in existence primarily to train fighters (although this has been attempted), but to draw impressionable young people towards the groups that are willing to carry out terror attacks. Access to a constant diet of videos portraying insurgent activities and executions, coupled with shocking images from Abu Ghraib and other appalling acts by Coalition troops can easily and quickly create a deep sense of both arrogance and grievance, particularly amongst young people who take their religion seriously.

The sites are becoming more complex, more widespread and harder to monitor, particularly by the internet companies. As noted above, few of them choose to monitor the content of the sites they host. They rely on court orders to force closures, although one speaker argued forcefully that, if approached, internet service providers will close sites on ethical grounds.

Whether or not Internet Service Providers (ISP) choose to close down offensive sites, government is becoming increasingly concerned about their impact. Censorship is seen as a matter for national governments rather than industry. In November 2007, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown announced that the Home Office would be looking into this issue and would also be convening meetings with the internet industry. His remarks were echoed in the keynote speech delivered by the British Home Secretary Jacqui Smith at the ICSR conference:

*The internet is a key tool for the propagandists for violent extremism... Let me be clear. The internet is not a no-go area for Government. We are already working closely with the communications industry to take action against paedophiles... we should also take action against those who groom vulnerable people for the purposes of violent extremism... I will be talking to industry... about how best to do this. Where there is illegal material on the net, I want it removed.*

The problem with censorship is that it can be a very blunt weapon. And what does censorship mean in the internet age? How effective can it be when there are no effective national boundaries?

Members of the workshop – despite their differing attitudes to how to control jihadist sites – were united in their belief that the priority was to learn far more about how these sites work, who uses them and for what. Research is very sparse. And without such research, it will be impossible to make good policy.

# The Economics of Radicalisation

By Anatol Lieven

**T**he link between poverty and radicalisation in the Muslim world is clear, but not straightforward. Most recruits to Al Qaeda and its allies – including most of the perpetrators of both 9/11 and the July 2005 bombings in London – came from educated, middle class backgrounds. Similarly, the traditional backbone of Islamist political movements has not been provided by the very poor. They are generally too uneducated and too concerned with day-to-day survival to be suitable material for mobilization; instead, they tend to vote for local bosses or ruling parties in return for material favours. At moments of crisis they may riot and loot, but they do not possess the discipline necessary to maintain a strong and enduring organization.

On the other hand – as seen during the chaos that followed the US invasion of Iraq – if the power of the state falters, non-ideological mayhem from below may help tip that state over into outright failure. Deep poverty and unemployment in countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh makes this an enduring threat.

The mainstay of Islamist groups has been the struggling urban lower-middle classes. Rather than absolute poverty, such groups, and especially young men among them, tend to be radicalised by considerations of jobs and status – the same factors which in an earlier era drove so many semi-employed graduates into the arms of Communist or other left-wing movements. In fact, the unemployed or underemployed graduate is one of the most dangerous of all political actors.

This means that we have to be careful about blindly assuming that education is the solution to all problems. Rather than an expansion of higher education, what is often needed is more vocational training, attuned to the nature and development of the economy in question.

In the Muslim world, feelings of personal and familial humiliation through the inability to match real income to perceived status feed naturally into feelings that the Muslim world, and the religion of Islam, are being humiliated by the United States and its non-Muslim allies. These feelings are now very widespread indeed in the Muslim world, and economic development alone will not make them go away; changes in Western and especially US strategy will be necessary. However, when it comes to recruitment for Islamist insurgency, the ability to pay fighters, and compensate the families of the dead, is obviously of great importance. A great many of the Islamist fighters, though no doubt perfectly sincere in their desire to

fight the enemy, are also serving in return for far better pay than they could ever receive as impoverished farmers.

Some of the necessary money comes from Islamist donors in the oil-rich Arab states, some from the local heroin trade. International action to block this funding is therefore important, though several members of the group expressed scepticism as to its success, given the myriad of informal or criminal ways that groups with widespread popular support have of raising money.

On the other hand there are now examples where the growth of prosperity has helped either end terrorist conflicts, or helped defuse what might have been a swing to militancy. This was most obviously true of the Northern Ireland conflict, where the economic revolution in the Irish Republic helped drain the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) traditional recruitment pool among the poor of that country, while simultaneously undermining the perception of the Ulster Protestants that they were bastions of economic progress holding out against a sea of Catholic peasant misery and backwardness.

Ireland's economic transformation was of course due in large part to Irish membership in the European Union (EU) – which is not on offer for most Muslim states. The example of Turkey however demonstrates how economic development has played a key role in transforming an Islamist movement into a moderate reformist force, promising greater social justice to the mass of the population, but also enjoying solid support from large sections of the business community.

In principle, Turkish-style economic growth in Egypt should have the same effect on the Muslim Brotherhood there. On the other hand, the economic travails of much of Iran's population played a key part in the rise of Mahmud Ahmedinejad, who was elected on a platform of populist hostility to the Iranian elites, but then used his victory to swing Iranian foreign and security policy in a more radical direction. The failure of the West, and the United States (US) in particular to mobilize much greater sums in development aid for the Muslim world is especially surprising because easily, within living memory, such aid played a critical part in what remains America's greatest geopolitical struggle to date, the Cold War.

From Truman in the late 1940s to Nixon in the early 1970s, every US administration, Republican as well as Democratic, recognized that massive US development aid was essential to strengthen states and societies against Communist revolution and subversion. Why then is Western and especially US aid today so miserable by comparison?

The core problems in the contemporary debate on this are threefold. Firstly, US aid directed against the spread of Communism is now remembered chiefly in the context of the Marshall Plan – and it is not difficult for opponents to point out the immense differences between the damaged but nonetheless highly developed economies of Europe after 1945 and most Muslim countries today.

Secondly, as far as US aid to the 'Third World' during the Cold War is concerned, American politicians have cultivated the impression that the standard

for success – or rather abject failure – was set by worthless kleptocracies like Mobutu's Zaire.

Thirdly, EU countries, while comparatively generous donors, only give in a co-ordinated and strategic way within the EU's immediate neighbourhood. Elsewhere, as Afghanistan has so miserably indicated, national agencies not only fail to co-operate but actively compete with each other. Where one EU country does focus on a particular area – as with Britain and Pakistan – it is liable to pump money into one fashionable sector (such as education), without regard to the wider need to stimulate economic growth and above all generate more jobs. Without this, the British programme of improving Pakistan's state education system may only produce more unemployable graduates – as noted, ripe recruits for Islamist radicalism.

In the concentration on the Marshall Plan, what has been generally ignored is that massive US economic aid and general trade openness were equally critical to resisting Communism in east and Southeast Asia – and to the long-term development of several of these countries first as successful economies, and then, in some cases, in the long run as successful democracies. This was true of South Korea and Taiwan, and later of Thailand and Malaysia. In these cases, the US had to turn a blind eye not only to high levels of corruption but to local dictatorship. However, it would be hard to deny that in the long run, US help contributed to spectacularly successful economic results – which in several cases (Malaysia, Indonesia, southern Thailand) today help limit the spread of Islamist militancy.

One reason why the successful example of US aid to East and Southeast Asia is ignored is that both US strategy in this region, and its long-term success in promoting economic and political development, was founded very largely on a conscious geopolitical decision to keep US markets open to exports from allied anti-Communist states – even at the price of very extensive swathes of US industry. Today, despite efforts by the Bush administration's Trade Representative (and later Deputy Secretary of State) Robert Zoellick and others, there is of course overwhelming opposition in both parties in the US Congress to really radical efforts in this regard – even when it is absolutely essential to help the economies of key Muslim allies like Pakistan.

The Bush administration has proposed a Middle East free trade zone including the US – but only by 2013, far too late to make an impact on immediate extremist threats. In 2004, the administration opposed legislation to open US markets to Muslim allies in the war on terror.<sup>1</sup> Immediately after 9/11, Zoellick, urged that trade liberalization be made a core part of the war on terror. This never happened, at least not on anything like the scale necessary. There have been helpful bilateral trade deals with some smaller Muslim countries, but even these lack the generosity and vision of trade policies towards East and Southeast Asia in the first two decades of the Cold War.<sup>2</sup> The political climate concerning free trade in Washington has been worsened drastically by the rise of China; and as regards both China and the Muslim world, politicians seeking to defend US jobs are also whipping up largely spurious concerns about US security.

The Bush administration has devoted projects under the Millennium Challenge Account to the Muslim world, and has also launched the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). The sums involved have, however, been pathetic, and largely swallowed by administrative costs and consultancy fees. In the financial year 2005-2006, only \$49 million from the MEPI were actually spent on projects in the region – not enough to make a significant difference to even one country.

The Truman and Eisenhower administrations, by contrast, were committed to levels of US aid which would be regarded as positively fabulous by US politicians at the start of the 21st century. The Marshall Plan cost roughly \$120 billion in 2006 dollars. Total US aid to Europe (including separate programs for Greece and Turkey) in the late 1940s and early 1950s came to almost \$267 billion. During the 35 years from the start of the Korean War to the end of the Vietnam War, a total sum comparable to the Marshall plan went to US allies in East and Southeast Asia.

The Truman-Eisenhower generation was also rightly convinced that to work in the struggle against Communism, this development had to be reasonably equitable: that it had to embody real elements of social justice, and visibly spread the benefits of economic growth to the mass of the population. In consequence, the US military government of Japan implemented radical land reforms, and the US also insisted on land reform in South Korea and Taiwan as a condition of its aid to those countries.<sup>3</sup> This tradition ties the strategically-driven aid programmes of the US from the 1940s to the 1970s to contemporary arguments concerning 'equitable development', presented by Joseph Stieglitz, Benjamin Friedman and others.

