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African Union

Press Release

THE AFRICAN UNION STRONGLY CONDEMNS THE TERRORIST ATTACK IN NIGERIA

Addis Ababa, 1 February 2016: The Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, strongly condemns the terrorist attack on a village near Maiduguri, in north eastern Nigeria, on Saturday, 30 January 2015, by elements of the Boko Haram terrorist group, which left at least 65 people dead and 136 injured.

The Chairperson of the Commission expresses AU's solidarity with the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. She pays her condolences to the bereaved families and wishes speedy recovery to all the injured.

She reiterates the AU's determination, through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) that was established by the Member States of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and Benin to eliminate the Boko Haram terrorist group.

She commends the (MNJTF) for its relentless efforts in the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist group and calls for stronger global cooperation in the efforts to prevent and combat terrorism, in line with various AU and international instruments.

The Chairperson reiterates the appeal made by the AU Peace and Security Council, at its 571st meeting held at the level of Heads of States and Government on 29 January 2016, for AU Member States and international partners to sustain their collective efforts towards effective combatting of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa, while addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of this phenomena.

Al-Qaeda affiliate menaces Africa

FEBRUARY 01 2016

Vehicles on fire outside Splendid Hotel in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on January 15 during a siege by gunmen allied to al-Qaeda. Picture: REUTERS

ONCE described as weak and defeated, a resurgent al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (Aqim) has proved its critics wrong by demonstrating that it is still a major threat to governments and civilians in North and West Africa.

Aqim and its affiliates have conducted two major attacks in Mali and Burkina Faso in the past three months, proving political philosopher Niccolo Machiavelli right when he said it was better to utterly defeat an opponent lest they come back stronger than before to retaliate.

The Ouagadougou attack was the first major operation by an al-Qaeda affiliate in Burkina Faso. This indicates the group is slowly extending its reach beyond its comfort zone of Mali and Niger, where it has been operating for the past three years.

In 2012, Aqim and other jihadist groups participated in the insurgency of northern Mali, with the aim of overthrowing the Malian government. The attempted coup was thwarted when French forces intervened and dispersed the jihadists into the Sahel.

Yet, despite the initial success of the French military operation, sporadic jihadist attacks in Niger and Mali had been on the increase since 2013. Members of Aqim went into hiding as the group's influence declined, which led to the assumption that it had been defeated following the French intervention.

...

WHILE Aqim went incognito and there were only a few sporadic attacks, another jihadist faction, al-Mourabitoun, became the prominent face of terror in Mali and the surrounding regions.

Al-Mourabitoun is led by Mokhtar Belmokhtar (right) a veteran of the Afghan jihad. The group's operations initially consisted of the illegal trafficking of narcotics and kidnappings for ransom. From 2013, however, al-Mourabitoun began conducting attacks against Malian and United Nations peacekeepers and targeting restaurants frequented by foreign nationals.

Within a short time, the group was perceived by the US state department as one of the greatest threats to US interests in the Sahel. Then in November, almost three years after they conducted a joint and failed operation to overthrow the Malian government in a coup, al-Mourabitoun and Aqim besieged the Radisson Blu hotel in Bamako. Satisfied with the success of their mission, al-Mourabitoun merged with Aqim on December 5 — a month later, they conducted their first attack.

...

THE Ouagadougou attack was the first major operation by al-Qaeda in Burkina Faso. At a time when al-Qaeda Central is being put under pressure by the advance of Islamic State (IS) as the predominant jihadist force, the Burkina Faso incursions demonstrate that al-Qaeda still remains a threat in Africa.

This raises the question why Burkina Faso was targeted. In the aftermath of the French military intervention in northern Mali in 2013, a regional organisation to strengthen co-operation on security in the Sahel was created. This organisation, known as the G5 Sahel, consists of Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso.

These countries resolved to tackle the issue of terrorism in the region with the help of the French military. Being part of the G5 Sahel made Burkina Faso a target of militant Islamists, who were waiting for the right moment to strike; the right moment turned out to be January 15. Gunmen attacked a hotel and restaurant in Ouagadougou, resulting in the deaths of 30 people, most of them foreigners.

In retrospect, several lessons can be learned from the Burkina Faso tragedy, of which two are quite crucial. First, a significant development from the attacks in Burkina Faso is the resurgence of Aqim in West Africa.

The merger between Aqim and al-Mourabitoun illustrates the dangers that co-operation between jihadist groups pose to any country or region. Within that alliance, Aqim appears to be responsible for the organisational and propaganda aspects, while al-Mourabitoun is delegated to conduct offensives — as was the case in Bamako and later in Ouagadougou.

With its newly found strength, Aqim now has its sights set on expansion into West Africa.

Al-Qaeda's leader Ayman al-Zawahiri admonished his IS counterpart last September for instigating dissent among jihadist communities worldwide.

With the fissure between al-Qaeda and IS widening, and reconciliation between them in the near future looking highly unlikely, al-Qaeda definitely wants to main-

tain its dominance in Africa, with al-Shabaab in the east and a resurgent Aqim in the west.

Second, it is quite evident that military intervention alone as a counterterrorism measure is not sufficient and can lead to the opposite of what was intended.

When the jihadist groups dispersed into the Sahel in 2013 after the French intervention — dubbed Operation Serval — many commentators hailed the mission as a success and concluded that the jihadist group (Aqim and affiliates) were defeated.

After Serval, the French launched a new mission, Operation Barkhane, to build on their prior success in the Sahel region. However, jihadist groups began to regroup during that period.

THE French military was faced with the Herculean task of patrolling large swathes of the Sahel. It was only a matter of time before the French and local security forces were incapable of preventing sporadic attacks around Mali. This failure culminated in the Radisson Blu hotel siege in Bamako and later the Ouagadougou incursion. Incidentally, Ouagadougou is host to one of the French regional military bases.

It is becoming vital that military intervention is accompanied by other counterterrorism measures, including countering jihadist ideologies, curbing youth unemployment and tackling the grievances of members of the population whose needs are not being met by their governments.

But this is no easy task. Preventing terrorism is a process; it cannot be achieved overnight. It is a process that requires effort, patience and dedication on the part of governments and civil society.

In addition, the fight against terrorism requires a holistic approach that targets the social, political and economic factors that lead to insurgency.

The failure to realise this will provide the perfect opportunity for groups such as Aqim and its affiliates to reorganise and expand their reach — at the expense of more innocent victims.

• *Chelin is as an independent conflict analyst*

http://www.bdlive.co.za/opinion/2016/02/01/al-qaeda-affiliate-menaces-africa

STANDING UP TO TERROR IN AFRICA

From January 2015 until now, more than a dozen African countries have suffered terror attacks and have accumulatively lost thousands of innocent lives to the violence propagated by extremist groups. Serial attacks on Mali, Nigeria, Cameroon and the recent debut in Burkina Faso show that terrorism is strong and spreading consistently across Africa and only a united African effort can effectively curb this growing threat. But despite the collective suffering in the tragedy, African countries are yet to band together against these ideologically similar and operationally-cooperative insurgent groups. Yet, it is only by standing together—in intelligence sharing, operational cooperation and moral support—that Africa stands a chance of defeating this scourge of terrorism.

After making 2015 a very bloody year for Africa, terror groups continued where they left off this past January. The past week was the bloodiest so far this year in Boko Haram's campaign of violence with the militants launching back to back attacks on Cameroon and Nigeria killing nearly 200 people. First, the terrorist group hit a market on Sunday, in northern Cameroon with multiple suicide bombings killing about twenty-five persons and injuring over sixty others. Days later, the group struck again, this time in Chibok (where they abducted over 200 girls from in 2014) and then followed with attacks in Maiduguri, on Saturday, where not fewer than 85 people were confirmed dead in the outskirt village of Dalori. This wave of attacks follows another, earlier in the month, where the al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) invaded a hotel in Burkina Faso, killing about thirty people.

While there have been initiatives to create an African coalition against terrorism, most of those efforts have been limited, underfunded and lacking implementation. One of the most concrete steps taken in the African fight against terrorism is the reorganization of theMultinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) by the Lake Chad Basin countries, Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, Chad and (non-member) the Republic of Benin. The mandate of the coalition is to stamp out the Boko Haram extremist group which has waged a bloody insurgency in Nigeria and carried out several attacks on its Lake Chad neighbours. But the MNJTF is quite limited in its scope of operations; "It will not be deployed in Nigeria, but along Nigeria's outside borders within neighbouring countries," wrote Lori-Anne Théroux-Bénoni, the Office Head of the Conflict Prevention and Risk Analysis Division of the Institute of Security Studies for Africa, at the institution of the Task Force. "For those who continue to worry about the kidnapped Chibok schoolgirls and other victims of terrorist acts perpetrated by Boko Haram, the details of the MNJTF deployment come as a major disappointment. The MNJTF appears largely out of sync with what would have been needed on the ground, in Nigeria, to eliminate the threat posed by Boko Haram."

Théroux-Bénoni suggested that a more robust coalition, in the format of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the AU Regional Cooperation Initiative for the elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA), or the African-led international support mission to Mali (AFISMA) would have been a better alternative, and the current situation of the crisis buttresses her point. While the Nigerian military has made tremendous progress in recapturing virtually all territory previously seized by Boko Haram, it continues to struggle with stopping cross-border attacks from the group (the same with Cameroon and its other Lake Chad Neighbours) while the whereabouts of the over 250 kidnapped Chibok girls—rumoured to have

been taken out of Nigeria—remain unknown. These challenges require more multinational cooperation than the MNJTF is currently offering. The Nigerian government recently announced plans to redeem its astounding funding pledge to the MNJTF, a recognition of the need to strengthen the Task Force. However, funding alone will not be enough for the coalition to achieve its objective, it also needs more intelligence sharing and security cooperation amongst the countries involved.

Apart from the MNJTF and other multinational coalitions fighting specific in-country insurgencies, such as AMISOM in Somalia and AFISMA in Mali, there are no other institutionalised coalition efforts against terrorism in Africa. The attack in Mali and then in Burkina Faso, by the same group—and without local roots—show just how international terrorism has become in Africa and that it can only be defeated by a similar international response. The recent meeting between Kenya and Nigeria's presidents Uhuru Kenyatta and Muhammadu Buhari, in which they discussed combatting terrorism and radicalization, is a step in the right direction, but there are so many more steps that need to follow that.

Perhaps creating an African version of the Interpol or a NATO-style coalition; whatever form it may take, would help as African countries need a multinational continent-wide institution with a serious focus on terrorism. Continuing to treat terrorism solely as an internal problem underestimates the potential of international terrorism in Africa. These extremist groups largely see themselves as members of a global jihad against states and organised government, it is high time African states responded to such threats, not just as individual nations but also in the broad perspective of protecting Africa.

http://venturesafrica.com/features/standing-up-to-terror-in-africa/

Terrorisme en Afrique : Le regard d'un spécialiste

Mamadou Aliou Barry Géopolitologue, spécialiste des questions de défense et de sécurité en Afrique, président de l'Observatoire national de la démocratie et des droits de l'homme, apporte un éclairage sur le terrorisme qui menace l'Afrique. Un phénomène auquel la Guinée n'est pas à l'abri. Entretien.

Quelle lecture faites-vous des actes perpétrés par des terroristes en Afrique de l'ouest ?

Aliou Barry : D'abord il faut souligner que l'Afrique de l'Ouest est une zone géographique qui est vulnérable au terrorisme et au financement du terrorisme pour plusieurs raisons. La sous-région ouest-africaine souffre d'instabilité politique, de violence ethnique et communautaire, de corruption endémique, de pauvreté galopante et de taux élevé de chômage et de sous-emploi, particulièrement chez les jeunes. Les terroristes et les groupes terroristes exploitent aujourd'hui ces conditions négatives, notamment en rapport avec les jeunes. Le Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement (PNUD) a, dans son rapport de 2011 sur l'indice du Développement Humain, classé 13 des 15 pays de la CEDEAO parmi les pays ayant un faible développement humain. Aussi, la mauvaise gouvernance et des institutions publiques faibles et caporalisées sous-tendent la plupart des défis de développement humain dans la sous-région.

Il faut noter aussi que la plupart des frontières en Afrique de l'Ouest sont poreuses et il existe beaucoup d'espaces non gouvernés aux alentours des différentes frontières. Tous les pays de la sous-région manquent de capacité pour contrôler efficacement les frontières, ce qui constitue une vulnérabilité pouvant être exploitée par des groupes terroristes pour y établir des bases d'entrainement de leurs membres et pour transporter et distribuer des armes à travers la sous-région.

Un regard de la géopolitique du continent montre que les actes terroristes n'affectent pas tout le continent. Au cours des récentes décennies, certaines des attaques les plus persistantes et les plus sanglantes ont eu lieu en Afrique du Nord, surtout en Algérie, pays affaibli dans les années 90 par une guerre civile qui a donné naissance à des groupes comme Al-Qaida au Maghreb Islamique (AQMI) qui opèrent maintenant au -delà des frontières de ce pays et jusqu'en Iraq.

L'Afrique de l'Est a aussi connu quelques incidents dramatiques. Dans le Nord de l'Ouganda, l'Armée de résistance du seigneur, qui se proclame groupe chrétien fondamentaliste, fait sienne les méthodes terroristes.

Mais c'est la Somalie, qui a soulevé les plus grandes inquiétudes au niveau interna-

tional étant donné la puissance de groupes armés, notamment les shebabs perçus comme hostiles aux intérêts occidentaux.

L'Afrique de l'Ouest a quant à elle, connu relativement moins d'actes terroristes, à l'exception du Nigéria et des pays du Sahel comme le Mali, la Mauritanie, le Niger et le Tchad où AQMI est actif. Pendant les guerres civiles des années 90 en Sierra Leone et au Libéria, des intermédiaires libanais impliqués dans le trafic de diamants ont pu alimenter Al-Qaida avec une partie de leurs profits, explique Gani Yoroms, chargé de cours à l'école de guerre du Nigéria.

L'Afrique australe a jusqu'ici été le théâtre de peu d'actes de terrorisme en dehors de quelques attentats à la bombe en Afrique du Sud dont certains sont attribuables à des groupes d'extrême-droite du pays. Mais il semble établi que des ressortissants de la région se sont joints à des groupes terroristes à l'étranger.

Mais il faut souligner que les attaques contre des civils innocents par des groupes rebelles aussi bien que par des troupes gouvernementales n'ont rien de nouveau dans les conflits armés en Afrique; mais ce sont les attentats presque simultanés contre les ambassades américaines au Kénya et en Tanzanie en 1998, qui firent des centaines de victimes africaines et plusieurs victimes étrangères, qui ont mis en lumière la vulnérabilité du continent africain aux activités des réseaux terroristes internationaux comme Al-Qaida.

Cette montée du terrorisme dans la sous-région est le fait de groupes terroristes particulièrement actifs. On peut citer : la branche maghrébine de la mouvance Al-Qaida, Al-Qaida au Maghreb Islamique (AQMI), le Mouvement pour l'Unicité et le Djihad en Afrique de l'Ouest (MUJAO et de la secte nigériane Boko Haram. Chacun de ces mouvements, représentent le visage de l'islamisme radical et du terroriste en Afrique de l'Ouest. Les liens qui s'établissent et se renforcent progressivement entre ces différents groupes portent les germes d'une menace particulièrement dangereuse et difficile à combattre pour notre sous-région. La situation dans le Nord -Mali et le vide institutionnel et sécuritaire qui la caractérise depuis le coup d'état du 22 mars 2012 à Bamako constitue aujourd'hui un facteur aggravant.

Selon vous que faut-il faire pour juguler le terrorisme en Afrique de l'ouest ?

L'Afrique devait engager des efforts plus importants pour combattre le terrorisme sur le continent

Les États africains ont leurs propres raisons de réagir à ces menaces, cependant après les dramatiques attentats du 11 septembre 2001, de nombreux pays se sont sentis contraints d'adopter rapidement des lois antiterroristes draconiennes et de signer de nouveaux accords de coopération militaire avec les États-Unis et les pays européens.

Mais, l'opinion qui prévaut en Afrique est que la campagne internationale contre le terrorisme initialement inspirée par les pays occidentaux a été conçue sans aucun apport des Africains. Au Nigéria, les tentatives initiales pour introduire des lois antiterroristes ont soulevé des critiques particulièrement vigoureuses dans les États du Nord du pays à majorité musulmane. Comme le souligne à juste titre Boubacar

Gaoussou Diarra**,** directeur du Centre africain d'études et de recherche sur le terrorisme, je cite : « Comment devons-nous, en tant que sociétés démocratiques et respectueuses des droits de l'homme, assurer notre protection collective et combattre avec efficacité cette forme de violence intolérable ? »

L'Union africaine a promulgué en 2002 un Plan d'action sur les moyens de prévenir et de combattre le terrorisme en Afrique. Ce plan ne se limite pas aux dispositions précédentes qui concernaient essentiellement l'action de détection et de répression pour traiter également des causes sous-jacentes de la violence terroriste, il demande aux États signataires de promouvoir une politique de réduction de la pauvreté, d'aide aux populations déshéritées et marginalisées qui peuvent constituer des terrains de recrutement fertiles pour les groupes terroristes.

Combattre le terrorisme en Afrique de l'Ouest exige aussi une plus étroite coordination entre les pays africains et ses partenaires internationaux. C'est ainsi que dans la région du Sahel, les pays voisins commencent à mieux coordonner les actions qu'ils engagent contre AQMI. L'offensive de l'armée malienne contre ce groupe a bénéficié de renseignements fournis par les autorités algériennes

Une meilleure coordination entre les gouvernements ouest-africains est cruciale, toutefois ces efforts exigent un financement plus important que celui dont ils bénéficient actuellement. Mais il est tout aussi essentiel, que les États ouest-africains et les organismes internationaux ciblent mieux la société civile ouest-africaine et ses associations nationales membres.

Trop souvent, les dirigeants ouest-africains ont tendance à considérer les activités antiterroristes comme étant du ressort exclusif de l'État, tandis que les forces de sécurité traitent souvent les informations s'y rapportant comme relevant de secret défense. Ceci prive les autorités nationales d'une précieuse source d'information à savoir le grand public, ce qui rend plus difficile l'instauration d'un climat de confiance auprès du public envers l'action antiterroriste des autorités des différents pays de la sous-région.

En effet, la société civile ouest-africaine et les associations nationales peuvent aider à renforcer les efforts de l'UA. Elles peuvent aussi souligner l'importance de la protection des droits de l'homme et la nécessité de porter assistance aux communautés les plus vulnérables et les plus marginalisées. En échangeant des informations avec la société civile et en cherchant à l'impliquer, les États renforceraient ainsi leur sécurité.

Une meilleure coordination entre les gouvernements ouest-africains est cruciale, toutefois ces efforts exigent un financement plus important que celui dont ils bénéficient actuellement. Mais il est tout aussi essentiel, que les États et les organismes internationaux ciblent mieux la société civile africaine et ses associations.

Par ailleurs, l'Afrique de l'ouest devra engager une lutte contre les facteurs qui favorisent la propagation du terrorisme, notamment par le biais de la résolution et de la prévention des conflits, la promotion du dialogue entre les religions et les différents groupes culturels, la lutte contre l'exclusion sociale et le soutien à une bonne gouvernance. Renforcer les moyens dont disposent les États pour prévenir et lutter contre le terrorisme. Et, la protection des droits de l'homme et de l'état de droit de-

vra être la base fondamentale de la lutte antiterroriste.

Comme le soulignait à juste titre M. Ban Ki-Moon, le Secrétaire général de l'ONU, « le terrorisme nuit à tous les pays, petits et grands, riches et pauvre. Il prélève un tribut sur des êtres humains de tout âge, de tous revenus, de toute culture et de toute religion. Il porte un coup contre tout ce que représentent les Nations Unies. La lutte contre le terrorisme est notre mission commune »

A votre avis la Guinée serait-il menacé par les terroristes ?

Bien évidemment, la Guinée n'est pas à l'abri de ce phénomène de terrorisme vu sa proximité géographique avec le Mali et surtout vu l'émergence des courants religieux wahhabite et salafiste dans notre pays. Pour s'en convaincre, il suffit de regarder la recrudescence de certains lieux de prière (musulmane et chrétienne) à travers tout le pays. Aussi, la grande misère qui sévit au niveau d'une frange importante des couches sociales notamment des jeunes est aussi un terreau favorable pour un recrutement des candidats pour rejoindre les mouvements extrémistes.

A votre avis les Mauritaniens arrêtés dans la préfecture de Boké étaient-ils en mission en Guinée, où étaient-ils de passage ?

Il m'est difficile de répondre à cette question, car je n'ai pas tous les éléments d'information. Néanmoins, il reste clair qu'avec la porosité de nos frontières, le manque de moyens adéquats d'information et de renseignements des forces en charge de notre sécurité et le fait que la Guinée est partie prenante à la lutte contre les mouvements rebelles au Nord du Mali, nous ne sommes pas à l'abri d'actes terroristes, loin s'en faut.

Que suggérez-vous aux autorités politiques du pays, afin d'éviter d'éventuels actes de terrorisme sur le sol guinéen ?

Le gouvernement guinéen devra assurer une vraie coordination entre les différents services de police et de gendarmerie qui travaillent dans le domaine de la lutte contre le terrorisme. Il faudra mettre en place une vraie Direction des Renseignements Intérieurs et Extérieurs et doter cette Direction de tous les moyens financiers, humains et techniques car, la lutte contre le terrorisme exige la mise en place d'un système performant d'alerte et d'information.

Mais la compréhension et l'analyse du phénomène du terrorisme sont indispensables pour venir à bout de ce phénomène. C'est pourquoi avec des spécialistes de la question, nous allons proposer au gouvernement guinéen, sans nous faire trop d'illusions, la mise en place d'un vrai Centre guinéen d'analyse du terrorisme qui sera une antenne du Centre africain d'études et de recherche sur le terrorisme basé à Alger. Ce Centre devra être un organisme interministériel à utilité publique sous la tutelle du ministère de la Sécurité et de la protection civile.

Il travaillera sur mandats, provenant des secteurs institutionnel et privé. Le Centre diffusera, de manière publique ou ciblée, ses informations, ses études et les résultats de ses recherches en matière d'analyse de risque du terrorisme et des radicalisations en Afrique de l'ouest. Le Centre aura pour objectifs de :

Constituer le premier centre d'analyse dans le domaine de l'analyse du terrorisme et des radicalités dans la sous-région ;

Favoriser la recherche sur le terrorisme et les radicalités et les stratégies de réponse, notamment l'analyse opérationnelle de l'organisation et de l'implantation des activités terroristes en Afrique de l'ouest ;

Constituer une capacité unique d'analyse et d'information sur la menace terroriste et les radicalités ;

Constituer la plus grande plate-forme d'information sur le terrorisme et les radicalités en Afrique de l'ouest ;

Constituer une force de proposition à l'égard des pouvoirs publics et des institutions ouest africaines et favoriser la coopération internationale et l'échange d'informations en matière de lutte contre le terrorisme et le financement du terrorisme.

Les tâches essentielles du Centre seront de rechercher, acquérir, traiter, et transmettre toute information relevant de son domaine de compétence. Le Centre aura pour ambition de transmettre sa vision des thématiques liées aux multiples manifestations du terrorisme et des radicalisations en Afrique de l'ouest.

Le Centre exécutera des mandats de recherche, d'investigation, d'analyse et de formation en matière d'analyse de risque du terrorisme et des radicalisations en Afrique de l'ouest.

Il aura son centre de documentation, le centre établira, maintiendra et mettra constamment à jour une documentation opérationnelle, méthodologique et didactique utilisable dans les formations, cours et autres séminaires liés au terrorisme et des radicalisations en Afrique de l'ouest qu'il entend proposer.

Le centre participera à des conférences et séminaires spécialisés de haut niveau. Il ambitionne également de générer en son nom propre un, voire plusieurs événements d'importance liés à la lutte contre le terrorisme et des radicalisations en Afrique de l'ouest. (Organisation de conférences, colloques, séminaires).

Le centre élaborera, diffusera et communiquera des informations sensibles et pertinentes dans son domaine de compétence au gouvernement, institutions nationales, internationales, sous régionales et aux ONG.

Il publiera, de manière ciblée et dans des supports médiatiques de qualité, certains résultats de ses recherches opérationnelles et le produit de ses analyses en matière du terrorisme et des radicalisations en Afrique de l'ouest.

http://guinee7.com/2016/02/04/terrorisme-en-afrique-le-regard-dun-specialiste/

L'Afrique doit lutter sur internet contre les groupes jihadistes

*Par AFP le **13 février 2016***

Menacée par les jihadistes au Sahel et le groupe islamiste nigérian Boko Haram, l'Afrique doit mener une lutte complexe sur internet pour contrer les radicaux qui se servent de la toile comme d'un outil de propagande et de recrutement, estiment des experts.

Les jihadistes comme Al-Qaïda au Maghreb islamique (Aqmi) à qui s'est rallié le groupe Al-Mourabitoune ayant notamment revendiqué les attentats au Burkina, sont très actifs dans la bande sahélienne. Boko Haram, responsable d'attentats ayant fait plusieurs milliers de morts au Nigeria depuis 2009, frappe désormais au Cameroun, au Tchad et au Niger.

Et les groupes jihadistes sont "ultra-connectés", comme le soulignent les experts présents à Abidjan cette semaine pour une conférence sur la cybersécurité et la cyberdéfense dans l'espace francophone.

"Ce sont des questions extrêmement importantes pour le présent mais aussi pour les décennies à venir", analyse le député Pierre Oulatta, colonel à la retraite et président de la Commission sécurité et défense de l'Assemblée nationale ivoirienne.

"L'Afrique est menacée, martèle-t-il. Bamako (20 morts en novembre), Ouagadougou (30 morts le 15 janvier) sont là pour le démontrer".

- Téléphonie et 3G -

"Internet est un fabuleux outil et les terroristes comme tout un chacun peuvent l'utiliser pour diffuser leurs idées, recruter, informer voire désinformer. Ils peuvent préparer des actes, s'organiser, les revendiquer (...) Ils peuvent utiliser internet en complémentarité avec le monde criminel" pour acheter des armes ou blanchir de l'argent, rappelle Solange Ghernaouti, de l'université de Lausanne et spécialiste en cybersécurité, soulignant que les jihadistes "ont montré qu'ils maîtrisaient les technologies".

"L'Afrique se numérise. Il y a une ultra-connectivité, avec notamment la téléphonie et la 3G dans les grandes villes mais aussi dans les campagnes. La surface d'attaque augmente", estime le lieutenant de vaisseau Julien Dechanet, "officier cyber" français pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest.