The identification of the US with blatantly unjust and unequal economic policies derived from the 'Washington Consensus' has had a terrible effect on US prestige in many countries, from Latin America through Russia to the Muslim world. This is especially damaging to the War on Terror, because of the special place of ideas of justice and dignity among Muslim cultural values. As the Mufti (senior Muslim cleric) of Egypt has stated, 'in authentic Muslim perceptions, justice structures all vital spheres of human existence. Justice is an absolute concept in Islamic teachings and precedes other central notions such as freedom and solidarity.'<sup>4</sup>

A new Western aid strategy must first promote policies and projects that will visibly benefit the majority of the population. Additionally, it must provide support for the growth of middle classes – who for a considerable time will form a minority in the countries concerned, but who are essential to the creation, and even more importantly the stabilization, of democracy.

The creation of middle classes, of course, requires overall economic growth, but more particularly it depends on the provision of reasonably easy access to loans for small businesses and for home ownership. This, in turn, requires the right kind of regional, national and local banking systems, funded to a sufficient level. The lead international player in helping to develop such banks is the International Monetary Fund, but it will be able to do little without strong political and financial support from the US and the other wealthy democracies. A valuable model for how to promote

such middle class development has been provided by EU strategies towards the former Communist states of Eastern Europe.

It is essential that any strategies be pursued consistently over decades, and not be subject to short-term changes as a result of Western domestic politics. For while stable and successful middle classes are an essential foundation of democracy, a range of disastrous historical experiences (worst of all, that of Weimar Germany) shows that middle classes who achieve a certain prosperity and status only to lose it again can be the most dangerous political group of all.<sup>5</sup>

There is the risk that economic decline will contribute to actual state collapse in certain countries, and provide opportunities to extremist groups to establish bases or even seize power. In certain cases, like that of Pakistan, this threat has been exaggerated in the Western media. However, in parts of Africa it is a very real one, and has indeed already occurred in Somalia. Most immediately, it is an obvious danger in Afghanistan, where despite massive inputs of Western military assistance and development aid the Afghan state remains extremely weak and would be unlikely to survive the withdrawal of Western troops.

At the First International Conference on Radicalisation and Political Violence, a high level working group met to discuss economics, development and radicalisation and recommend the following:

- The universal solutions and rigid free-market ideology of the 'Washington Consensus' must be decisively rejected. Aid strategies must be tailored to individual countries, and carefully shaped with political and social considerations in mind.
- Aid strategies must be shaped so as to promote 'equitable development', not only to help develop the economy as a whole but to spread a reasonable proportion of its benefits to the poor, especially in terms of jobs and improved services. It is important that Western aid be seen by the population to have a direct and positive impact on their own lives. Promoting development that is seen to benefit only the elites by contrast is actively dangerous – as Iran demonstrated in the 1970s.
- If we really want to help, there is no alternative to greatly increasing Western funding for development aid. Despite all the rhetoric comparing the war on terror to the Cold War, US aid to the Muslim world remains vastly lower than aid to East and Southeast Asia during the Cold War, which had a transformative effect on some of these countries and helped produce their economic miracles.
- As these examples demonstrate, while we should not direct aid to open kleptocracies like Mobutu's Zaire, we also cannot afford to let our efforts be crippled by too rigid an adherence to anti-corruption guidelines. In the past, this would have made the immensely successful US aid efforts to South Korea, Thailand and elsewhere impossible. Moreover, insisting on a complete absence of corruption is

pointless if part of the point of the whole exercise is to bribe national elites to help the West.

- As the example of US help to East and Southeast Asia demonstrates however, more important than aid as such is keeping our markets open to exports from the Muslim countries concerned. This does not mean reciprocal 'free trade' as it is now being promoted by the US and EU. On the contrary, during the early decades of the Cold War the US made a clear decision that for strategic reasons of the fight against Communism, it was necessary to keep US markets open to Korean, Taiwanese, Thai and other exports even while these countries kept their own markets largely closed to US products in order to protect their nascent industries.

Advancing this last proposal in particular would require considerable political courage from our political leaders. But when the soldiers of several Western countries are being required to show great physical courage in battle against the Taliban in Afghanistan, it does not seem too much to ask that their political leaders should at least show moral courage.

#### FOOTNOTES

- 1 Cf Peter Beinart, *The Good Fight*, op cit, p.178-179, 278 ff; Paul Blustein, 'US Free Trade Deals Include Few Muslim Countries', *Washington Post*, 3 December 2004.
- 2 Cf Robert Zoellick, 'Countering Terror with Trade', *Washington Post*, 20 September 2001.
- 3 Bruce Cumings, 'The Origin and Political Development of the Northeast Asian Political Economy', *International Organization*, 38, 1, Winter 1984, pp.24-25; Robert Wade, *Governing the Market: Economic Theory and the Role of Government in East Asian Industrialization* (Princeton University Press, 1990), p.82 ff.
- 4 George Perkovich, 'Giving Justice Its Due: The Missing Principle', *Foreign Affairs* July/August 2005; Afshin Molavi, 'Dignity, Above All', *Arab Trends*, 21 October 2004.
- 5 Cf Nancy Birdsall, 'Building a Market-Friendly Middle Class', remarks to the Annual World Bank Conference on Development Economics, Washington, DC, 18 April 2000; available at [www.carnegieendowment.org](http://www.carnegieendowment.org); Walter Russell Mead and Sherle R. Shwenninger, 'A Financial Architecture for Middle-Class-Oriented Development', Council on Foreign Relations Press, October 2000; Afshin Molavi, 'Mortgage Markets will Strengthen Arab Middle Classes', *The Daily Star*, 17 September 2004; Glenn Yago, Betsy Zeidman and Bill Schmidt, 'Creating Capital, Jobs and Wealth in Emerging Domestic Markets: Financial Technology Transfer to Low-Income Communities', Milken Institute Policy Brief, January 2003.

# The Use and Abuse of Religion

By Mustafa Cerić

In this short paper, I will put forward some thoughts on the role of religion in the process of radicalisation. Before turning to the issues of radicalisation and violent extremism, I believe it is important to reflect on the nature of religion and how it relates to the subject in philosophical terms.

## Religion and identity

It may sound like a cliché, but humans are not machines. We have a sense of purpose which stems from the universal search for the meaning of life. Faith, morality and religion serve as ‘an explanation of the *ultimate* meaning of life, and how to live accordingly, based on some notion of the Transcendent’. Religion, then,

*...does not attempt to explain just part of life, as do, for example, such disciplines as physics (the physical dimension), chemistry (the chemical dimension), biology (the living dimension), psychology (the inner human dimension), and sociology (the interhuman dimension). Rather, religion attempts to provide a comprehensive explanation of the entirety of life. Consequently, religion tends to be ‘absolute’.* (Leonard Swidler, *Beyond Violence Through Dialogue and Cooperation*)

Whereas religiously derived identities are often dismissed as ‘irrational’, those identities that are derived from liberal individualism and class are portrayed as ‘rational’. In fact, Marxism – together with the ideas of class and economic determinism – was meant to erase the idea of religious freedom. Liberal individualists, on the other hand, failed to comprehend the power of identity politics, assuming that the defeat of Fascism and Nazism was the final blow to the seemingly anachronistic forces of extreme nationalism.

Europe has been faced with the dilemma of political power based on reason versus identity since the eighteenth century. The duality of reason versus identity is, of course, a false dichotomy. It has been shown that the two do not necessarily exclude each other. As George Schöpflin points out,

*Recourse to reason provides clarity in understanding action, consistency, accountability, predictability, the ability to question motives and place them in a frame of reference. Identity, as against this, offers individuals the security of community and solidarity, of shared patterns of meanings, a bounded world in which to live and in which one can find others like oneself.* (George Schöpflin, *The New Politics of Europe: Nations, Identity, Power*)

Power, Schöpflin argues, ‘operates in both these spheres. The exclusion of either reason or identity creates unease.’

It seems obvious that religion is among the factors that make up personal and group identities. The question, then, is how religious identity can be saved from being used to legitimate other issues and, instead, motivate people to strive for peace, justice and tolerance in everyday life.

Within a relatively short period of history, the telephone, radio, television, motion pictures, and, more recently, computers, e-mail, and the worldwide web have drastically altered our perceptions of time, space, and one another. Even so, these tools of modern technology, which connect people to one another more closely in the physical sense, do not bear fruit in making them closer in the sense of decent human relationships. Terrorist attacks in recent years are alarming signs of the use and misuse of religion, and the state of mind of many in Iraq and Afghanistan today speaks for itself.

## Truth and justice

To counter the abuse of religion for the purpose of promoting radicalisation and extremism, we need to begin by exploring basic notions of truth and justice. Religion is, after all, about faith and morality – it embodies the strong human sense of truth and justice. John Lukacs argues:

*Justice is of a lower order than is truth, and untruth is lower than is injustice. The administration of justice, even with the best intentions of correcting injustice, may often have to ignore or overlook untruths... We live and are capable of living with many injustices; with many shortcomings of justice; but what is a deeper and moral shortcoming is a self-willed choice to live with untruths... The difference between the propagation of justice and that of truth, resulting in the difference of the prevalence of injustice and of untruth, has perhaps never been as extensive (and startling) as it is now, at the end of the Modern Age, and in the midst of our democratic age. There may be less injustice – surely of institutionalized injustice – now than ever before. The governments of many states and all kind of legal establishments profess to dedicate themselves to the elimination of injustice: slavery, exploitation, racial and social discriminations.* (John Lukacs, *At the End of an Age*)

In facing religious radicalism and political violence, we therefore need to engage in a dialogue of truth as well as have a vision of justice. In John Rawls' view,

*Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of system of thought. A theory however elegant and economical must be rejected or revised if it is untrue; likewise laws and institutions no matter how efficient and well-arranged must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust... the rights secured by justice are not subject to political bargaining or to the calculus of social interests.* (John Rawls, A Theory of Justice).