"Les groupes type Boko Haram et Aqmi sont très présents sur les réseaux sociaux, ils utilisent ces médias plutôt en phase de recrutement", précise-t-il. Les recruteurs préfèrent ces canaux pour échanger des vidéos, souvent par téléphone, et les disséminer en Afrique, aux magazines comme ceux de l'Etat Islamique.

Et le recrutement des jeunes est assez simple, selon le militaire: "Quelques centaines de dollars, un téléphone. Pas plus de 150.000 CFA (220 euros) et ils deviennent des combattants".

Pour communiquer entre eux et échapper à la surveillance, les jihadistes "utilisent le +Darknet+ (la face cachée de l'internet), le facebook russe qui est beaucoup plus permissif (Vkontakte), les forums de discussion de jeux vidéos et d'autres moyens encore", explique-t-il.

- Afrique pas outillée -

Contrer les jihadistes "nécessite de surveiller les réseaux, les serveurs. On peut alors savoir qui est potentiellement visé, qui est sur les réseaux et on pourra les +fliquer+", dit-il. La mise en place de ces structures de surveillance en Afrique est toutefois difficile car il faut des moyens.

"Il manque parfois des ressources humaines. Mais cela a tendance à changer dans le bon sens", analyse l'officier français.

"L'Afrique n'est pas outillée, elle a besoin de renforcer sa coopération avec les pays qui ont la technologie", regrette Pierre Oulatta. Le groupe Etat islamique "a des ramifications en Afrique. Ils profitent du fait que nos pays ne peuvent contrôler de manière efficace les réseaux informatiques", souligne le député ivoirien.

Le colonel Guelpetchin Ouattara, spécialiste cyber du ministère ivoirien de l'Intérieur, se veut rassurant. "On n'est pas au niveau de la police américaine, mais on a des outils qui correspondent à cette menace. Les dispositions sont prises depuis bien longtemps, bien avant" les récents attentats.

"Les services de police partout dans le monde se disent démunis.... Nos obligations c'est de faire des mutations pour s'adapter aux nouvelles menaces. Notre niveau de réponse est à la hauteur de la menace", conclut-il.

Selon plusieurs experts, un des axes de travail doit être l'assèchement des flux financiers vers les groupes jihadistes. Ceci "n'est pas un mirage. Al Capone s'est fait avoir sur le plan fiscal", rappelle Mme Ghernaouti. "Mais, ce n'est pas l'une ou l'autre (méthode pour contrer les jihadistes), ce sont des +et+, des conjonctions de plusieurs actions. Il faut aussi de la sensibilisation des jeunes, l'éducation, offrir des perspectives économiques", explique-t-elle.

http://www.notretemps.com/internet/l-afrique-doit-lutter-sur-internet,i106351

Interpretations of terrorism and legends of globalization

Monday, 15 February 2016

Terrorism has not only dominated our reality but it has also prompted several studies to research its roots and search for the energy that has helped it survive for the centuries Muslims have lived through. Terrorism gained its vitality by riding the wave of modernity for 30 years now and found its way into leftist and resistance movements as their goals intersected.

As discussions on globalization surged, the political interpretation of terrorism also expanded and turned into a global manifestation. Among these interpretations is the correlation between a solution to the Palestinian conflict and an end to terrorism. However, the thesis linking terrorism and globalization was the most common in some ideological studies about violence and terrorism.

The globalized interpretation of terrorism was tempting to Islamists. They thought it was a cognitive breakthrough to free them of responsibility and hold the U.S. and the West accountable for al-Qaeda's emergence as a result of what happened in Afghanistan, Hamas's emergence as a result of not resolving the Palestinian cause, and Hezbollah's emergence as a resistance movement that protects civilians from Israel. This is how Islam has been interpreted on radical websites for 20 years now. Some Western thinkers and philosophers' analyses intersect with these interpretations. For example, we can take what Paul Di Michele said in the book "Islam, Globalization and Terrorism" which he co-authored, where he warned that one cannot understand the current wave of terrorism and violence without linking them to globalization.

In the same book, Olivier Mongin discusses the concept of conflicting identities and globalization. He says that the notion that they led to a wave of violence only enhanced the concept of a "war of cultures." This imposed itself after the Gulf War during the 1990s. Mongin added that this notion suggests that threats are always perceived as being from a foreign source.

A third world problem?

All these theories about the globalized interpretation of terrorism are no longer of any value or use because not taking the ideological attachment to terrorism into consideration is a waste of time. It is also an attempt to practice ideological reprimand by generalizing the economic and political analysis of terrorism and evoking civil disputes, resistance movements and demands for liberation in the Middle East and other third world countries. French professor Olivier Roy thinks that terrorism is a case of globalization, and is originally a "third world phenomenon."

Terrorism is the weapon of criminals, and it's not the product of an empire or an economic party but the product of the teachings available at hand.
Fahad Suleiman Shoqiran

In May 2007, Algerian scholar and thinker Mohammad Arkoun delivered a lecture on Islam and its confrontation of European challenges. He analyzed violence by referring to globalization. He said: "Violence, unlike what the Western media claims, does not only stem from extremists and fundamentalists, but also from the West and its allies. The violence of Western globalization is the strongest, considering the

West's tyrannical power." Although Arkoun is an exceptional historian in the modern history of Muslims as he's brave when it comes to condemning the guarded energies which terrorism attains support from, he practiced his favorite hobby of critique and launched "a war on all fronts."

Arkoun cannot consider globalization to be the driving force behind terrorism and the base of religious violence because he'd be denying his other major research and work in Applied Islamology.

Author Ali Harb has engaged in this debate as in his recently-published book "Terrorism and its makers," he condemns the globalized interpretation of terrorism. He says that he disagrees with Olivier Roy "who thinks that the jihadist organizations are a result of globalization and not a result of political Islam." He adds that the belief that jihadist organizations are a result of globalization "is an opinion based on overlooking the ideological base of the jihadist project which is a translation of the fundamental ideas which Islamist movements planted in people's minds." He has thus responded to Roy's book "The failure of political Islam."

With the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the same analyses re-emerged. The Muslim Brotherhood's interpretation of ISIS's emergence revolves around the "government suppression" of the Arab Spring and state "conspiracies" against the MB running for elections. Others however consider that ISIS is a product of the technological revolution. Some analysts believe that ISIS is part of a Western conspiracy, while others think it's a Baathist conspiracy.

At the end of the day, religious lectures and fatwas (religious edicts) dissect these organizations better than any other interpretations. If experts continue to try to solve mysteries, understand vague root causes and looking into secret intelligence documents on the emergence of terrorist organizations, then Muslim societies - which failed to confront certain organizations in the past - will also fail to confront any other organization later. Terrorism is not the weapon of the powerful as American philosopher **Noam Chomsky** puts it. Terrorism is the weapon of criminals, and it's not the product of an empire or an economic party but the product of the teachings available at hand. It has been rearranged in a repugnant, bloody manner which has now backfired on Muslims all over again.

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Fahad Suleiman Shoqiran is a Saudi writer and researcher who also founded the Riyadh philosophers group. His writings have appeared in pan-Arab newspaper Asharq al-Awsat, Alarabiya.net, among others. He also blogs on philosophies, cultures and arts. He tweets @shoqiran

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http://english.alarabiya.net/

Egypt

Abdel Fattah al-Sissi : « Sans action, le danger terroriste ne peut que s'étendre. Et il s'étend »

13 février 2016

Terrorisme, projets pour l'Égypte, Libye, Syrie, rapports avec l'Occident... Le président égyptien évoque longuement tous ces sujets dans la grande interview qu'il a accordée à "Jeune Afrique".

Sauveur providentiel pour ses partisans (nombreux), tyran putschiste pour ses opposants (acharnés), le président Abdel Fattah al-Sissi laisse encore perplexe dans les chancelleries et les rédactions occidentales.

Que veut-il ? Jusqu'où ira-t-il ? Et où mène-t-il l'Égypte ?, se demande-t-on alors qu'une répression sans précédent s'abat depuis deux ans sur les Frères musulmans mais aussi sur les mouvements militants gauchistes et libéraux qui avaient fait la révolution du 25 janvier 2011. Le second sursaut révolutionnaire du 30 juin 2013, qui a chassé les islamistes du pouvoir, n'a-t-il pas adjoint les impératifs de sécurité et d'ordre aux revendications de 2011? interjette-t-on dans l'entourage présidentiel. Pour marquer le nouveau départ de l'Égypte sur une base qu'il veut stable, le raïs héritier des pharaons et des sultans multiplie les grands projets, et a déjà mené à bien le réaménagement du canal de Suez en un temps record.

Le nouvel homme fort du Caire veut aussi rendre à l'Égypte sa position éminente sur la scène diplomatique régionale et internationale. Et, à l'heure où les crises politiques plongent le Moyen-Orient dans un marasme prolongé, l'Afrique attire toute son attention.

Les 20 et 21 février prochain, le président accueillera ainsi à Charm el-Cheikh des centaines de décideurs économiques et politiques du continent, dont de nombreux chefs d'État, pour le forum Africa 2016. C'est dans ce contexte que *Jeune Afrique* a eu l'occasion d'une interview d'une heure et demie dans le palais prési-

dentiel d'Al-Orouba.

Une Égypte forte, au coeur de l'Afrique

Au cours de ce long entretien, Abdel Fattah al-Sissi a d'abord évoqué sa vision de l'Afrique où « l'Égypte doit revenir en force et redevenir ce qu'elle a déjà été, un des piliers de l'action africaine commune ». Puis il a exposé son analyse de la situation et de l'action à mener chez le voisin libyen en faillite, s'interrogeant à l'heure où les rumeurs d'intervention occidentale s'intensifient « pourquoi nous en remettre à l'Otan sans avoir cherché à exploiter toutes les solutions internes de ce pays ? ». Car, constate-t-il à propos des chaos syriens et irakiens où l'Occident tente de mettre bon ordre en s'investissant diplomatiquement et militairement, « les résultats ne sont pas du tout à la hauteur des moyens déployés ».

Comme la Libye, la Syrie et l'Irak, mais aussi le Yémen, la Somalie, le Mali, le Nigéria et l'Europe elle-même, l'Égypte fait face au fléau jihadiste et son chef de répéter inlassablement que « le terrorisme nous touche tous et nous devons y faire face ensemble sans attendre qu'il s'invite à l'intérieur de nos frontières ». Et c'est, pour ce général à la retraite, dans ce contexte qu'il « faut savoir faire la part entre objectifs de sécurité et droits de l'homme ».

Prudentes sur certains sujets, percutantes sur d'autres, parfois à comprendre entre les lignes, ses réponses laissent penser son engagement total pour son pays et son peuple qu'il s'agit, il le répète avec conviction, « de protéger et de rendre heureux ».

http://www.jeuneafrique.com/302044/politique/abdelfattah-al-sissi-sans-action-le-danger-terroriste-ne-peut-que-setendre-et-il-setend/

Libya

Un troisième front contre l'Etat islamique en Libye ?

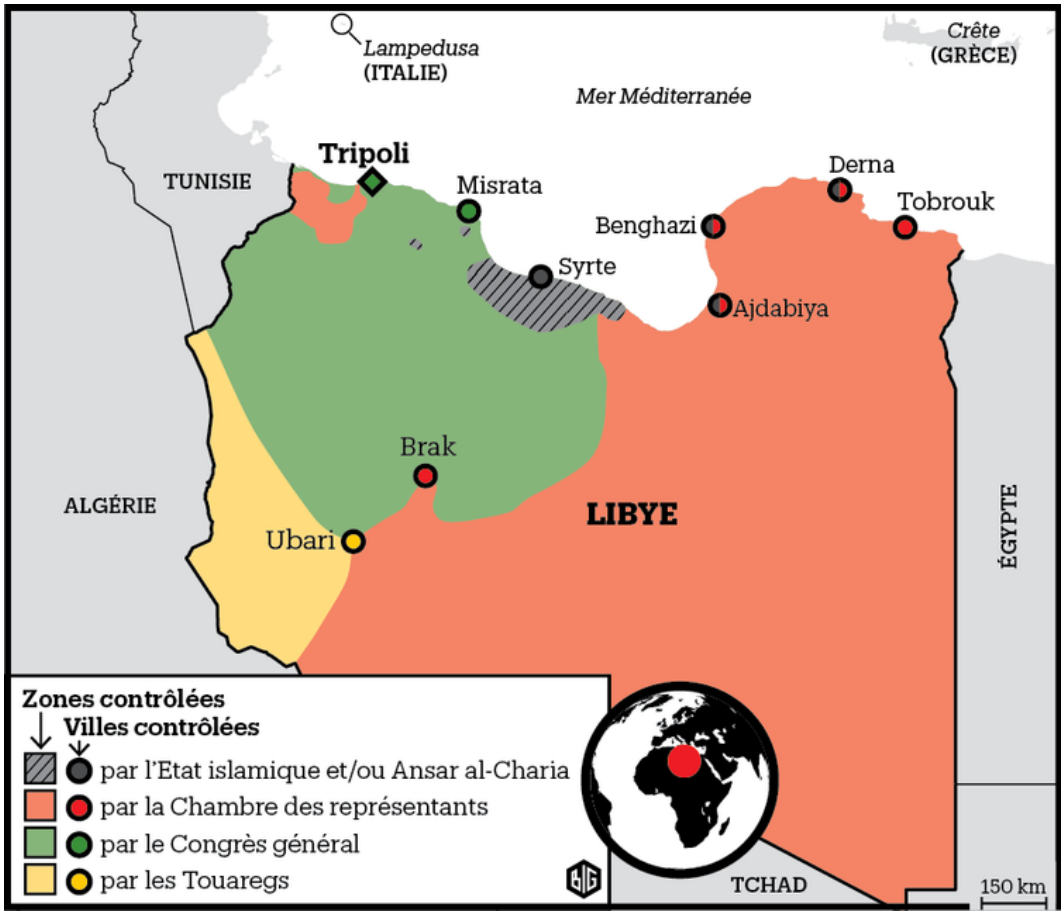
Par 2 février 2016

Federica Mogherini (UE) salue John Kerry (Etats-Unis) à l'ouverture du sommet des ministres des Affaires étrangères destiné à s'accorder dans la lutte contre l'Etat islamique, mardi à Rome. Photo Alberto Pizzoli. AFP

Après l'Irak et la Syrie, les pays membres de la coalition contre l'EI réunis à Rome évoquent une possible future intervention en Libye, où prospère le groupe jihadiste.

Un troisième front contre l'Etat islamique en Libye ?

L'implantation croissante de l'Etat islamique (EI) en Libye, notamment autour de la ville de Syrte, à 450 kilomètres à l'est de Tripoli, inquiète de plus en plus les pays occidentaux. Réunis à Rome pour faire le point de la situation en Irak et en Syrie, les 23 pays de la coalition contre l'EI ont évoqué aussi de possibles futures opérations sur ce nouveau terrain même si à en croire le ministre français des Affaires étrangères, Laurent Fabius, *«il n'est pas question que nous intervenions en Libye»*. En fait, la condition préalable reste la formation en Libye d'un gouvernement légitime d'union nationale accepté aussi bien par le pouvoir de Tobrouk que par celui de Tripoli à même de demander formellement une telle intervention et de lui donner ainsi un cadre légal. A la suite d'un accord négocié par l'ONU, le 17 décembre un Premier ministre Fayez al-Serraj a été désigné mais il n'a toujours pas réussi à former une équipe. Il y a urgence car le péril jihadiste se précise et de nouveaux volontaires arrivent, y compris des pays occidentaux, pour renforcer les quelque 3 000 à 5 000 combattants de l'EI déjà présents.



«Ils sont là sur près de 300 kilomètres de côtes et ils se répandent. Ils sont à 350 kilomètres à peine de l'ile italienne de Lampedusa et lorsque le beau temps va arriver il y a des risques réels de passages de combattants», relevait dimanche le ministre français de la Défense, Jean-Yves Le Drian. Le chaos libyen, avec deux Parlements, deux gouvernements et les milices faisant régner leur loi un peu partout dans le pays est un terreau fertile pour le mouvement jihadiste.

L'EI avait tenté tenté dans un premier temps de s'implanter à l'est, dans la région de Derna, longtemps fief islamiste, avant d'en être chassé en juillet par les troupes du général Haftar proche du pouvoir de Tobrouk. L'organisation a alors a jeté son dévolu sur la ville de Syrte, le dernier bastion de la résistance kadhafiste, où les tribus sont avides de revanche aussi bien sur les Occidentaux que sur les milices voisines, notamment celle de Misrata, qui eurent un rôle clé dans l'insurrection de 2011. C'est un emplacement stratégique car il menace les principales zones pétrolières du pays et il contrôle une bonne portion de littoral. La crainte d'une «grande Somalie au bord de la Méditerranée» avancée par Rome inquiète d'un effondrement du régime au moment où l'Otan se décidait à intervenir est en train de devenir réalité.

«Nous ne laisserons pas la situation se dégrader comme en Syrie ou en Irak», assurait déjà fin janvier Ashton Carter, le secrétaire d'Etat américain à la Défense. Mais s'ils semblent décidés à pousser pour un «troisième front» contre l'Etat islamique, les Américains veulent cette fois rester en retrait même si des hommes de leurs forces spéciales sont déjà en reconnaissance sur le terrain. Il en est de

même pour les Français et les Britanniques. Une future intervention serait probablement avant tout aérienne, voire avec des drones, mais il devrait y avoir aussi en appui des commandos au sol y compris pour aider les forces libyennes. Les Italiens, l'ancienne puissance coloniale, comptent bien en revanche jouer un rôle clé en coordonnant voire en assurant le commandement d'une opération en Libye, pays stratégique au carrefour du Maghreb et du Sahel qui, en devenant un fief de l'EI, déstabilise encore un peu plus une région déjà hautement explosive.

http://www.liberation.fr/

Opinion: Next anti-'IS' front will be Libya

The successes of the anti-IS coalition in Iraq and Syria are forcing the terror organization toward Libya. The West will have no choice but to take up the fight there, says Max Hofmann.

First, the good news: Some 10,000 airstrikes are having an effect. The coalition against "Islamic State" (IS), has been able to recapture large swaths of land in Iraq and Syria - and more importantly - the cities of Tikrit and Ramadi in Iraq, and Kobani on the Turkish-Syrian border. The coalition is attempting to repair infrastructure, clear mines, secure land, rebuild schools and reinstate a semblance of everyday life with all its might.

Now, the bad news: If the coalition is to truly eradicate the terror organization, it will have to do all that and more once again - this time in Libya.

Waiting for a unity government

The coalition's strategy certainly isn't perfect: For instance, it lacks ground troops. And the situation, especially in Syria, is so complex that the countries participating are far from having accomplished their mission. Nevertheless, the combination of international airstrikes and local ground forces - trained by countries from the alliance - is functioning well enough to drive many "IS" fighters into Libya. There, the terrorists have found a country in chaos, and thus, perhaps fertile terrain. Furthermore, Libya offers many sources of finance for "IS," above all, human trafficking. And if things go their way, also control of Libya's enormous oil fields.

DW's Max Hofmann

The coalition's official plan is to establish a unity government as quickly as possible, in order to stop the deadly fragmentation that is destroying the country. In Rome, US Secretary of State John Kerry said he was optimistic that such a government would soon exist. Behind the scenes, however, the British, Italians and others continued to discuss military options. They have no other choice.

Whether in support of a unity government, or under the banner of the United Nations: Successfully fighting "IS" in Libya will only work if a plan similar to that in Iraq and Syria is executed. Still, the complexity of the situation in Libya could present altogether new challenges: There is no unified army to train, it is full of rival factions that are becoming ever more entrenched, and there is no national infrastructure for the coalition to rebuild.

Big gamble for Europe

Looking the other way is not an option. Because what is on the line in Libya could be far more dangerous than what Europe faced in Syria. What are 17 million potential war refugees in Syria when compared to the African continent, home to more than one billion people? Libya is already a gateway for all those who long to escape destitution, war or dictators. When springtime comes, the inflatable boats, overloaded with migrants, will once again be launched from Libya's shores.

That means: regardless of whether the unity government in Libya comes or not - the coalition will have to open a second front against "IS." One could most easily read this between the lines of comments made by Italian representatives at this week's meeting of foreign ministers in Rome. That will not please the citizens of many coalition countries, especially those in Germany. But the deployments in Iraq and Syria have made one thing clear: Unfortunately, diplomatic efforts must be flanked by a military component. Otherwise, there is no defeating "IS."

http://www.dw.com/

Nigeria

Here's what one of the world's deadliest jihadist groups really believes

*Jossy Ola/AP*People stand outside burnt houses following an attack by the Islamic militant group Boko Haram in Gambaru, Nigeria on May 11, 2014.

The Nigerian jihadist group Boko Haram killed at least 86 people in a series of attacks earlier this week.

The attack, in which the group firebombed villages and reportedly burned several children to death, is the latest demonstration of the brutality of a group that's killed over 15,000 people in the past 14 years, and has emerged as one of the deadliest terror organizations on earth.

Every terrorist group inhabits its own moral universe, following a value system and worldview that compels it to kill.

But Boko Haram's atrocities are heinous enough to upend the claim that terrorist violence stems from something that can be rationalized or comprehended.

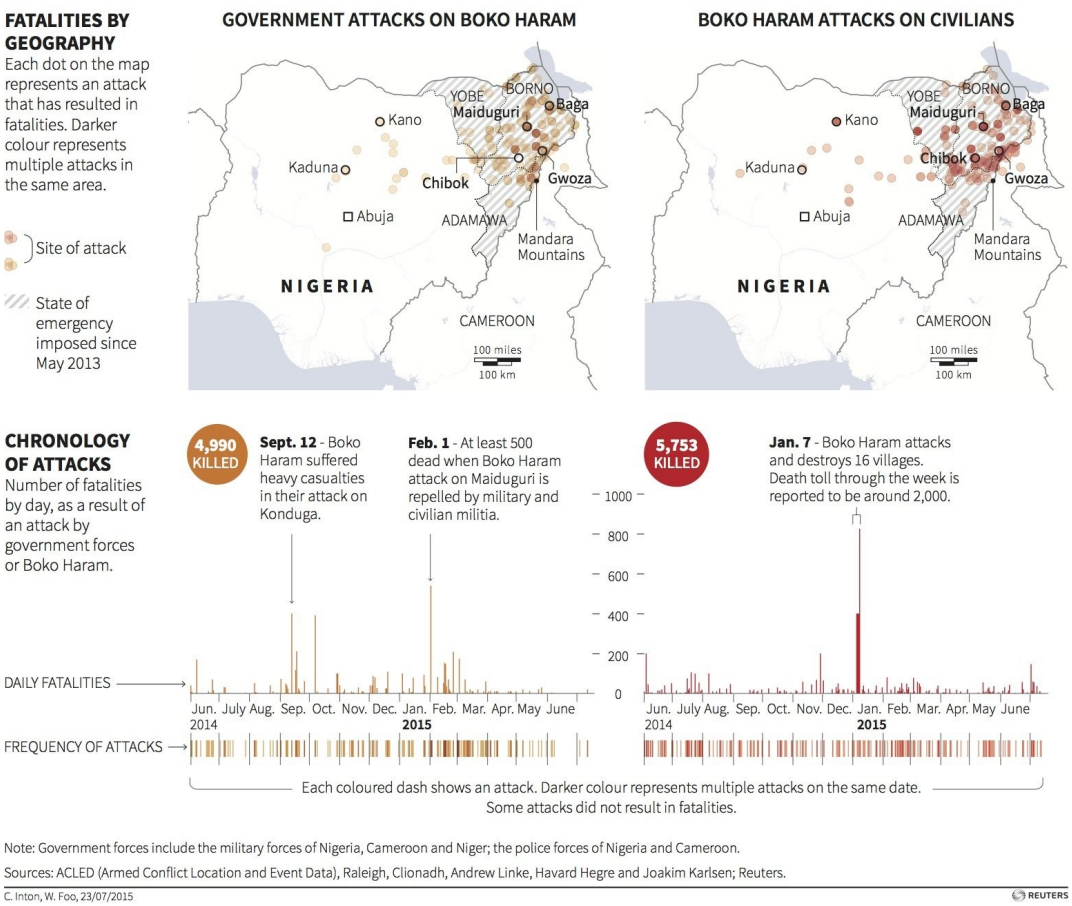
The group kidnapped over 200 girls from a school in northeastern Nigeria in April of 2014,massacred as many as 2,000 villagers during a single attack along the shores of Lake Chad in January of 2015 and may have used a 10-year-old girl as a suicide bomber in July of 2015.

Boko Haram, which pledged allegiance to ISIS in March of 2015, seems to exist on the edges of human depravity, outside of any comprehensible moral system.

But that's not the case. In an important new Brookings Institution study, Georgetown University scholar Alex Thurston gives a compelling analysis of Boko Haram's ideology and worldview.

Through an analysis of the group's literature and the statements of top Boko Haram leaders, Thurston shows that the organization's ideology has remained remarkably consistent since its founding in 2002, with the group using a "combination of exclusivsm and grievance" to justify "violence toward the Nigerian state, other Muslims, and Christians."

Here's what that means.



Boko Haram attacks and safe haven as of mid-2015

Boko Haram vs. everybody else

As Thurston notes, Boko Haram wasn't the first Salafist, or ultra-conservative reformist Islamic movement to gain traction in northern Nigeria.

It set itself apart through its opposition not just to western norms and secular government, but also through its ideological hostility towards nearly every other Islamic

group in the region, regardless of its political or social orientation.

Simply, Boko Haram "consider themselves the only genuine representatives of Sunni Islam," Thurston writes, and "consider themselves arbiters of who is a true Muslim."

For Mohammed Yusuf, the Boko Haram founder who died in Nigerian government custody amid a 2009 crackdown against the group, "loyalty to Islam meant rejecting democracy and Western-style education."

He believed that "'ruling by other than what God revealed' is equivalent to polytheism," and that "democracy positions the people as an authority in rivalry with God."

*AP Photo/Lekan Oyekanmi*Nigerian soldiers man a checkpoint in Gwoza, Nigeria, in April 2015, when the town was newly liberated from Boko Haram.

One crucial difference between Yusuf's ideas and other strands of Salifism was his belief that Muslims are obligated to act against western or secular authority, and that they "needed to confront the fallen society surrounding them." Quietism is just not an option within the Boko Haram worldview, which views even passive acceptance of the status quo as an unforgivable crime.

As Thurston notes, Boko Haram's novel interpretation of Islam — which is more extreme and far more activist than other strands of Nigerian Salafism — was enabled through a "'fragmentation of sacred authority' in Northern Nigeria." The region's Sufi orders, or mystical sects, as well as its system of traditional authority shared among a group of centuries-old emirates in the country's Muslim north, had seen their influence wane in the decades leading up to Boko Haram's rise.

Boko Haram didn't just attempt to surpass the Sufi orders and emirs. It actively re-

jected and turned on them, even assassinating the Emir of Gowa in May of 2014.