There is no alternative to developing a practical vision that is based on dialogue and will win the hearts and minds of all religions against the extreme views of the radicals who are abusing religion to justify their attacks against the innocent.

Some of the great political philosophers of our age have highlighted the fact that politics is made up of seemingly contradictory forces: 'Peace depends on war. Freedom on order. Stability on change. Liberty on violence. Security on fear'. (Geoff Mulgan, *Good and Bad Power*). It is because of these 'paradoxical truths' that we are confronted with the paradoxical logic of politics, which rewards those who are bad because they could be worse, and punishes those who are good because they could be better. Those who are peaceful are neglected because of their not being troublemakers, whereas those who are violent are given concessions because they could make trouble. Nevertheless, no one can change two absolute truths: that to forgive the sin of crimes against humanity is to commit crimes against humanity; and that crime in the name of religion is crime against religion.

### **Taking responsibility**

In order to defeat religious radicalism and political violence, a change of mindset will be necessary: replacing the argument of the might of big nations with the argument of the right of small nations; the argument of historical myth with the argument of historical responsibility; the argument of poor political compromise with the argument of strong moral commitment; the argument of sin with the argument of Adam's humble repentance; the argument of falsehood with the argument of Abraham's truth; the argument of revenge with the argument of Jesus' love; and the argument of injustice with the argument of Muhammad's justice.

Doing so will not be easy. It will require everyone to confront some hard questions which desperately need honest answers. For example, why did the United Nations Security Council's proclaimed 'safe zone' of Srebrenica become the abandoned 'zone of genocide'? Why do thousands of widows from the 'safe zone' still not know where their husbands are now – dead or alive? Where is the courage to face obvious evil?

If no one has the monopoly on pain, why is the pain of victims denied? If no one has the monopoly on morality, why is the righteousness of some people not appreciated? Can we do humanitarian work before war rather than after the war? Can we protect human rights before genocide, rather than after genocide? Can we improve human relations before ethnic cleansing rather than after the ethnic cleansing? Can we take care to protect women's safety before they are raped rather than after they are raped? Can we learn the rules of human rights not so that we can break them but to maintain them for the sake of our common future?

What is human happiness but sharing good and bad times with others? Are rich nations willing to share their wealth with the poor ones? Can a man with a full stomach understand the grief of hungry people? Can poor children share the happiness of education and success in society with their peers? Can refugees return to their homes and share the blessings of safety and freedom with the rest of the world?

Politics is too important to be left to the politicians alone; religion is too precious to be left to the theologians alone; and the issue of war and peace is too delicate to be left to the generals alone. Every one of us is responsible in his or her capacity for global peace and security. No one has an excuse for being indifferent to religious radicalism and political violence. In order to defeat terrorism, radicalisation and political violence, we must become more passionate about global peace and security than the terrorists are about global terrorism against innocent people.

The last few centuries of human history have witnessed discoveries in the physical world that ancient generations would have never dreamt of. Even so, as centuries have unfolded, we have also witnessed human evil that would have seemed unimaginable before it happened. Indeed, mankind has achieved tremendous success in the human mind, but is faced with an unprecedented failure in the realm of human morality.

Will human success in the next centuries be measured in terms of man's ability to master the Laws of Physics, or will it be measured in terms of the human ability to discover the Laws of Morality that will preserve the physical world? Is it not time that we discover the way towards morality in the same manner as it has been discovered for science?

### **Conclusions**

Based on these reflections, our discussions at the conference gave rise to three emerging themes, which are summed up in the following.

The first theme relates to the notions of morality and faith. Religions fulfil certain psychological and social needs which render them useful as an ordering principle in societies. Indeed, religion as a guidance system of moral behaviour can stop people from reacting to violence with more violence.

The second theme deals with the connection between religion and culture. Cultural connotations matter, because they provide the tools with which individuals interpret religion. Violence takes place among religions as well as within religious belief systems. As a result, we believe that there seems to be no direct, conclusive link between any particular religion and radicalisation leading to violent behaviour

Thirdly, we examined the question of justice and violence. We believe that religion is itself rarely the reason for violence, but a seemingly coherent narrative for the justification of resorting to violence. Indeed, the radicalisation process appears to require a backdrop of political grievances, which are often unconnected to religion.

The perception and interpretation of truth and justice – and the violation of these notions – seems to be a central factor in the radicalisation process. This is particularly the case regarding the question of how individuals end up perceiving that resorting to violence is the most viable remaining option to further their goals.

Considering Muslims specifically, they often feel that they are unable to tell 'their story'. They also believe that international institutions are unjust towards them, giving rise to a sense of victimisation. Therefore, we must never cease to remind ourselves, that the most powerful weapon against any misuse of religion, political violence and radicalisation is honest dialogue aimed at achieving truth and justice. Simply put, there is no alternative to dialogue.

# Civil Resistance and Alternatives to Violent Struggle

By Jack DuVall

**T**he use of extreme violence by radical groups is a tactic of political conflict to the extent that its perpetrators claim to have political goals. If the costs of violence as a means of conflict are higher than its adherents realise, and if another, lesser known strategy would produce greater benefits, there is reason to believe that promoting the alternative and diverting the followers of a cause from the use of extreme violence can be successful. After all, at the First International Conference on Radicalisation and Political Violence in London, Daniel Benjamin of the Brookings Institution declared that any strategy to deal with these twin threats 'has to counter the narrative of groups using extreme violence.'

## The Violent Narrative

In 1998, Jamal Ahmidan, a young Moroccan man, emerged from a Spanish prison obsessed with the Palestinian struggle. By 2003, he could not sleep at night, knowing that women and children were being killed by Americans in Iraq. A year later, he was one of the ringleaders behind the Madrid train bombings and committed suicide as the police closed in. A statement was found in his papers denouncing the 'tyrants' who had humiliated him.<sup>1</sup>

Hatred of political oppressors is explicitly enjoined by leaders of violent groups. In a video released in July 2007, Ayman Al Zawahiri of al Qaeda vilified the Egyptian regime's torture of prisoners and reviled the Saudi regime for corruption, citing princes who had taken bribes from British defence contractors.<sup>2</sup> In April 2007, Al Qaeda's commander in Afghanistan, Sheikh Abu Laith Al Libi, said that while establishing Islam throughout the world was their long-term goal, the short-term goal was 'to rescue the Muslims from the oppression to which they are subject.'<sup>3</sup>

Terrorists hype the treachery of the enemies which they identify in order to make their extreme methods appear to be proportionate – and necessary. 'Oppression cannot be demolished except in a hail of bullets,' Osama bin Laden

has said.<sup>4</sup> Al Zawahiri has even quoted Malcolm X: 'If you are not ready to die for [freedom], take the word 'freedom' out of your dictionary.'<sup>5</sup>

While essential in justifying terror, the argument of the necessity of violence has crucial vulnerabilities – its explanatory value and credibility – which can be exploited in curbing the appeal of violent groups. In a word, the violent narrative is not true. 'Violence, being instrumental by nature, is rational to the extent that it is effective in reaching the end that must justify it,' said Hannah Arendt.<sup>6</sup> Yet in the 46 years since Frantz Fanon recommended 'red hot cannonballs and bloody knives' as the means of overthrowing colonial oppressors, no violent struggle has led to a government that enforced the rights of the people.<sup>7</sup>

In research for a forthcoming article, 'Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Political Conflict,' Maria Stephan and Erica Chenoweth compared the outcomes of 285 nonviolent and violent resistance campaigns in the 20th century and found that 'major nonviolent campaigns have achieved success 55% of the time, compared to 28.4% for violent resistance campaigns.'<sup>8</sup> Violence is neither more effective in overturning oppressors nor likely to benefit the people on whose behalf it is used – though few who hear exhortations to take up violent struggle know that.

Since the discourse of justification suffuses the rationale for extreme violence, the process of radicalisation is insupportable if that rationale is undercut in the mind of its prime audience – civilian populations that are the source of potential manpower. 'The way to deprive them of their ability to recruit,' said Ashraf Mohsin, an Egyptian diplomat specializing in counter-terrorism, 'is to attack the message.'<sup>9</sup>

Whatever creates civil space for truthful information enables this approach. Cass Sunstein of The University of Chicago argues in his forthcoming book, *Extremism: Its Causes and Cure*, that radicalisation is driven by what he calls the 'outrage heuristic,' which occurs in 'segregated dissident spaces which create social interaction that intensifies group-polarized extremist opinions.' This happens most easily, he notes, in the 'echo chambers' of repressive societies where the state is always dispensing false information that isn't trusted.<sup>10</sup>

It is therefore not accidental that terrorist groups depend almost symbiotically on authoritarian regimes, not only as rhetorical targets that help them construct a political rationale for their struggles, but also in producing the conditions that fuel radicalisation. Any global strategy aimed at interrupting this process is unlikely to succeed if it tolerates or overlooks opportunities to weaken locations of authoritarian power.

Countering the violent narrative therefore requires offering an alternative strategy for overturning oppression. To frame that alternative, the argument against instrumental violence should have higher priority than the argument against political radicalisation – since there have been radical political changes driven by nonviolent struggles and revolutions. Means, not ends, are the urgent problem.

## The Counter Narrative

A proven force for shifting political systems from oppressive rule to democratic consent is that of civil resistance, involving the systematic use by broadly representative, civilian-based movements of disruptive tactics such as strikes, boycotts, protests and civil disobedience. 'People power' can shred the legitimacy of the existing system, drive up its costs, and divide the loyalty of those who enforce its orders.

In the 20th century, civil resistance forced the Russian Tsar to convene a new parliament in 1905, helped Germans stymie the French invasion of the Ruhr in 1923, enabled Mohandas Gandhi to vitiate British control of India, sapped the foundation of the German occupation of Denmark and other European nations in World War II, gave African-Americans a way to shatter segregation in the American South in the 1950s and 1960s, powered the Solidarity movement in Poland and the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia which helped unravel communist control of Eastern Europe, collapsed the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines and Pinochet's rule in Chile in the 1980s, became the decisive factor in the fall of Apartheid in South Africa, toppled Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia, was the hammer of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine – and has begun the 'Saffron Revolution' in Burma.

A study by Freedom House published in July 2005, 'How Freedom Is Won,' reported that in 50 of the 67 transitions from authoritarianism to democracy in the previous 35 years, nonviolent civic force rather than armed struggle was pivotal. Moreover, it concluded, 'the activity of strong nonviolent coalitions reduces the appeal of opposition violence.'<sup>11</sup>

This confirms the insight of Princeton economist Alan Krueger who, while sceptical of anti-terrorist policies that try to diminish the supply of jihadists, believes 'it makes sense to focus on the demand side, such as by... vigorously protecting and promoting peaceful means of protest, so there is less demand for pursuing grievances through violent means.'<sup>12</sup>

To the extent that zeal in fighting oppression can be harnessed to civil resistance, not only can an alternative pole of creative space in previously closed societies be raised to attract and organize resisters, intense pressure can be placed on authoritarian regimes that quicken the process of radicalisation and serve as despised targets for violent incitement. The political rationale for fighting oppression would effectively be transferred from terrorist groups to civil resistance.

This has happened before in the modern period. In India in the 1920's and 1930's, Gandhi mounted nationwide campaigns of non-cooperation and civil disobedience that mobilized tens of millions of Indians to fight for independence from the British Empire. For almost thirty years before Gandhi's rise, the most dramatic resistance to the British had come from terrorist groups. But despite a popular following in Bengal, Punjab and Maharastra, assassinations of British officials, and the martyrdom-by-imprisonment of a charismatic terrorist leader, terror had no political

results. Gandhi vociferously challenged its effectiveness, and by the time of his Salt March in 1931, he had thoroughly stolen the terrorists' show, without firing a shot.

In the Philippines in the 1970's, after President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law, armed resistance was led by the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army, which steadily gained strength – and helped give Marcos justification to consolidate authoritarian control. But after the regime assassinated the democratic leader Benigno Aquino in 1983, his widow led a nationwide civilian-based movement that propelled her to win a presidential election in 1986 and invite mass protests that protected defecting military units. The ensuing victory of 'people power' undermined the appeal of armed struggle as a way to change the system.

Today the choice between civil resistance and radical violence as the vehicle for dislodging oppressors is less spontaneous and more deliberate by activists. For example, in the Maldives, governed since 1978 by the same corrupt dictator and his business clique, there is a competition for leadership of popular discontent. A nascent but erratic opposition party is vying for primacy with nonviolent civic activists but also with radical Islamists. The latter are essentially telling the people: Don't believe the democrats; they will only deliver you to the capitalists. But many Maldivian women are convinced that women's rights will disappear if Islamists take power. Meanwhile the regime is believed to have staged a bombing to justify new repression and has played games with promised elections.

Similar competition or parallel struggles by power-seeking groups that have opted for either violent or nonviolent methods can be found today in the Palestinian Territories, Iran, Pakistan, and Ethiopia. In Muslim societies such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Egypt, debates among militants and bystanders rage about the justifiability of extreme violence.

In the global media, the default assumption of news producers and editors is that the most powerful force against state power is violence. But doubts about whether the costs of violence can be sustained are beginning to appear in the visual media. In Alfonso Cuarón's Oscar-nominated 2006 motion picture, 'Children of Men,' a police state in Britain in the year 2027 is bedeviled by violent fighters who murder innocent people in pursuit of a woman they think will discredit the regime, and tanks pulverize apartment buildings full of civilians while trying to kill insurrectionists. From the action of either side, the result is not freedom but rubble.

Amid this global competition of events, ideas and images claiming to represent the battle for justice and the cause of liberation, what might be the elements of a new international strategy to help redirect militant struggle from violent to nonviolent conflict?

### **A Civilian-Based Strategy**

It has become a cliché that 'the real battle against terrorism lies in wresting the hearts and minds' of the people away from extremism, but the crux of that, in the words

of John Harrison of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research in Singapore, is that its 'belief system [has] to be challenged and defeated to a point where you are not going to get people to support it any more.'<sup>13</sup> All political movements must persuade followers to undertake a particular form of action. If the effect of its action is dubious or uncertain, a radical movement cannot as easily produce the psychological agitation necessary to field new violent actors.

So the *first dimension of a strategy* to develop alternatives to radicalisation and political violence is obvious: Those who want to fight oppression should be deflected from favouring and adopting violent struggle as the means to do so. This requires three specific tactics:

- The public discourse that justifies violence as effective or necessary has to be discredited, targeting the instrumental rather than the ideological basis for the enterprise. The goal of terrorists to overturn oppression is not the problem – the methods of action to which they are attached are the problem. But the assumption that terror is 'invigorating,' to use Lenin's word, is rooted so deeply in the modern revolutionary mind, that educators, civil society leaders, international institutions, and the news and entertainment media everywhere must be enjoined to help subvert the mythology of violence.
- The cost to innocent non-combatants of extreme violence must be publicly dramatized among the people ostensibly represented by violent groups. Those who have notional sympathy for these groups should be shown graphically – through a new global media offensive – that they are toxic to the life and livelihood of children and women as well as the hope for any general stability in society. The reality of violent struggle is that it kills innocent people who have a universally accepted right to live. Any ideas or beliefs which reject that in principle or violate it in practice must be censured and stigmatized.
- A significantly higher level of personal sanctions should be applied to members of authoritarian ruling groups who oppress their own people or control states that finance, harbour or supply groups using extreme violence. This should include the complete interdiction of financial and travel opportunities beyond their own borders. It is time to terminate normal international professional life for senior government officials whose actions procure, facilitate or justify the use of terrorism and organized violence.

Yet criticizing and obstructing violence only goes so far without promoting an alternative, once the goal of activists to defeat oppression is accepted. So the *second dimension of a strategy* to direct would-be fighters away from extreme violence is to promote civil resistance as a powerful force for change, and then to legitimize and support its use. This should have five elements:

- The international community – NGO's, governments and regional entities such as the EU – should assist capacity-building in strategic and tactical performance by indigenous actors in nonviolent struggles for rights, democracy, and freedom from domination. These nonviolent action-takers should be told: We will give you the knowledge and the tools you need, but we will not interfere in your choice of ideology or political goals. This effort should include the establishment of a new international funding source for the support of nonviolent resistance, free of the taint or suspicion of any government's interests or politics.
- A new global solidarity network of activists and foundations must be developed to support the decision to opt for nonviolent struggle and to help minimize the risks that it entails. We must create a world in which nonviolent resisters know that when they take the risks inherent in dissidence and opposition, there will be a worldwide army of advocates, teachers, donors and friends willing and ready to give them physical, logistical, legal and moral assistance.
- Media and educational institutions should be enjoined to raise the visibility and teach the 'counter narrative' of effective nonviolent struggle everywhere. Widely held misconceptions – that nonviolent action is about making peace rather than defeating oppressors, or that resistance is always quelled with repression – have to be reversed. Young people must be shown that the pay-offs for involvement in violent groups – belonging to an urgent cause, becoming a warrior – are also provided by civil resistance. The stunning record of nonviolent movements on every continent in winning rights and liberating peoples must become common knowledge.
- New international sanctions should be targeted at repressive state actors who shrink the space in civil society used by nonviolent actors and independent media. Mobilizing against tyranny and injustice is facilitated when organizing and communicating with citizens is less difficult. If these channels are shut off, the impulse to resist is either directed toward extremist violence or has to await safer, non-political avenues to be expressed, thus possibly delaying the development of an alternative to radical violence.
- The international news media must be challenged to increase substantially the reporting of civil resistance campaigns and movements. Persistent nonviolent strategies are often more successful in ending oppression and winning rights, yet there is far more reporting of transitory violence and the spectacle of terrorist actions. Conflict is inevitable in a world wracked by the suppression of freedom and vast inequities, so leaders in the new global civil society must choose which method of conflict should be encouraged.

Today in Zimbabwe, in the midst of autocratic abuses and economic collapse, a valiant group called Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) has mobilized more than

30,000 members to join in protests and civil disobedience demanding a peaceful transition from dictatorship to genuine democracy. Jailings, torture and sexual violence visited on these women have not stopped them. But today they are mostly limited to their own resources. When a member dies at the hands of the regime, only her family and fellow activists mourn – few elsewhere notice or seem to care. That has to be changed, so that nonviolent struggle in any country never feels like a lonely or thankless quest.

There is a vigorous alternative to violent struggle, and it is represented by millions of courageous civil resisters who live in Zimbabwe, Burma, Egypt, West Papua, West Sahara, Belarus, Iran and dozens of other countries. The causes pursued and the methods used in such conflicts are not only compatible with the goal of quenching the fires of political violence. The success of this alternative as a force for political change is that goal's prerequisite.