Boko Haram, savior of Nigeria's Muslims

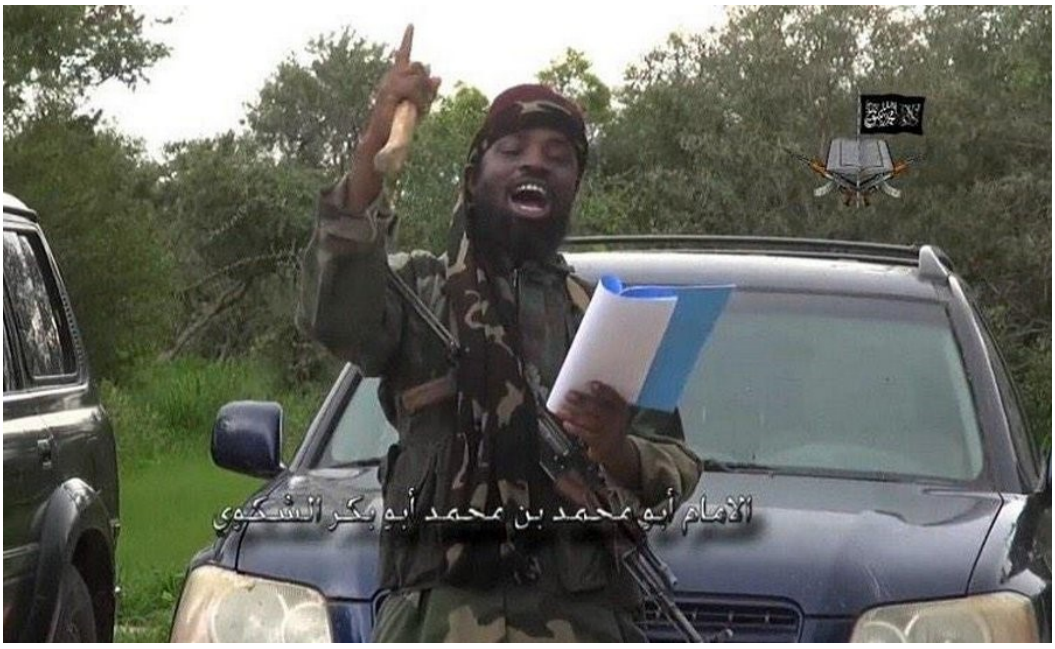
Of course, plenty of other other religious movements around the world have viewed themselves as the only true embodiment of spiritual and doctrinal purity — and Boko Haram has been more brutal than almost all of them. The group's victim complex, which is central to both its ideology and its self-image, helps explain why.

As Thurston writes, "Boko Haram's leaders tell a provocative story about what it means to be Muslim in Nigeria."

Yusuf had argued that "The government of Nigeria ... has been built to attack Islam and kill Muslims," After Yusuf's death, his successor, Abubakr Shekau, cast Boko Haram's struggle as a fight for basic religious liberty in the face of an aggressive central government, saying in a 2012 speech that the government is "fighting us for no reason, because we've said we'll practice our religion, we will support our religion and stand on what God has said," according to Thurston.

Nigeria, which is the most populous country in the world with an even demographic split between Muslims and Christians, has a fraught regional and sectarian politics that lends just enough credence to these claims to make them seem plausible to possible recruits.

Certainly Yusuf's 2009 death increased Boko Haram's sense that it was being specifically persecuted by the authorities — which, according to Boko Haram's moral framework, meant that virtually the *only* true Muslims in northern Nigeria were being singled out and attacked as well. As Thurston's analysis shows, the group still maintains that it's fighting for the survival of Islam in Nigeria against a host of forces attempting to exterminate it.



Abubakar Shekau, the leader of Boko Haram, pledges allegiance to ISIS caliph Al-Baghdadi.

Thurston's analysis leads to a number of distressing conclusions. Boko Haram's rise, and its brutality, doesn't stem from the political or economic situation in northern Nigeria, or even from the influence of outside groups like Al Qaeda or ISIS.

Instead, it was driven by an ideology that cropped up organically in Nigeria — an ideology that reflects a coherent theory of religion, reality, and politics.

It's a worldview that tries to answer fundamental questions about the individual's role in society, the nature of an ideal state, and the relationship between religious imperatives and earthly action.

Like ISIS, another jihadist group whose worldview exhibits a certain jarring coherency, Boko Haram is sustained through a set of ideas — something that might allow Africa's most brutal jihadist group to survive even after it loses its remaining

safe havens around Lake Chad.

TA screen shot of a video released by Boko Haram shows kidnapped Nigerian school girls.

http://www.businessinsider.com/worldview-of-boko-haram-2016-2

News Analysis: If Boko Haram is not in Nigeria, where is Sambisa Forest?

Feb 8 2016

Intercepted Boko Haram terrorists

The Nigerian political-military establishment wants Nigerians to believe that Boko Haram has been technically defeated, flushed out of Nigeria's territory.

But each day the Boko Haram militants raid one Nigerian village after another, killing scores as it happened in Dalori, one wonders where the hell the insurgents were coming from. From Chad or Niger or from Cameroon?

Senator Baba Kaka Bashir Garbai (Borno Central) has now debunked the pervasive propaganda: Boko Haram, he said are still occupying more than half of Borno State. Indeed, the senator on sympathy visit to Dalori, said most shockingly, that only three local council areas are safe from Boko Haram attacks, because of heavy

military presence.

“There is an assumption that most of the local governments in Borno are recaptured from the Boko Haram. In reality this is not true in the real sense,” Garbai said.

“Apart from Maiduguri Metropolis, Kwaya Kusar and Bayo these are the three LGAs that are safe,” Senator Garbai stated.

These areas, according to the senator, are only safe due to the strong military and police presence which maintains “law and order”.

Senator Garbai went on to lament that areas such as Mobbar, Kala Balge, and Abbadam LGAs are 100 percent occupied by the insurgents.

In addition, there are several areas that are partially under the thumb of Boko Haram, according to the senator.

The Defence Headquarters (DHQ) in a swift response tried to deflate Garbai’s statement, repeating the propaganda that Boko Haram has indeed been knocked down in Borno and other parts of the Northeast.

Sambisa Forest which Rabe says is 80 kilometres, understates the enormity of the size. The forest, which is 60 kilometres southeast of Maiduguri, is 60,000 square kilometres or 23,000 square miles. The forest straddles four states in the north east, Yobe, Borno, Gombe and Bauchi. In Borno, it is administered by four LGAs, Askira/Uba in the south, by Damboa in the southwest, and by Konduga and Jere in the west. It is not a coincidence that Boko Haram attacks are deadly in all these council areas, especially Damboa and Konduga.

But in revealing that the only battle ground left is in the Sambisa Forest, the about 80 kilometres swathe of thick bush that is the sect’s stronghold, the Defence Headquarters unwittingly buttressed Garbai’s disclosure that a large part of Borno is still under Boko Haram stranglehold.

Brigadier Gen. Abubakar Rabe , DHQ spokesman said: “What is left is Sambisa Forest. That is the last battle ground with the insurgents.

Brig. General Abubakar Rabe: Boko Haram decimated but in Sambisa Forest

“ This Forest is about 80kilometres but I believe very soon, we will overrun the Forest and rout out the insurgents. We will certainly send them packing from the Sambisa Forest.”

“For anyone to make a claim that half of Borno State is under the insurgents is not helping the military. It is just to get media attention. We have decimated Boko Haram. This is the reality”, Rabe told The Nation newspaper.

Sambisa Forest which Rabe says is 80 kilometres, understates the enormity of the size. The

forest, which is 60 kilometres southeast of Maiduguri, is 60,000 square kilometres or 23,000 square miles. The forest straddles four states in the north east, Yobe, Borno, Gombe and Bauchi. In Borno, it is administered by four LGAs, Askira/Uba in the south, by Damboa in the southwest, and by Konduga and Jere in the west. It is not a coincidence that Boko Haram attacks are deadly in all these council areas, especially Damboa and Konduga.

At least we now know from Garbai's statement and DHQ's response that Boko Haram insurgents are still on Nigeria's territory, living fine in Sambisa, from where they plot the bombings and raids of unprotected Nigerian communities and make forays into neighbouring countries of Cameroon, Niger and Chad.

And until Nigeria is able to confront the insurgents in their Sambisa den, it may not be 'technically', right to say that Boko Haram has been 'technically' defeated.

On the contrary, the insurgents are still a potent force capable of inflicting great damage on the hapless villagers, whose homes and lives they destroy wantonly.

Nigeria still has a lot of work to do in combating the insurgency. We agree with Rabe that it is not the duty of the military alone. It is a pan-Nigerian burden, our collective nightmare.

http://thenewsnigeria.com.ng/2016/02/news-analysis-if-boko-haram-is-not-in-nigeria-where-is-sambisa-forest/

Should America be involved in Nigeria?

February 9, 2016

The Washington Post recently released a moving piece on the death of 86 children burned alive by the Boko Haram, Nigeria's homegrown Islamic extremists. The six-year onslaught by the group has killed over 20,000 people and driven 2.5 million from their homes. Feelings of anger and sadness are natural reactions to a piece like this, followed by resentment for world powers not getting involved.

The natural reason as to why the U.S. has not gotten involved would be the lack of petroleum in the northern part of the country. However, there's much more to the situation than the lack of tangible resources we can pilfer from the region.

This is one case where, despite the empathy we may have for the senseless victims, any intervention by the U.S. would and should be deemed in a negative light.

To begin with, the U.S. did ask the Nigerian government if they wanted military aid in their fight following a social media campaign headed by Michelle Obama with the hashtag, #BringBackOurGirls. The government hesitated at first and then rejected the idea. Several months later, the government asked for help again following a series of attacks in major cities, and Secretary of State John Kerry stated that intervention might occur following an analysis of the elections in the region.

However, after the election voted in Muhammadu Buhari, the first time an incumbent president had lost reelection in the country's history, no intervention was given to the region. While corruption was leveled as a possible reason for the lack of force, there are multiple other factors at work, which has cautioned us from turning the biggest economic country into another Iraq/Afghanistan.

The government, for one, is a big problem. The change of incumbents is a step in the right direction in terms of replacing a man charged with war crimes and who oversaw a nation with experienced 12,000 deaths as a result of political violence. This is a nation we have yet to see strive to spend the money that it most certainly has in fighting terror. Both Algeria and Angola have spent more militarily than Nigeria, where ill-equipped soldiers have deserted in the thousands fighting an ideological cause. Before Buhari was elected, Nigeria relied on the neighboring country of Chad to fight the group as it placed security in spots to hold the delayed elections.

This isn't a country with a low GDP and no manpower to fight an organization. It's a country, much like that of Iraq or Afghanistan, which has refused to fight it. It's refused to invest in communities where infrastructure and education is desperately needed and is an easy picking ground for supporters of an alternative, extreme option. Until then, does the U.S. need to involve itself in a cause with no direction?

When discussing any human rights violations and terrorism around the world, there is a crossroad in the course of action to be taken. Are we the world's police force or should we be focusing on injustices on the home front? Maybe, it's time to put down the big stick.

- See more at: http://www.torchonline.com/opinion/2016/02/09/should-america-be-involved-in-nigeria/#sthash.KXIjh8Y1.dpuf

Somalia

Somalia: A Legitimate Government Is the Only Antidote to Al-Shabaab Terror in Somalia

1 February 2016

ANALYSIS *By Wachira Maina*

The Al Shabaab raid on the KDF camp at El-Adde is the fourth attack on Amisom forces in Somalia in twelve months.

In June 2015, the militants killed 70 Burundian soldiers in Lego, south of Mogadishu; in September they killed another 50 Ugandan soldiers in Janale District to the southwest.

Earlier they had ambushed and killed dozens of Ethiopian soldiers. Ethiopia, like Kenya, did not release casualty figures. The response of other troop contributing countries is likely to echo Kenya's: A splenetic venting, a surge in force numbers and an increase in sorties against suspected Al Shabaab camps.

In military terms, this may even cripple the insurgent group.

However, even if Amisom militarily degrades Al Shabaab, the prolonged presence of foreign troops in Somalia will inevitably seed another anti-Kenya group because the country has unresolved and deep-seated grievances with Kenya -- and Ethiopia. This is what history teaches.

Al Shabaab was an effectual and fringe off-shoot of the more moderate Islamic Courts' Union, ICU when Ethiopia invaded in 2006. By adroitly exploiting Somalia's deep historic hostility to Ethiopia, it was able to mobilise Somali nationalism and recruit thousands of youth. If that prognosis is correct, it is time for Kenya and Amisom to redefine their Somalia mission.

As they do so, they will benefit immensely from reading the October 2015 Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia to the UN Security Council. It is a treasure trove of information and candid analysis.

The report makes three points clear: One, ineptitude and corruption have drained the vitality of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, TFG, and destroyed the scant legitimacy it originally enjoyed.

Second, some members of Amisom -- principally Kenya and Ethiopia -- have territorial ambitions that undermine Amisom's mission in Somalia and seem likely to spawn Somali resentment sooner rather than later.

Third, Al Shabaab has morphed faster and become much more tactically flexible than those fighting it. Unfortunately, inability to defeat Al Shabaab in one fell swoop will compel Amisom to stay in Somalia longer, which makes it harder for it to fulfill its mission and risks inflaming Somalia's famously incandescent nationalism.

The first point is that security and stability cannot be restored in Somalia by a terminally weak, incompetent and corrupt government. And the details in the report show that the TFG is all three.

It is now nearly four years since the TFG was established. Its only real success -- with the help of Amisom -- has been to reverse Al Shabaab's territorial gains.

Other crucial reforms have stalled. Under the 2012 Provisional Constitution, Somalia was to have had elections later this year but mid last year, the country's Federal Parliament -- where votes are traded for cash through a graft-fuelled network of fixers -- agreed to a sweetheart deal with the executive that elections should be postponed, ostensibly because violence and turmoil make a credible election impossible.

Not in good faith

It is a case of the TFG profiting from its own omissions: It has not implemented the Provisional Constitution in good faith. Of the nine independent commissions that the TFG is obliged to establish, only four had been established by the end of 2015.

The critically important Provisional Constitution Review and Implementation Commission was set up two years too late, in 2014. It has since been hobbled by official antipathy, chronic under-funding and since May last year, when its chair resigned in frustration, is increasingly bereft of effective leadership.

So much for the constitutional difficulties: The report also makes it clear that corruption is so deeply embedded, the TFG just cannot deliver essential services or win hearts and minds.

Corrupt payments run up and down the system: Government revenues are funnelled to unauthorised bank accounts, bypassing the Treasury Single Account; withdrawals to fund government agencies are often made in cash and informal payment systems are not regulated.

For instance, a total of $1.8 million of port rehabilitation funds were transferred from the UNDP in 2014 to a Mogadishu Port account at the Central Bank of Somalia.

In seven days, $1.7 million was withdrawn in cash. The Monitoring Group says that it has evidence that "the then minister for ports and marine transport, Yusuf Maalim Amin 'Baadiyow' and the then director general, Abdullahi Ali Nur, likely misappropriated the funds.

http://allafrica.com/stories/201602011272.html

Al-Shabaab preys on poor youth with promises of cars and wives

By FRED MUKINDA

Al-Shabaab militants in Elasha Biyaha, Somalia, on February 13, 2012. According to new information gathered from detained terror suspects, the militia lures Kenyan youth with promises of cars and wives. PHOTO | AFP

In Summary

Police say syndicate has roots in Mombasa and tentacles in Isiolo, Nairobi and Lamu counties.

The information came from four terror suspect detainees.

A primary school in Likoni, Mombasa is at the centre of the investigation because of the terror suspects teaches there.

The four were arrested in Madogo area, near Garissa en route to Somalia.

ADVERTISEMENT

Police say they have unearthed an Al-Shabaab recruitment network that lures youths with promises of cash, cars and wives.

They say the syndicate has roots in Mombasa and tentacles in Isiolo, Nairobi and Lamu counties.

Police say four young men arrested recently gave details of the network to detectives after interrogation.

Idris Sadalla Iddi, Mohamed Ahmed Fadhili, Issa Noor Abdullahi and Abdulhafidhi Issa Faraj were arrested last month but the court allowed police to detain them as investigations went on.

A primary school in Likoni, Mombasa is at the centre of the investigation because Fadhili teaches there.

The four were arrested in Madogo area, near Garissa. Police say they planned to travel to Mandera before entering Somalia and joining Al-Shabaab camps.

"The syndicate is linked to Ramadhan Kufungwa. He has been on the police list of most wanted criminals. He is hiding in Somalia," a government report says.

Kufungwa fled Kenya when his photos were circulated by police with calls for information that would lead to his arrest.

Security agents say they suspect that he donates money to the school.

Idriss stayed in the school in December.

POVERTY

The boarding school is known for admitting children from poor backgrounds and charges only Sh500 per pupil per term.

Children whose parents cannot afford the fee are allowed to study for free.

"Most of the school's expenses are funded through donations and authorities think the help comes from Al-Shabaab sympathisers and the pupils targeted for radicalisation," the report adds.

"The vulnerable children are easy prey, given that few people would be curious and wary of what they are taught. Investigations continue on this institution."

Kufungwa is also wanted after investigations linked him to the June 2014 killing of Sheikh Idriss in Mombasa.

"He was also behind a spate of violent robberies in Mombasa that were carried out by members of his cell so as to raise money for Al-Shabaab activities. He coordinates recruitment of youths and facilitates their movement to Somalia as well as providing logistical support to militia in Boni Forest," an earlier police report said.

Jeshi Ayman, a faction of Al-Shabaab has set up camps in Boni Forest in Lamu, prompting a massive security operation.

"Investigations on the four, which started earlier revealed they were in contact with facilitators in Somalia and had made arrangements to travel there through Mandera. As part of the incentive to join Al-Shabaab the boys were promised, money, cars and wives," the latest report says.

Investigators said Fadhil and Idriss were the initial targets of recruitment.

Later on, they brought in the other two.

http://www.nation.co.ke/news/Shabaab-lure-youth-with-cars-and-wives/-/1056/3071238/-/tmiqm1z/-/index.html

Life after Al Shabbab's attack on El-Adde: How will Kenya respond?

3 February 2016

On 15 January 2016, a Kenyan Defence Force base at El-Adde in the Gedo region of Somalia was attacked and overrun by Al-Shabaab. News still remains sketchy, though it is increasingly certain this is the costliest day in Kenya's proud military history. By DICKIE DAVIS and GREG MILLS.

According to Kenya's Defence Chief General Samson Mwathethe, a massive vehicle-borne improvised explosive device triggered the Al-Shabaab attack on the El-Adde KDF camp. While the exact number of Kenyan troops involved has not been divulged, it is estimated to have been a company strength base, around 150 men. Given the size of the initial explosion, General Mwathethe has called for patience in identifying the victims. Al-Shabaab's haul from the attack appears to include Armoured Personnel Carriers, Land Rovers, trucks, as well as weapons and ammunition, suggesting that the camp was completely overrun.

It is a tragic event for Kenya, for the armed forces and particularly for the families of the soldiers involved. In war such hard knocks are not uncommon, they are the price of conflict; to prevail it is important that lessons are learnt and reforms made.

Four pointers stand out in the circumstances:

First, there might be a temptation to keep a hold on the casualty figures, for a number of reasons, including the impact on domestic inter-ethnic relations, or the reflection on the competency of those involved. But warfare is as much about perception as it is about reality, and Al-Shabaab have gained much from their quick release of images. Bad news generally does not get better and in the absence of information people make it up to be generally worse than it is. The Kenyan government needs to get accurate information into the public domain as soon as the families of the casualties have been informed.

Second, the public reaction will depend on how the government responds to this event. The best that could come out of it is that it is seen as the event that catalysed improvements. There needs to be an immediate lessons-learned process identifying quick wins – generally changes to tactics and procedures – and, even more importantly, a longer term analysis that evaluates the overall security capability. The Colombian military, to take an example from another counter-insurgency campaign, used its humiliation in Mitu in 1998, when FARC guerrillas overran an Army battalion and Police unit, killing 150 personnel and capturing more than 40 soldiers, to reorganise. Mitu was evidence of the strength of their foe and the relative weakness of the Colombian state, a realisation that led to a rapid increase in the size of the armed forces and better equipment, improved intelligence collection and fusion, and inter-operability between the army, air force, navy and marines, and police.

Third, ownership of the problem – in essence, the threat posed by radical Islam to Kenya from both without and within – and the solution. This is not the military's problem alone. Again, the lesson from Colombia is the need for a whole of government approach, including the treasury, social services, foreign ministry, police, intelligence services, and the military. Ultimately, for example, some hard resource choices will have to be made as to where and on which equipment and people money is to be spent. The foreign ministry will have to play its part in acquiring international support to fund, train and equip the security forces. The toughest choice overall will likely be about the size of the military. Given Kenya's long borders and its missions in Somalia and South Sudan, it seems that the current size of the KDF at 24,000 troops is just too small, and that too much of its $1 billion budget is not spent in the right areas.

The **fourth** and final pointer is to evaluate Kenya's strategy in Somalia. To be sustainable, any military action has to be led or, at least, paralleled by local political developments. There remain intrinsic problems with governance in Somalia, stemming from the historical impossibility of governing Somalis, from without and within. Once a basis of social stability and consensus, the clan system is now routinely a source of power and control outside of government.

So far both President Uhuru Kenyatta and General Mwathethe have reiterated Kenya's commitment to the AMISOM Somali operation. This should however not obscure the importance of using the El-Adde attack to conduct a thorough review of Kenyan tactics, capabilities and the overall strategy to contain the threat posed by radical Islamic groups. **DM**

Davis, who retired from the British Army last year after 32 years of service as a Major General, and Dr Mills are with the Johannesburg-based Brenthurst Foundation. Both have extensive experience in Afghanistan, and are the joint authors recently of 'A Great Perhaps? Colombia: Conflict and Convergence' (Hurst, London).

Photo: A member of the Kenya Defence Forces yawns as they attend prayers to pay their respects to the Kenyan soldiers serving in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), who were killed in El Adde during an attack, at a memorial mass at the Moi Barracks in Eldoret, January 27, 2016. Al Shabaab, which is aligned with al Qaeda, said its fighters killed more than 100 Kenyan soldiers when they overrun the base in El Adde, also known as Ceel Cadde, near the Kenyan

border, on Jan 15. REUTERS/Thomas Mukoya.

http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2016-02-03-life-after-al-shabbabs-attack-on-el-adde-how-will-kenya-respond/

Terror: The globalisation of extremism

A surge in Isis-claimed attacks suggests the ideology is extending its influence to Asia

©AFP

Indonesian armed police secure Jakarta after attacks on the capital in mid-January

Gunmen hunting foreigners kill a Japanese farm expert in northern Bangladesh and an Italian aid worker in the capital Dhaka. Shia Muslims are targeted in a bomb blast in Pakistan that kills 24. In Indonesia, eight people are slain in an assault on civilians around a Starbucks café at a Jakarta shopping mall. A bomb explodes at a popular Hindu shrine in Bangkok, leaving 20 dead, including five Chinese tourists.

Terror attacks such as these in recent months — some claimed by Isis or its adherents — suggest that the Sunni Islamist extremist group and its violent, ultra-conservative ideology are successfully extending their influence to Asia from the Middle East and Europe.

First FT

*First*FT is our new essential daily email briefing of the best stories from across the web

In a world of instant connections via the internet and social media, the growing popularity of the Isis brand among young Asian Islamists should be no surprise.

Asia is home to about 1bn Muslims, nearly two-thirds of the world total, and has undergone waves of radicalisation in earlier decades.

The jihad that drove Soviet forces out of Afghanistan in 1989, backed by the US and Saudi Arabia, notoriously spawned the Islamist Taliban regime in Afghanistan and Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda.

The first decade of the new millennium saw the Indonesian Bali bombings of 2002, which killed more than 200, and the attack launched from Pakistan on the Indian city of Mumbai in 2008.

The fact that it has happened before, however, only heightens the anxiety among Asian and western governments about the latest, continent-wide surge in Islamist militancy — fuelled as it is by online recruitment campaigns and backed by a plethora of local extremist groups whose leaders are impressed by Isis and its wars in Syria and Iraq.

A risk analysis by consultancy IHS said the Isis terror attacks in Paris last November are continuing to drive south Asian Islamist factions, including the remnants of al-Qaeda, the Pakistani Taliban and the Jamaat ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh, into the arms of Isis.

Such groups would not receive much direct help from Isis and would rely on their own capabilities to keep attacking foreigners, government and military installations and religious minorities, Omar Hamid wrote in the report.

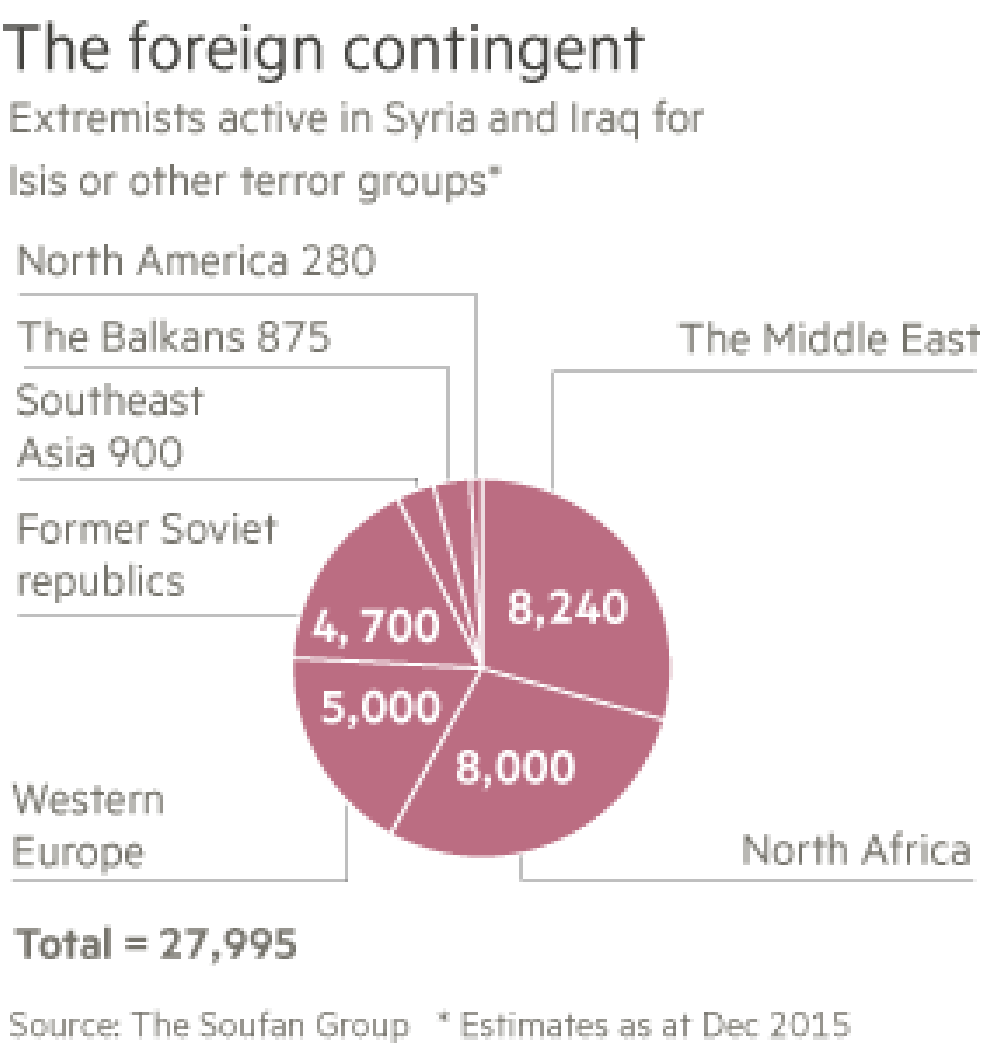
"However, due to the enthusiasm generated by the Paris attacks among jihadis, an increase in the number of attacks on these targets is highly likely over the next six months," he said.