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# Negotiations and Peace Processes

By Yezid Sayigh

## Scoping the challenge

The purpose of negotiations and peace processes generally is twofold: to end violence in the immediate term and replace it with non-violent means of pursuing conflict; and in the longer term, to reach innovative and pragmatic solutions to conflicts and their root causes. Three questions present themselves when considering whether this approach is effective, and how to make it so, in tackling the particular challenge of radicalisation.

First, what defines a group as 'radical', and does this determine whether there can be negotiations or a peace process with it? Is there something about the nature of the group's ideology, psychology, or social composition that makes it inherently unwilling and unable to engage in dialogue or compromise, whether in relation to its objectives or to its strategy and tactics? Is there a dividing line regarding the activities of the group beyond which negotiating with it is impossible even if it is willing to talk? These issues certainly affect the approach and timing of any form of political engagement with such groups, but what is immediately apparent is that labelling them as 'radical' does not in itself take us forward analytically in terms of acquiring an accurate understanding of them. Nor does it necessarily help in de-legitimizing these groups or encouraging moderate trends among their followers and within their core constituencies.

Second, do negotiations and peace processes with radical groups differ in any essential way from conflict resolution approaches towards more conventional non-state actors using violence, such as national liberation movements? It has become commonplace to distinguish the latter category of groups that, while at times using terrorist tactics, seek relatively pragmatic objectives and are therefore amenable to dialogue and compromise. Many of these groups have been described by their opponents as 'radical' and 'terrorist' at one time or another, but currently the radical label is attached most often to groups engaged in identity-based conflict that is viewed in zero-sum terms. Whether this perception of radical groups is accurate is of critical importance, since it pre-determines assumptions about the utility of mediation and negotiation. The risk in this context is that labelling a group as 'radical' too easily absolves its adversaries of the need to acknowledge their own role in causing conflict and fuelling radicalisation, and to accept the need to subject their own policies and

counter-strategies to critique or modification. Arguably most important is to observe that very few, radical groups are like Al Qaeda; the significance is that most groups are home-grown, locally-based, and retain a national focus, and so to conflate them with Al Qaeda type radicalism is a fundamental error.

Third, what is the correct balance between pressure and engagement when dealing with radical groups in order to prompt them to towards desirable goals, whether these relate to the means (ending violence) or the ends (stable political agreements)? Similarly, what is the balance between the risk that radical groups will gain from the willingness of others to engage with them, by enhancing their standing and legitimacy within their constituencies at the expense of possibly more moderate rivals, and the gains to be made from bringing them into a structured political process that may ease or resolve violent conflict? In the first instance, clearly there is often a marked asymmetry of motivation, as radical groups generally appear subject to weak normative or political restraints and willing to inflict massive, indiscriminate violence against civilians, and so negotiations may not be effective without coercion. Yet refusing to engage with them and withholding recognition may only confirm their belief in the utility of violence as a means of challenging the monopoly of force enjoyed by their adversaries. It follows that, without engaging radical groups politically, and without giving them a sense of what they will receive for a cessation of violence, they are unlikely to perceive a stake worth acquiring through negotiation.

## Developing a template

### *Talking as the norm, not as a concession*

The preceding translates into a number of operating principles. The first of these relates to definitions and labels: how do the nature and objectives of radical groups, both self-declared and as perceived by others, affect the decision to talk to them, and what are the practical implications for the manner of engagement? It is immediately apparent that there is wide divergence, indeed disagreement, over categorizing radical groups. A further problem that can arise as a result of applying catch-all labels is to conflate different types of groups and threats into one, diminishing the likelihood of designing appropriate political and military strategies to deal with each.

To draw on a different set of examples, governments confronted with sub-state groups seeking autonomy or independence in fragile states or divided societies tend to perceive or portray an existential, radical threat that cannot be resolved through negotiation, or at least not at an acceptable cost. But in other cases, refusing to enter dialogue with armed non-state actors at certain points in time has been less an absolute principle than a tactic, or the result of disappointment with past negotiations and peace deals.

What this suggests is the need to be circumspect: not about labelling groups but about drawing the practical policy implication that this labelling precludes talking

to them. Labels are blunt instruments that may obscure political dynamics that offer critical opportunities for conflict resolution, and for this reason they can often be self-serving. Whether to engage politically should not be in question so long as the 'other side' is willing to talk, although the timing and form of engagement may vary and the approach needs to be assessed in a context-specific and evolving manner. This gains special importance in the case of radical groups that emerge in response to state failure. For example, in Somalia, 'traditional' warlords like Mohammed Aidede have been superseded amidst a plethora of armed groups, offering some degree of law and order in their zones of control by the Islamic Tribunals. In such cases concerns about the evolution from 'warlords' to 'Islamists' should be balanced with an understanding of the need of societies for public goods (such as security) that these actors may provide.

However, in arguing for political engagement, the above does not propose a blanket approach that seeks to bring all radical groups into negotiations and peace processes regardless of their rhetoric and behaviour. First, it is crucial here to distinguish between talking and negotiating: there should be few if any restrictions on the former, whereas the latter is feasible only with groups that are willing to accept some scope for reciprocity and compromise, at least in principle. Second, talking may be conducted indirectly, for example through non-governmental organisations or civil society groups, not in order to ensure plausible deniability so much as to minimize the political significance of appearing to extend recognition and legitimisation through direct talks. Third, a 'spectrum of engagement' may be established, in which talks are held with some groups while coercive pressure is used against others, or in which these and other approaches may be used simultaneously towards the same group.

In all cases, mediators should not submit to vetoes imposed by parties to the conflict against talking with their adversaries. Vetoes often prove counter-productive and are routinely violated, undermining their effectiveness and the credibility of the policy they are supposed to underpin.

#### *Pre-conditions: help or hindrance?*

The second operational principle relates to conditionality and sequencing, specifically the utility and feasibility of setting pre-conditions for political engagement with radical groups, rewarding them for meeting pre-conditions, and the desirability of flexibility regarding the order in which each side undertakes required measures or initiates dialogue.

As a general rule, setting pre-conditions before talking to a group is unhelpful and, more often than not, counter-productive. It tends merely to raise the premium set on acquiring recognition and to reinforce the apparent utility and validity of force as a counter-means for doing so on the part of relatively weak, non-state actors. Pre-conditions that directly affect belief-systems, or that appear to diminish the credibility of groups before their own communities and constituencies, are almost

guaranteed to block progress, without genuinely securing core interests of adversaries or third parties. Pre-conditions may themselves become the subject of bargaining, often conducted through coercive or violent forms, adding to the complexity and intractability of conflict. Mediators must think hard whether to accept or challenge pre-conditions presented by parties to the conflict. In the final analysis, talking should be regarded as a norm, not as a concession, and so using it to gain leverage is ineffective.

Conditionality is still needed, if talking is to lead to negotiations and a structured, purposeful peace process. A sense of reciprocity and mutual obligation must be developed in order to consolidate gains and measure compliance. Such conditionality can be built into the peace process and staggered or applied incrementally once it is underway, rather than being asserted in the form of pre-conditions for talking at all. The issue of disarmament by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) was dealt with successfully in this way, with the former occurring in several stages and verified by a third party, whilst the IRA was given a face-saving label.

The preceding example reconfirms the need to allow radical groups leeway in legitimizing their entry into the process to their own constituencies, and in reassuring themselves that the concessions they make do not place them at a fatal disadvantage. It also demonstrates the need to give believable incentives to radical groups to reduce, suspend, or cease violence or to accept any other conditions. It must be clear that something is being offered, and that negotiations will involve meaningful and substantive exchanges. In increasing the reasons for radical groups to talk and to seriously consider the conditions set for transition to actual negotiations, this also increases the range of policy instruments in the hands of governments and mediators: when talking is made a serious option for radical groups, 'freezing them out' becomes an effective third alternative to either bombing them or negotiating with them. The key is to avoid pre-conditions for talks, while insisting that all demands be addressed if negotiations are to be conducted, and to build performance-based criteria, into the peace process as a means of identifying non-compliance and of justifiably imposing penalties when needed.

#### *Utilizing factional politics*

The preceding point leads to the third operational principle, which is the importance of observing and utilising factional difference and dynamics within radical groups. Once again, the idea that radical groups are undifferentiated and beyond rational or cost-benefit calculation, and consequently that talking to them is futile, is misleading and self-defeating. In reality, all political bodies have their factions, and it is important to encourage those individuals or factions who are at least willing to talk, and who may possibly moderate their group's behaviour, engage in peace processes and accept negotiated compromises.

The Iraqi experience supports this view forcefully. On the one hand, the national dialogue effort has adopted an inclusive approach of talking to all groups, including armed insurgents and regardless of their public rhetoric and stated agendas – the only exception being Al Qaeda, not only because of its deliberate slaughter of civilians, but also because it refuses to talk. This approach has paid dividends in the return of various Sunni groups to political engagement concerning constitutional matters and participation in a modified governing system. On the other hand, the United States (US) Army has taken former Sunni insurgents under its wing to further isolate Al Qaeda. Perception and policy played a critical role: the key to enabling the shift from fighting to supporting those who were previously labelled ‘Saddam diehards’ or ‘fanatics’ is the evolution of the political process in ways that have altered the incentive structure and the cost-benefit calculations of Iraqi Sunnis.