Western governments are particularly concerned about Russia and central Asia, an important source of the foreign fighters who join Isis in the Middle East, and see radicalisation in other parts of Asia as well.

"Asia-wide, it's more of a concern than people think for the governments concerned," says one western official. "You've essentially had the globalisation of Islamic radicalisation, the Daesh [Isis] brand . . . though you still have a range of local brands."

The slew of terrorist killings, including the Jakarta attacks and the hacking to death of liberal writers on the streets of Bangladesh, may finally lay to rest the notion that Asian Muslims are somehow less prone to radicalisation than their co-religionists in the Middle East.

While it is true that Indonesian Islam, for example, is often coloured by Hindu and other pre-Islamic traditions, that has not stopped puritanical Sunni groups such as al-Qaeda and Isis from finding eager recruits to murder innocents of any age or religion.



South Asia, with Hindu-majority India at its heart, is home to millions of mystical, music-loving Sufis and has Muslim traditions as varied, tolerant and syncretic as those of Indonesia.

Yet in Pakistan, nearly 60,000 civilians, security force personnel and militants have been killed in terror attacks and government crackdowns since 2003. Almost all the victims were Muslims.

Indonesia

Tolerant nation wary of extremist trends

New leaders keen to demonstrate their reach to groups such as Isis

Equally, it is hard to think of any country in Asia — except perhaps the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan — that has not been affected by the rise of Isis and seen at least some of its citizens migrate to Syria or Iraq to fight for the organisation.

The Indian Ocean archipelago of the Maldives, a destination for wealthy tourists, is thought to have contributed about 200 Isis fighters, one of the largest contingents as

a share of national population, according to the Soufan Group.

Domestic factors

Radicalisation is probably made easier by the tendency of Asia's Muslim-majority governments and societies such as Malaysia and Pakistan to impose or adopt progressively more conservative rules. Neither increased conservatism nor the novel appeal of Isis, however, mean that Asian Muslims are a monolithic group fated to become ever more radical.

An examination of leading Asian countries shows they are buffeted by an array of influences, including ethnic separatism and political disputes as well as Islamism, religious bigotry and deep-rooted anti-western sentiment.

In some, Isis is only the latest actor to join in long-running extremist campaigns. In Afghanistan, for example, where a western-backed government under President Ashraf Ghani is struggling to ensure security, Isis is vying for influence with the Taliban, al-Qaeda and other Sunni groups.

There are signs that established groups in Pakistan have sought to form alliances with Isis. Had a militant group not cited revenge for "the killings of innocent Muslims in Syria" as the reason for its December 13 bomb in the mainly Shia town of Parachinar, the attack would have been just another example of sectarian carnage. But Lashkar-e-Jhangvi has for months been suspected of trying to become a branch of Isis.

"LeJ is trying hard to become enrolled in Daesh. They want money and weapons," says one intelligence official.

©Getty

Kashmiri Muslim protesters display the Isis flag during november rallies in Srinagar

India detained 14 suspected Isis sympathisers shortly before the arrival of François Hollande, the French president, in New Delhi last week. With 170m Muslims India has one of the religion's largest national populations, but they are rarely regarded as extremists and only a few dozen are thought to have left for Syria.

"Most of the Indians whom we know were attracted to Daesh were brought to our attention by their own family or community," Shivshankar Menon, a former national security adviser, said in a recent speech. "What should worry us is the fact that 10 years ago we could say proudly that there was no Indian in al-Qaeda. Today we can no longer say so."

And in Bangladesh, two strands of Islamic militancy have been prominent over the past year. First, a group known as Ansarullah Bangla Team, an al-Qaeda affiliate, has murdered five liberal writers and atheists and circulated a hit list with many more names. Second, Isis claimed various shootings and bombings that killed foreigners, policemen and Shia Muslims and boasted of "the revival of jihad in Bengal".

Last month, Singapore announced it had arrested 27 Bangladeshi men who were working on construction sites for supporting the ideology of al-Qaeda and Isis.

©AFP

Onlookers gather following a December suicide bomb blast at an Ahmadiyya mosque in Bangladesh

Meanwhile, Malaysian authorities say they have frustrated several plots and are concerned by the number of nationals who have gone to fight with Isis. The ruling United Malays National Organisation has also sought to bolster support among rural voters by emphasising its Islamic credentials.

Eager alliance

In short, Isis may indeed have Asia in its sights. The latest issue of its magazine Dabiq talks of Islam conquering or reconquering "the cow-worshipping Hindus and atheist Chinese" from "Khurasan", an imagined Islamic land centred on Afghanistan

and western Pakistan.

But Asia is not yet as important for Isis as its embattled Middle East heartland or the temptingly vulnerable and nearby nations of Europe.

Asian militants, in fact, sometimes seem more eager to associate themselves with Isis than overburdened Isis leaders are to co-opt them. Isis is only one of many extremist Sunni groups in Asia, and its ideologues spend much of their time attacking organisations such as the Taliban that are ideologically almost indistinguishable from itself.

“Extremism is a spectrum in this part of the world and it is very difficult to draw the line,” says Sidney Jones of the International Crisis Group. “I don’t think Isis central is interested in Southeast Asia. I think Indonesians in Isis based in Syria are interested in showing they can put the region on the map.”

Few analysts think Asian countries face immediate threats to their existence from Islamist radicals. Indeed, it was just such a threat to the stability of Pakistan from its homegrown Sunni extremists that persuaded the armed forces to launch operations against the militant groups they had helped to establish. Islamabad has, however, been less willing to abandon the jihadis it finds useful: those destabilising neighbouring India and Afghanistan.

Like Indonesia and several other Asian countries, Pakistan can now boast of some successes in suppressing violent radicals who want to attack their fellow citizens . And, with the notable exception of Afghans and Pakistanis, most Asians can assume they are as safe as Europeans from attacks by Isis or its fellow extremists. Unfortunately — after the attacks of Paris, Istanbul, Bangkok and Jakarta — that is small comfort.

China

Groups include: East Turkestan Islamic Movement

Beijing has stepped up its response to an insurgency in the northwestern region of Xinjiang, home to 10m Muslim Uighurs, since a 2014 knife attack in Kunming. It blames such attacks on ‘separatists’

Regional picture: Local groups are being influenced by Islamist networks

Pakistan

Groups include: Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan

TTP works directly to carry out attacks as well as through many affiliated groups; one intelligence official says LeJ is trying 'very hard to become enrolled in Daesh [Isis]'

Afghanistan

Groups include: Afghan Taliban, Haqqani network, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
The government is struggling to rein in lawlessness, with the spillover felt in Pakistan to the south, and central Asia and China to the north and east

India

Groups include: Indian Mujahideen

Only a few dozen of the country's 170m Muslims are thought to have travelled to Syria to fight. But India detained 14 suspected Isis sympathisers in New Delhi last week

Bangladesh

Groups include: Ansarullah Bangla Team, Jam'atul Mujaheddin Bangladesh

Ansarullah Bangla Team, an al-Qaeda affiliate, has killed liberal writers and atheists while groups linked to Isis have claimed responsibility for a spate of recent attacks

Thailand

©AFP

A suspect in August's Bangkok shrine attack is escorted by Thai commandos

Groups include: National Revolutionary Front

A long-running insurgency by predominantly Muslim ethnic Malays has claimed thousands of lives. Ethnic Uighurs from China were suspected of involvement in an August attack on a shrine in Bangkok

Indonesia

Groups include: Jemaah Islamiyah, East Indonesia Mujahidin

Despite the recent Jakarta attack the number of serious terrorist incidents remains small. But the authorities fear that returning fighters could revive local extremist groups

Malaysia

Groups include: Katiba Nusantara

Malaysian authorities say they have frustrated a spate of terror plots but are concerned by the number of nationals who have left the self-styled moderate Muslim country to fight with Isis in Syria and Iraq

Philippines

Groups include: Abu Sayyaf, Moro Islamic Liberation Front

There are fears the restive southern island group of Mindanao will 'become a safe haven for everybody else in the region fleeing and an arms supplier', says a security analyst

Additional reporting by Farhan Bokhari in Islamabad, Joseph Allchin in Dhaka, Michael Peel in Bangkok, Jeevan Vasagar in Kuala Lumpur and Tom Mitchell in Beijing

The aftermath of a December attack in Parachinar, northern Pakistan

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a181bbda-c8e1-11e5-be0b-b7ece4e953a0.html#axzz40tsY4N54

Terrorisme : la France et la Belgique renforcent leur coopération

01 février 2016 à 23h52

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Deux mois et demi après les attentats de Paris et de Saint-Denis, la France et la Belgique ont décidé de renforcer leur coopération en matière de lutte contre le terrorisme. Plusieurs mesures concrètes ont été évoquées.

La France et la Belgique avancent main dans la main. Les deux pays souhaitent renforcer leur coopération en matière de lutte contre le terrorisme suite aux attentats de Paris et de Saint-Denis survenus en novembre 2015. Parmi les auteurs présumés de ces attaques, certains avaient vécu dans l'agglomération bruxelloise.

En visite à Bruxelles avec les ministres de la Justice et de l'Intérieur, le Premier ministre français a évoqué les moyens de renforcer la sécurité, tout en mettant en garde contre la puissance de la menace terroriste. Au titre des « décisions concrètes », Manuel Valls a cité l'échange de policiers et d'officiers de liaison et le renforcement de la coopération de la police transfrontalière « même si, notamment dans le domaine de la lutte contre la criminalité, elle est déjà de très bonne qualité ».

Devant la presse, aux côtés de son homologue belge Charles Michel, le Premier ministre a aussi évoqué l'affectation d'un magistrat de liaison à l'ambassade de France à Bruxelles ainsi qu'une « action concertée » en matière de lutte contre la radicalisation. Et de préciser : « Nous avons également convenu d'intensifier les échanges d'informations, déjà intenses, entre services. Il faudra pour cela exploiter pleinement les capacités des outils des outils bilatéraux et européens existant ».

Préparation des attentats. L'enquête sur les attaques du 13 novembre a révélé l'existence d'une filière à Molenbeek, un quartier de Bruxelles présenté comme une plaque

tournante du djihadisme et une base arrière à la préparation d'attentats. Plusieurs auteurs des attaques, dont Abdelhamid Abaaoud, considéré comme l'organisateur des opérations, avaient la nationalité belge ou résidaient dans le pays. Pointées du doigt en France, les autorités belges ont régulièrement pris ces derniers mois la défense de leurs services de renseignement, qui n'ont pas réussi à mettre la main sur Salah Abdeslam à son retour en Belgique.

Malgré les failles, Charles Michel estime que la coopération en matière de sécurité entre la France et la Belgique « fonctionne plutôt bien ». « Les échanges sont les plus systématiques possibles, des équipes d'enquête conjointes sont en place », explique-t-il dans le quotidien Le Monde. « Nous voulons toutefois prendre des engagements plus opérationnels et plus concrets ». Et de poursuivre : « Nous pouvons aussi améliorer notre lutte conjointe contre la radicalisation. »

Pas de risque zéro. Depuis le 13 novembre, une dizaine de personnes ont été interpellées en Belgique pour leur implication présumée dans ces opérations revendiquées par l'Etat islamique. Au niveau européen, les gouvernements et le Parlement de l'Union européenne se sont mis d'accord début décembre sur la création d'un fichier « PNR » (Passenger Name Record) conservant la trace des déplacements en avion des voyageurs. Dans un entretien accordé en fin de journée à la chaîne *RTL-TVI*, les deux dirigeants ont souligné l'importance de la pression, rappelant en chœur que « le risque zéro n'existe pas. » « La menace, je veux le rappeler, est à un niveau sans précédent », a dit Manuel Valls, alors que le gouvernement français doit examiner mercredi le projet de prolonger de trois mois l'état d'urgence en France.

(avec Reuters)

http://www.lopinion.fr/

Iraq

Understanding Youth Radicalization in the Age of ISIS: A Psychosocial Analysis

12 February 2016

By Kumar Ramakrishna

Mojpe/Pixabay

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In December 2015, Malaysian police reported that the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) had set up camps in Kazakhstan and Syria to train and indoctrinate children as young as two years old to become militants. It was alleged that the camps were training children from all over the world in the use of firearms, as well as immersing them in what one senior Malaysian police officer called a ' false jihad'.