The Iraqi case also underlines the need both to reward moderation and to protect leading individuals or factions who break away from radical groups or who isolate and marginalise their hardliners. The prospect of talks over a modified constitutional or governing system has been critical in shifting Sunni perceptions, while counter-attacks by Al Qaeda against the tribal militias and urban ‘Awakening Councils’ that have turned the tide against it demonstrate the need for a continuous process of engagement that maintains the incentives and the opportunity for these groups to establish their own domestic legitimacy. However, an inclusive approach of this sort is not without costs and risks. In this example, the reward for negotiation with former Sunni insurgents is their absorption within the Iraqi Army and a share of the cabinet seats allocated to the Sunnis; the former will further inflate an already bloated public payroll and possibly alienate Shi’a allies, while the latter will come at the expense of those Sunni groups that braved the threat of assassination to participate in government and enhance its legitimacy. This is a poor reward for their moderation.

Finding an approach that resolves all these tensions and paradoxes is highly unlikely, but the benefits of reducing radical ranks and isolating the hardliners are indisputable and critical to gaining control over the security situation, without which political and economic reconstruction is impossible. Furthermore, the Iraqi case offers a reminder that engaging in political dialogue and rewarding moderation does not mean reducing pressure on radical groups. It also demonstrates graphically the importance of acquiring a detailed understanding of radical groups which allows more effective dialogue through avoiding direct challenges to core values or beliefs, accurately identifying their motivations and suitable incentives for moderation, or correctly evaluating their ability to deliver on agreements and ensure compliance within their own ranks.

In all cases, however, the critical element in pre-empting or confronting radicalisation is winning allies among the authorities and populations. Combating radicalisation is fundamentally dependent on winning the active support of local communities, police forces, intelligentsia and media for whom the radical groups have real faces and for whom the radicalizing impulse is familiar and possibly legitimate.

In other words, talking to radical groups and encouraging moderate factions within them is actually an important part of winning the hearts and minds that count most.

#### *Avoiding blindness towards ourselves*

It is important to remember that mediators bring their own normative assumptions and material interests to the process, and – moreover – are perceived to do so by parties to the conflict. It is rare for an outside actor other than the United Nations (UN) to be completely honest, neutral, and even-handed; Norwegian mediation in Israel and Palestine and in Sri Lanka is an example of disinterested mediation, but it is highly unusual and its real influence and capability have probably been over-stated.

Furthermore, outside actors bring their own factional politics to bear, a notable example being the contradictory policies promoted by rival visiting US delegations in Baghdad in 2004, some lobbying for a quick transition to a full-fledged democratic process while others worked to delay general elections, all of which fed into an unstable and volatile political situation on the ground and strained US relations with key local partners.

Therefore, the nature and consequences of political intervention or mediation need to be considered carefully. One risk is that local actors will displace their own need to talk directly and build trust, by placing too much reliance on the external actors. Another is that strong local actors, especially governments, will use the active or tacit support of outside actors to marginalise or avoid political engagement with adversaries labelled as ‘radical’. Consequently, outside actors may play a more beneficial role by influencing the incentive structure within which the local actors formulate their approaches; insisting on talking to all parties helps to circumvent approaches based on power asymmetries and may thus invigorate peace processes. In such situations outside actors can play a vital role by offering neutral arbitration, which is vital if some sense of a level playing field and dependable ‘rules of the game’ are to be established. Otherwise the costs of engagement and compliance may be seen as too high or too risky by the weaker parties, prompting defection and renewed violence. In all this, it is assumed that the outside actors understand that what they face is locally-based radical groups operating within their national territory rather than a trans-national radical entity that engages them in direct conflict.

Clearly, a balanced approach requires securing buy-in by local governments and their domestic allies, formulating the ‘rules’, and finding credible penalties for non-compliance (that outside actors are also willing – and able to apply). This is especially challenging, but peace processes cannot be anchored without it. This underlines the importance of the relationship between mediators and the local adversaries – governments or other protagonists – confronting radical groups. Although these local protagonists may be allies, they may be weak and unable to deliver on their commitments or else unwilling to do so because they are authoritarian and repressive, raising ethical questions and credibility problems. In such cases, the neutrality of

outside actors should be reconsidered: if the aim is to transform a 'radical' threat through political engagement, then mediators may have to advocate an approach that contradicts more 'eliminationist' policies pursued by local allies.

### Recommendations

- Talk to anyone who is willing to talk. This does not necessarily mean engaging in negotiation, nor does it mean ceasing pressure in parallel, though this must be carefully targeted and nuanced.
- Identify principal goals: to bring about a change in the means used by radical groups (violence, especially against civilians), or to bring about new, stable end situations?
- Study radical groups (and all parties to a conflict) carefully, to know their real agendas and what they perceive as opportunity costs and benefits and to use these in order to engage them effectively; this is especially important in order to encourage relatively moderate individuals or factions.
- Establish and use incentive structures (integrating the political, symbolic, and material) to affect the critical choices of all relevant parties, and also to indicate to radical groups what rewards they will gain for moderation; whilst continually testing commitment.
- Conditionality should be built into negotiations and peace processes, but pre-conditions should be avoided; for conditionality to be seen as legitimate and credible, it should also involve reciprocity, clear criteria for measuring compliance, and means of arbitration.
- An inclusive approach and an inclusive solution are always preferable, but this does not mean seeking consensus at any cost.
- Requiring radical groups to accept compromise and to modify their means and goals also means compromise and modification on the part of those confronting them; without the recognition implicit in talking to them and in addressing their agendas, they will continue to seek to challenge the monopoly of force and legitimacy claimed by their opponents through violence.

# Using Hard Power in the Fight against Terrorism

By Daniel Benjamin

### The Strategic Value of Good Tactics and the Right Tools

A key element of any strategy to contain and defeat the terrorist challenge involves the prevention of attacks, especially in regard to jihadist terrorists, who aim to prove through violence that they are the true leaders of the Muslim world. It is self-evident, though worth reiterating, that successful tactical counterterrorism must be a major part of any strategy to deal with contemporary terrorism – especially its most dangerous form, which emanates from the radical Islamist movement. That means capturing and killing terrorists, disrupting their operations and keeping them off-balance so they cannot carry out attacks. This is not only a matter of protecting innocent lives – a paramount priority in its own right – but a necessity for deflating the terrorists' overall effort. Put another way: If our foe practices a strategy of 'propaganda of the deed,' to use Prince Kropotkin's famous phrase, we must prevent the deed. We will not be able to stop all attacks, but frustrating jihadist efforts undermines the terrorists' claim to being uniquely effective in moving its opponents to change their policies. Although the global level of jihadist violence has been rising, at least in number of attacks if not fatalities – and the picture is badly muddled by Iraq – the post-9/11 record is better than might have been expected. Indeed, few counterterrorism practitioners, would likely have predicted that as many conspiracies in Europe, Southeast Asia, North Africa and elsewhere could be thwarted.

Tactical counterterrorism is an empirical science whose essential instruments are in the realms of law-enforcement, intelligence and military force. No one should expect a miraculous breakthrough that will cause the terrorists to give up. To maintain progress in this area, countries allied in the fight against terrorism will need to maintain a sustained level of investment in technology – especially signals intelligence – in their clandestine services and in some of their less rich liaison partners. We will also need to improve the quality of analysis, which has been uninspired at best in recent years. We will need to study best practices intensively in the areas of policing, prosecution and intelligence-gathering. One of the outstanding challenges that concerned states face is the need to constantly improve coordination among the different component parts within their bureaucracies. It has been widely – though quietly – observed that law enforcement and intelligence agencies within a particular country have better

relationships with foreign partners than with each other. Clearly, there must be sustained, energetic attempts to bring down the cultural barriers that hinder the kind of cooperation that is necessary.

To win public approval of counterterrorism practices – and therefore ensure that we have the durable defences we need – nothing is more important than maintaining a shared sense of the legitimacy of government policy. This is an extraordinarily challenging requirement for the leaders of Western democracies, not least because of the integral role that secret intelligence plays in counterterrorism. There are few guidelines here available to policymaker beyond the obvious ones of adhering to the law and amending through a fully democratic process those laws that need updating to cope with the threat. Whenever possible, transparency is a virtue, especially because in so many areas it is unachievable without compromising essential intelligence sources and methods. And, whenever possible, agreement across partisan lines is desirable precisely because such unity conveys legitimacy to publics that often cannot know everything about the execution of counterterrorism policy. Political leaders must be keenly aware that legitimacy is often contingent on efficacy, and even well-meant policy that is badly handled will make it ever more difficult to maintain crucial public support.

### **Military force**

Prosecuting the effort against jihadists also requires wisdom and restraint when it comes to the choice of tools. In this respect, we need to understand what works. Faced with a powerful threat, the United States has instinctively wheeled out its most powerful response: the military. Yet the large majority of counterterrorism work depends on action in the realms of intelligence and law enforcement, in part because most of the places where terrorist activity occurs are within functioning states. Most of these states are friendly, or, at a minimum, not states that ought to be attacked. It may seem obvious, but there needs to be less force used in these cases.

At times, military action will be appropriate, as it was in 2001-2002 in Afghanistan, the world's first terrorist-sponsored state. In Afghanistan today, military force remains necessary (though not sufficient) because of the continued threat from the Taliban and the spectre of the country becoming again a safe haven for al Qaeda. There will undoubtedly be a call for the use of force in some other areas, but the experience in Iraq has clearly illustrated how problematic the military instrument is for fighting terror, especially against an ideologically-driven foe like the jihadist movement.

One downside of deploying a military response against terrorists is that it too often glamorizes them. That is, the terrorists can then plausibly portray themselves as they would like to be seen: in the jihadist case, the terrorists wish to appear as the true standard-bearers of Muslim dignity, and the only ones who are prepared to confront a hated occupier and supporter of corrupt, autocratic regimes. The tableau of these fighters in action, taking up arms against the world's most powerful military

force, has had a galvanising effect on radicals around the world. This has been especially true because of the broad distribution on the internet of videos of Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia and allied groups in action. The insurgents understand the value of these videos: They often deploy two or more camera crews to film the action, recognizing that the presentation of the act is at least as important as the killing itself (see Nick Fielding's contribution in this booklet). Caches of these videos have been found in the possessions of innumerable terrorist cells, including many that have carried out attacks. They have clearly had an inspirational effect on some violent actors.

Another negative consequence of using military force is that such deployments typically have a large footprint; their presence can alienate exactly those individuals in a given community who we do not want to radicalize. Military action against terrorist targets often causes the deaths of innocents, no matter how much care is taken. With tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of Iraqi deaths since the U.S. invasion, inevitably many Iraqis have come to blame the tragedies that have befallen their families on the U.S. and its coalition partners.

Partly in consequence, thousands of Iraqis have joined a jihadist movement in a country that has had very little experience of radical Islam. Though news reports herald the possible defeat of al Qaeda in Mesopotamia (AQIM) – a questionable prospect – any fair assessment would conclude that the group achieved a remarkable success in foiling American efforts to occupy the country. Not only did it spark a civil war, AQIM also managed to turn bin Laden's pre-invasion prophecy of a ruinous war of attrition into a reality. The Bush administration appears to have calculated that jihadists would find the experience of American firepower a disincentive to confrontation with the U.S. In fact, the radicals were more prescient in their belief that the forces of destruction would serve their goals more than ours.

The terrorist strategy calls for ensnaring the U.S. in the kind of conflict that brought down the Soviets in Afghanistan. It does not help America or its friends when it walks into this kind of trap. The Iraq war has been a failure in so many different ways that one hesitates to draw too many lessons from it because so many of its failures were over-determined. It seems fair to say – and instructive for the future – that it is a mistake to present troops as targets for the terrorists. It follows that, wherever possible, it is wise to avoid entanglements on the ground in conflicts in the Muslim world. Instead of thinking that our military ought to be deployed because it will strike fear into others and bend them to our will, we should recognise that in all but the most urgent cases – loose nuclear weapons in Pakistan, perhaps, or a radical takeover in Jordan – an offshore military presence is the right way to go.

This is not meant, however, to argue against military-to-military exchange or training. In some cases, such cooperation has proven helpful – an oft-cited example is U.S. Special Forces training of the Philippine forces that have targeted the Abu Sayyaf group.

In thinking about the use of force (and, it should be added, a number of kinds of intelligence operations), the experience of the last six years has suggested that there

are different 'zones of legitimacy.' What may be acceptable in some parts of the world in terms of military operations will not be tolerable in others because of the different conditions that pertain. For example, the use of a missile fired from a drone may be acceptable when it takes place in an ungoverned space in a way that it would not be in, say, a more populous region where the national government's writ is observed. Further exploration of this notion would aid policymakers and could help deepen public support for counterterrorism policies.

### **Covert Capabilities**

For the reasons cited, force should be used sparingly. Nonetheless, a reliable covert capability is needed for dealing with the problem of terrorist safe havens in largely ungoverned spaces. This problem already exists in Pakistan, especially in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and it may well confront us in Iraq. Over the long-term, the reduction of safe havens will be best achieved through a combination of diplomatic, economic and security means. To disrupt ongoing conspiracies and capture leading terrorists, operations by forces such as the American Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) or the British Special Air Service (SAS) will be necessary. To date, though, there appears to have been a reluctance to move forward with such missions – in part because of a lack of intelligence and in part because of risk aversion. This may prove a dangerous trend. National leaders must consider carefully whether they are being too cautious in an era when terrorists seek weapons of mass destruction.

### **Policing and Prosecution**

It is universally true that the quality of policing is vitally important for dealing with the terrorist threat, but it is especially in the countries of Europe and North America, because of the challenges of dealing with minorities that might become alienated. These nations have a vital interest in the integration of their minorities and in ensuring that law-abiding members of these communities remain the first line of defence against radicalism.

This requires that interior and justice ministries as well as local authorities invest considerably in training police in community outreach. It also requires that there is a clear understanding of the dangers involved in the use of force. Social scientists have emphasized the effect in terms of radicalisation that abusive policing and the use of force can have. A parallel can be drawn in the area of prosecution. There has been a clear trend toward the extension of terms of detention in terrorism investigations. Clearly, in cases where there is well-founded suspicion of violent activity, there may be no alternative to lengthy detention while charges are prepared. But such instruments need to be used cautiously. Just as the abuse of the 'Material Witness Statute' in

the United States after 9/11 caused a backlash in the Muslim community, excessive terms of detention may have severe negative consequences.

### **Terrorist Financing**

Cutting the flow of resources to terrorists is imperative. As most practitioners will acknowledge, it is not possible to bring terrorist activity to an end through financial interdiction – the activity is too cheap, and the possibilities for funding too abundant. But it is nonetheless essential to continue taking steps that make it more difficult for terrorists to operate.

Thus far, cutting terrorist financing has been one of the more successful areas of counterterrorism activity. Work to stop terrorist financing has a salutary effect in terms of elucidating financial byways and illuminating the origin of some terrorist resources. Indeed, investigation into terrorist finances has been extremely valuable in terms of developing new and useful intelligence. It has also helped deter some radical sympathisers into reducing their support of terror for fear of having their assets seized. In addition to measures taken thus far, states will have to continue pressing countries, especially in the Persian Gulf, to continue upgrading their financial controls and increasing regulation on NGOs.

One pitfall associated with the attention paid to terrorist financing is that political leaders too often focus on it as an area for making more effective inroads against radicals. In doing so, these officials stoke a public misunderstanding about what work in this area can realistically achieve. They also create the illusion that behind it all is a 'Mr. Big' just waiting to be caught. Such talk misleads the public about the diffuse nature of the current threat and has a counterproductive effect.

Policymakers also need to recognise that efforts to control terrorist financing have left Muslim communities confused about which charities they may legitimately give to. Finance authorities need to develop means of certifying legitimate charities as such.

### **International Cooperation**

One of the main reasons for the tactical successes of recent years has been the high degree of international cooperation in the fight against terror – the unsung success of the post-9/11 period. Despite this success, intensifying collaborative work at the international level is necessary. To ensure it is achieved will require a real vigilance on the part of political leaders and civil servants because the episodic nature of the terrorist threat can all too easily lead to a false sense of security. Considerable strides have been made in the post-9/11 period, and the sense of common purpose has resulted in the thwarting of numerous plots. But with the passing of the period in which the memory of 9/11 is a daily prod to action, this cooperation still needs

to be deepened and further institutionalised – a task that is often at odds with the habits of the national security establishments of many countries. As the recent National Intelligence Estimate on ‘The Terrorist Threat to the US Homeland,’ noted, ‘We are concerned, however, that this level of international cooperation may wane as 9/11 becomes a more distant memory and perceptions of the threat diverge.’

At the level of national leaders and policymakers, there is a fairly acute understanding of the nature of the threat and the desire to maintain close cooperation. The question is whether popular support for a ‘global war on terror’ (or a more felicitously named successor) can be sustained in Europe and elsewhere. Some measure of support will be forthcoming if only because several key countries feel themselves under attack. But maintaining solidarity over the long-term will still require work because of the diminished sense of legitimacy attached to American policy. For this reason, it is essential that U.S. policymakers move to end human rights abuses, close the facility at Guantanamo and ensure that torture is banned. Unless the global community has faith in U.S. observance of the rule of law, international cooperation will become increasingly strained.

### **Building Capacity, Institutionalising Cooperation**

Policymakers will increasingly face a conundrum in the future: There is likely to be waning global interest in counterterrorism at the same time that the actual threat level rises and falls. Many countries, especially in the developing world, will understandably say that they have higher priorities than helping the West defend its citizens. Yet it is imperative that the enduring counterterrorism partnerships be built with countries around the globe – especially weaker ones – to prevent terrorists from taking advantage of their state insufficiencies.

In this manner, the anti-terrorism coalition can fulfil the strategic imperative of shaping the battlefield. The United States already have considerable experience in this area through the Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) program and other more general law enforcement and intelligence assistance programs administered by the State Department and other federal agencies. What has been lacking is a comprehensive approach. Taken all together, spending on ATA and related non-military programs has run to less than \$1 billion. A program that was significantly enlarged and better coordinated, within the U.S., and with other donors and recipient countries, could help produce competent intelligence officers, border security authorities, financial investigators, prosecutors and judges. Such a program has received a hardy perennial call for action at the G8 and in the UN, but governments have delivered very little in coordinated action.

There will be considerable challenges in dealing with capacity-building in the areas of intelligence and law enforcement in countries that have few democratic safeguards, and that will be a limiting condition. Ultimately, we should be as energetic in this area as possible without compromising our fundamental values. Those who

oppose terrorism have a strong interest in binding others into these efforts; no single country or even a small group of like-minded states can deal with this threat alone.

Another important step to shape the environment in which terrorists operate involves institution building. If one compares the recent period with an earlier one when there was a paradigm shift in the security landscape, the beginning of the Cold War, the difference in this regard is striking. Circumstances are not exactly parallel – they never are – but there is undoubtedly room for innovation.

Although numerous international organisations now take counterterrorism issues into consideration in their work, no single institution focuses primarily on the issue. Like-minded nations should back the establishment of an international organisation to raise global norms of behaviour by states to ensure that terrorists find it more difficult to act within any country. The agenda could include:

- Achieving universal ratification and enforcement of all international counterterrorism conventions.
- Undertaking a systematic effort to upgrade intelligence and law enforcement capabilities in countries in need of greater capacity; such an effort would include matching donor countries with recipients,
- Using a process of peer review like the one of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and ‘naming and shaming,’ one of the few mechanisms for driving real change on such a charged issue.
- Working with FATF on multilateral initiatives and training against terrorist financing.
- Preparing the hardest cases of state misbehaviour for U.N. Security Council attention.

As this list suggests, the creation of such an organisation would have the further virtue of removing the perceived ‘made in America’ label from the struggle against terror, which has been a disincentive to cooperation for some states. Such an institution could also address problems presented by state sponsors of terrorism. Although most concern today focuses on non-state actors, state sponsorship of terror continues to flourish in the Middle East, where both Iran and Syria support Palestinian rejectionist groups. With the outlook for the Middle East uninspiring, this is likely to continue. Measures that can check state-sponsorship should be pursued since there is nothing that suggests that the diminution of state support is a permanent feature of the international landscape.

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# Contributors

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Daniel Benjamin was named Director of the Center on the United States and Europe at the Brookings Institution in 2006. Prior to his appointment, Benjamin spent six years as a Senior Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). From 1994 to 1999, Benjamin served on the U.S. National Security Council staff, first as a foreign policy speechwriter and Special Assistant to President Clinton and later as Director for Counterterrorism in the Office of Transnational Threats. He has also been a foreign correspondent for *TIME Magazine* and *The Wall Street Journal*. Daniel Benjamin has co-written two books: *The Age of Sacred Terror* was a *New York Times* Notable Book and was given the Arthur Ross Book Award of the Council on Foreign Relations; and *The Next Attack* was a Washington Post 'Best Book' of 2005. He holds degrees from Harvard and Oxford.

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Mustafa Cerić is the Grand Mufti of Bosnia-Herzegovina, where he is serving his second term. He received a scholarship to study at Al-Azhar University in Cairo and, after completing his studies, he returned to Bosnia-Herzegovina where he became an Imam. After accepting the position of Imam at the Islamic Cultural Center of Greater Chicago, he earned a PhD at the University of Chicago in Islamic Studies. Following this, he returned to Bosnia-Herzegovina, where he became the Grand Mufti in 1999. He is the co-recipient of the UNESCO Felix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize for Contribution to World Peace and of the International Council of Christians and Jews Annual Sir Sternberg Award for exceptional contributions to interfaith understanding.

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Jack DuVall is President of the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict. He was Executive Producer of the documentary *A Force More Powerful* and co-author of the book of the same name. He is a frequent speaker at universities and policy institutes, including the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs, the Palestine Center, Princeton University, and the University of Sydney. He has also appeared on the BBC, MSNBC and CBC. He was Vice President of WETA-TV/Washington; Director of Corporate Relations, University of Chicago, and Director of Industry Compliance, Cost of Living Council, Executive Office of the President. His writing includes speeches for five American presidential candidates. He holds a BA degree (cum laude) from Colgate University and is on the Board of Sponsors, Morehouse College (Atlanta). He is also an associate of the Centre for Justice and Peace Development, Massey University (New Zealand).

**Nick Fielding**

Nick Fielding is an author and journalist with wide experience in reporting terrorism and intelligence issues and a frequent speaker on terror-related issues. For seven years, he was a Senior Reporter on the *The Sunday Times* where he covered the aftermath and implications of the 9/11 attacks, reporting from Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Far East. In 2003 he co-authored *Masterminds of Terror*, which examined in detail the planning for the 9/11 attacks. Since leaving the *Sunday Times*, Nick Fielding has continued to write for the national press in Britain and recently was Associate Editor of a television documentary on the life and unexplained death of Jamal Khalifa, the brother-in-law of Osama bin Laden who was murdered in Mozambique in January 2007.

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Anatol Lieven is Chair of International Relations and Terrorism Studies at King's College London and Senior Fellow of the New America Foundation in Washington DC. He spent most of his career as a British journalist in South Asia and the former Soviet Union, and is author of several books on the latter region, including *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power?* and *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism*. His latest book, *Ethical Realism: A Vision for America's Role in the World*, co-authored with John Hulsman, was published in 2006. Professor Lieven holds a BA in history and a PhD in political science from the University of Cambridge, Great Britain.

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Yezid Sayigh is Professor of Middle East Studies, King's College London. Previously, he was Assistant Director of Studies at the Centre of International Studies, Cambridge University (1994-2003) and headed the Middle East programme of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (1998-2003). From 1990 to 1994, he was an advisor and negotiator in the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks with Israel and since 1999, has provided policy and technical consultancy on the permanent status peace talks and on Palestinian reform. His publications include: *Armed Struggle and the Search for a State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, *The Third World Beyond the Cold War: Continuity and Change*, and *The Middle East and the Cold War*. He has also written numerous articles for academic and policy journals.

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# About ICSR

Since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, it has become clear that radicalisation and political violence are two of the greatest challenges to peace and stability everywhere. Yet, in more than six years since 9/11, no truly global centre for knowledge and leadership has emerged that would bring together academic insight, political foresight and business acumen in order to study the phenomenon and devise innovative counter-strategies.

The *International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence* (ICSR) has been designed to close this gap. It is a unique partnership in which King's College London, the University of Pennsylvania, the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya (Israel), and the Regional Center on Conflict Prevention, Amman (Jordan) are equal stakeholders.

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ICSR will bring together and facilitate systematic, outcome-driven dialogues between senior policymakers and stakeholders from different national, religious and political backgrounds.

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## **Department of War Studies King's College London**

The Department of War Studies at Kings' College London is a multi-disciplinary institution devoted to the study of all aspects of war and conflict, international relations and politics.

The Department is an acknowledged leader in teaching and research. It scored the highest rating in the last Quality Assurance Agency Subject Review assessment of teaching, and was one of only two 'Politics and International Studies' departments in the United Kingdom to have received the highest possible rating in the last three Research Assessment Exercises. In the second National Student Survey, the Department of War Studies was voted one of the top five UK university 'Politics' departments in terms of student satisfaction.

A remarkable diversity of research interests, disciplinary approaches, opinion and background exists in the Department among both staff and students. Our staff draw on military and international history, strategic studies, international relations, philosophy, politics, sociology, literature and psychology. Their specialist interests extend across many regions of the world and also extend across time with colleagues focusing on topics ranging from the dynamics of ancient warfare and medieval warfare to human rights, weapons proliferation and intelligence.

*For more information, see <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/sspp/ws>*

## **Institute for Strategic Threat Analysis and Response University of Pennsylvania**

Many urgent national priorities are subjects of intensive study on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania. The Institute for Strategic Threat Analysis and Response's (ISTAR) scope is on international and domestic events that threaten and impact the United States and democracies around the world. Broadly-based multidisciplinary teams and individual faculty members at the Institute generate and evaluate hypotheses, applications and policies for the detection, prevention and remediation of these threats.

ISTAR stimulates, supports and generates innovative projects and programs of research, education and practice in the field of strategic threats. ISTAR remains committed to studying strategic threats in the context of a multidisciplinary institute. It recognises that the challenge is to develop research and academic programs

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*For more information, see <http://www.istar.upenn.edu>*

## **International Institute for Counter Terrorism Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya**

Founded in 1996, the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) is the leading academic institute for counter-terrorism in the world, facilitating international cooperation in the global struggle against terrorism. ICT is an independent think tank providing expertise in terrorism, counter-terrorism, homeland security, threat vulnerability and risk assessment, intelligence analysis and national security and defence policy.

ICT also serves as a joint forum for international policymakers and scholars to share information and expertise through research papers, situation reports and academic publications for worldwide distribution. A number of international seminars, workshops and conferences are organized monthly by ICT to discuss and educate on global and regional issues of security, defence, and public policy making in order to better facilitate the exchange of perspectives, information and proposals for policy action. ICT also administers the largest public domain research database on the Internet encompassing global terrorist attacks, terrorist organisations and activists in addition to statistical reports.

ICT draws upon a comprehensive and international network of individuals and organisations with unique expertise on terrorism and counter-terrorism research, public policy analysis and education from all over the world, including the United States, the European Union and Israel, among others. ICT is a non-profit organisation located at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya (IDC), which relies exclusively on private donations and revenue from events, projects and programs.

*For more information, see <http://www.instituteforcounterterrorism.org>*

## **Regional Centre on Conflict Prevention Jordan Institute of Diplomacy**

The core idea behind the Regional Centre on Conflict Prevention (RCCP) is to promote early warning and conflict prevention. In particular, RCCP aims at embracing all structural and interactive means to prevent intra- or inter-state tensions and disputes from escalating into significant violence. Moreover, RCCP aims at strengthening capabilities to resolve such disputes peacefully, and at resolving the underlying problems that caused them in the first place.

To realize its goals and objectives, RCCP develops specific 'tools' with a view to optimizing the management of policy processes in crisis and potential conflict situations. In this context, RCCP approaches conflicts through practical and research-oriented activities that help, in turn, to stimulate and further advance other related aspects of conflict prevention. Therefore, RCCP builds its expertise on a network of first-rate research institutes, specialized non-governmental organisations, and high-quality independent experts. The work of RCCP, thus, is intended to contribute additional insight into and to assist policy-makers and practitioners with concrete suggestions for the improvement of their conflict prevention and early warning policies.

*For more information, see <http://www.rccp-jid.org>*

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The views and opinions expressed in this booklet are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of ICSR.

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