While the Kazakh ambassador in Singapore swiftly issued a rebuttal of the Malaysian claim, it is worth noting nevertheless that news is available – including apparently video evidence produced by ISIS itself- of Kazakh children being trained by ISIS. More generally, terrorism researchers have confirmed that ISIS 'actively recruits children' to engage in 'combat, including suicide missions' (Stern and Berger 2015:

210). In any case, Southeast Asian authorities were hardly surprised at the latest allegations of ISIS targeting youth for Islamist indoctrination. Since September 2014, it has been known that ISIS has set up a Southeast Asian unit of Malay-speaking militants, drawn from mainly Indonesia but also Malaysia. According to some estimates, the unit called Katibah Nusantara (KN), or the Malay Archipelago Unit, held sway amongst 450 Indonesian and Malaysian fighters and their families in the Syrian/Iraq region, as of November 2015 (Arianti and Singh, 2015).

Of particular interest, KN has apparently set up the Abdullah Azzam Academy for the education and military training of children of Malaysian and Indonesian fighters. The medium of instruction is in the Malay language, and KN appears desirous of training a new generation of Malay-speaking militants indoctrinated from childhood to be committed to ensuring that the so-called ISIS Caliphate, inaugurated by its titular leader Abu Bakar al-Baghdadi in June 2014, eventually encompasses Malay-speaking Southeast Asia as well. In March 2015, moreover, a two-minute video emerged via ISIS social media sources in which ethnic Malay-looking children were seen training with weapons. The video declared that these children will 'finish all oppressors, disbelievers, apostates'. The underlying message to Southeast Asian governments was unmistakable: 'These children will be the next generation of fighters. You can capture us, kill us, we will regenerate, no matter how hard you try'. Terrorism scholars agree in this connection that from the ISIS perspective, '[l]eadership decapitation is significantly less likely to be effective against organizations that prepare children to step into their fathers' shoes' (Stern and Berger, 2015b: 211).

ISIS is hardly unique in targeting youth – especially young males – for indoctrination. Its ideological parent Al Qaeda sought to radicalize youth into its virulent varieties of Islamist extremism as well. The British MI5 warned in 2007 that Al Qaeda and its affiliates were seeking to radicalize children as young as 15 into mounting terror attacks in the United Kingdom. In like vein the former Director of the US Central Intelligence Agency warned that Al Qaeda was seeking to radicalize western youth for the purpose of mounting terror attacks in the West. Some estimates suggest that youth between 15 and 18 years of age comprise 20 percent of all suicide bombers (Samuel, 2011:109-113). As we shall see, youth are particularly susceptible to radicalization into violent extremism of the ISIS and similar ills, for a variety of reasons. This article will first examine widely accepted definitions of the term 'youth'. It will then examine, drawing on a number of disciplinary perspectives, a few key intertwined factors – neurological, psychological, family and social – that impact the degree to which youth are rendered susceptible to the seductive ideological appeals of ISIS and the like, and ultimately radicalize into violent extremism. I shall then end the article by briefly suggesting ways to mitigate the relative vulnerability of youth to the highly professionalized and seductive Facebook, Twitter and YouTube propaganda of ISIS.

'Youth' Defined – and How ISIS 'Unleashes' Them

That ISIS seems keen on targeting young children and youth for recruitment into either active militant serving on the frontlines in Syria and Iraq, or so-called 'lone wolves' carrying out terrorist acts inspired but not necessarily orchestrated by the organization, is evident enough. A brief definitional discussion is warranted at this juncture before proceeding further. The term 'youth' is interpreted differently across

national and institutional jurisdictions – and at times even within the latter. While the United Nations Secretariat and the World Bank both define 'youth' to refer to individuals between 15 and 24 years old, the Denmark Youth Council establishes the age range of individuals considered to be youth more expansively – as between 15 to 34 years of age (Ramakrishna, 2015: 115). The African Union further extends this latter definition of youth by a year, to age 35. Within the UN system itself, UNICEF's Convention on the Rights of the Child broadly defines the term 'youth' as a 'child until 18' while the UN Habitat identifies an age range from 15-32 years.

In any case, as mentioned, quite apart from the children in training camps that have been featured in ISIS propaganda videos, the ISIS message has clearly resonated with youth that are older, as evidenced by a cursory glance at newspaper headlines on lone wolf attacks in the second half of 2014 and throughout 2015. In September 2014, ISIS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani – in response to the Obama administration's launching of airstrikes a month earlier to stem the terrorist army's seemingly inexorable advance in Iraq – issued via social media a call upon ISIS supporters worldwide to engage in so-called 'lone wolf' attacks in Western coalition capitals. This appeared to be deadly effective: two months after al-Adnani's call, a 25-year old ISIS-inspired lone wolf, Martin Roulea, ran over two Canadian soldiers in a Montreal parking lot before being killed by police. In January 2015, 20-year old Christopher Cornell was arrested by the FBI for a plot to open fire on US government officials and the Israeli embassy. He claimed to have been acting on behalf of ISIS. Six months later, during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, al-Adnani urged ISIS supporters to turn it into 'a month of disasters, defeats and disgrace for the kuffar [infidels] everywhere'. Subsequently, in the Tunisian tourist resort of Port el Kantaoui near the coastal city of Sousse, 20-year old Rafik el Chelly shot dead 37 mainly Western civilians near the beachside Rui Imperial Hotel (Ramakrishna, 2015).

Youth have featured heavily in lone wolf incidents in Australia as well. In September 2014 an 18-year-old male was killed by police after he had stabbed two counter-terrorism police officers in Melbourne. In April 2015, several teenagers were arrested on suspicion of plotting an ISIS-inspired assault on police at a Veterans' Day ceremony. This particular plot even had a transnational dimension: Australian authorities revealed that the alleged mastermind of this plot was a 14-year-old British boy operating 'from his bedroom in northwestern England'. A month later, again in Melbourne, police arrested a 17-year-old for being implicated in a plot to detonate three homemade pipe bombs.

Youth and Radicalization into Violent Extremism: A Preliminary Psychosocial Analysis

Why are youth so heavily represented amongst militants radicalized by ISIS? While some argue that the role of social media is crucial in understanding how ISIS attracts today's tech savvy youth, in reality the Internet, though not unimportant, is merely an accelerant of the radicalization process (Homeland Security Institute 2009: 6). What makes youth vulnerable actually reside off-line in a real world context; to properly elucidate this assertion would require more space than is permissible in this article. Nevertheless, insights from several disciplines offer us some preliminary answers.

Neurological Factors

To start with, neurologically youth are pretty unique as their brain development proceeds in a rather uneven fashion. Specifically, during the teenage years the prefrontal cortex that guides reasoning and self-control develops more gradually than the amygdala – the center of human emotions. This helps explain why teenagers between 18 and 20 years of age often appear to many an exasperated parent as impulsive and rash (Leong, 2011). Second, the amygdala-driven and rather intense emotional turbulence that many teens more or less experience at regular intervals is not without implications. It suggests a certain psychological instability that expresses itself frequently in a quest for absolute cognitive certainty – which violent fundamentalist groups like ISIS conveniently appear to offer. In sum, youth are anything but regular folk: they are actually in a 'tumultuous biological, cognitive, social and emotional transition to adulthood' (Ramakrishna, 2015:116). It is precisely this process of transition that renders youth to be akin to psychological putty in the hands of skilled extremist ideologues.

The Family Context

The essential psychological vulnerability of youth arising from neurological factors is further influenced by the immediate family context. British psychiatrist Russell Razzaque in this respect has argued that the 'the initial parental bond' is utterly crucial for the healthy emotional development of youth (2008: 80-83). He asserts that 'just as oxygen deprivation can impair growth or cause damage to the unborn child, so lack of attachment and emotional deprivation can harm the growing infant and stunt his psychological development'. Razzaque warns that a youth growing up without a stable role model in the immediate family context 'will see things in a very different light from the way adults do, even as he grows older'. This requires elaboration. Psychologically speaking, it has long been understood that 'our personality, character, thoughts, and feelings are shaped by our early childhood experiences', and central to the process of ego and identity formation until even well into adulthood is as noted the 'early and influential parent-child dyad' (Jones, 2008: 119). Hence those youth who, because of a deeply dysfunctional relationship with early parental figures, possess 'fragile senses of identity and unhealthily developed egos', they would lack the utterly important 'inner strength and personal stability required to endure life's ordinary trials and tribulations' (Alper, 2006:173-4). A weak and/or dysfunctional immediate family context, therefore, could well render a youth 'desperately hungry' for 'external objects that claim to be perfect and ideal', and that supposedly offer 'that necessary sense of connection to something of value' that can 'buttress his self-esteem' (Jones, 2008: 133-4). This is the point where for instance ISIS extremist ideologues can strike home with their social media appeals. The adverse impact of a poor family background is no exaggeration. In Saudi Arabia as one instance, it was found that many who had grown up in homes of relatives 'without their parents present' were in need of attention, as their 'personal and social problems' appeared to 'contribute to radicalization' (International Peace Institute, 2010: 9).

The Social Milieu

Another factor that plays an instrumental role in at times rendering youth susceptible to ISIS extremist appeals for example is the wider social milieu within which they and their immediate families are embedded. Of special concern are Muslim communities or sub-cultures that are relatively insulated from the wider polity and have been beset by a range of political, historical and socioeconomic setbacks that have

generated a sense of alienation vis-a-vis dominant out-groups. In some cases, such 'countercultures' – not just in the Middle East but including poorly integrated migrant communities in the West or elsewhere– may share a generalized perception that their communities are facing political and socioeconomic marginalization – or worse (Juergensmeyer, 2000: 12). In a broadly similar way, the aforementioned training camps for children ISIS has apparently set up can be considered as seminal 'cultures of violence', that are 'a crucial part of understanding religious terrorism' (Jones, 2008: 120). Youth that are immersed in their formative years in such stressed communities rarely emerge unscathed. From a neurological perspective, growing up immersed in a countercultural milieu characterized by interactions and experiences that heighten out-group prejudice has a significant impact on their highly plastic youthful brains. Specifically, within the hippocampus, a part of the ancient limbic system of the brain, strong emotional reactions to experiences of social and economic discrimination or worse at the hands of out-groups – as well as repeated exposure to negative out-group stereotyping – cannot but be stored as long-term memory (Johnson, 2004: 8); (Wilson, 1999: 116-17); (Newberg and Waldman, 2006: 32).

Freud elaborated on this process with his concept of so-called critical periods. During such periods the unique architecture of a youth's hippocampus stabilizes in a relatively enduring way. Hence when such critical and brief windows close, the youth's learned habits, beliefs and attitudes become relatively resistant to change; put another way, once certain neural pathways are laid down, they become entrenched (Doidge, 2008: 52-3); (Ridley, 2004: 167-70). In essence, therefore, youth who come of age within cultures of hatred 'tend to be self-righteous, prejudicial and condemnatory toward people outside their groups', whilst possessing an especially pronounced ''us versus them' mentality that many will carry throughout their lives' – shaped in no small part as well by 'the stories' they have 'heard and read while growing up'(Newberg and Weldman, 2006: 121).

The Middle East offers one illustration of how culturally sanctioned out-group prejudice can be socialized into youth: 'hatred for Jews and Zionists' is widespread in the mainstream and social media and even in textbooks for children as young as three years old, 'complete with illustrations of Jews with monster-like qualities'. In short, Jews are painted as 'bloodsuckers who attack the Palestinians' (Ali 2013: 37). Not entirely surprising perhaps then that in one Palestinian refugee camp in the Gaza Strip a Hamas official informed the terrorism scholar Scott Atran in 2004 that 'our youth are running into martyrdom' (Atran 2010: 353). So generalized and pervasive was the countercultural hatred of Israelis that one young man very matter-of-factly discussed with Atran the 'costs and benefits of a roadside versus suicide bombing', a topic that appeared normal within the 'group's moral frame' (2010: 355). Even more remarkable was the little boy kicking a frayed soccer ball near the border crossing at Bayt Lahiyah who assured Atran that 'he wanted to die a *shaheed*, killing Israelis' (2010: 356). It is thus not hard to see how immersion in a countercultural milieu characterized by deep out-group hatred and prejudice can – in tandem with the neurological, psychological and family factors just discussed – erode the ability of youth to withstand the siren call of violent extremist ideologues, like those that currently promote the seductive ISIS narrative across various social media platforms.

Conclusion: Promoting Good Families via Good Societies

The United Nations Secretary-General recently inaugurated his Plan of Action for

Preventing Violent Extremism, which *inter alia,* identified the importance of strategies of preventing radicalization into violent extremism to complement security-oriented counter-terrorist approaches. He specifically identified youth, moreover, as a critical global resource that had to be protected against the deleterious pull of virulent extremist ideologies. By way of conclusion, the foregoing analysis of the unique psychosocial attributes of youth suggests that at a minimum, a suite of policies guided perhaps by the principle of promoting 'good families via good societies' may represent a way forward to cope with the youth radicalization problem. A 'good family' here is defined as one possessing a *strong parent-child dyad* at its core. As seen this helps foster healthy and normal ego and intellectual development in youth (Jones 2008: 119-20). What the eminent psychoanalyst D.W. Winnicott (2006:148-9, 236-8) termed 'ordinary good homes' are needed to nurture youth capable of navigating the adolescent journey from emotional dependence on parents to mature adult independence in the context of a democratic society – with its emphasis on inter-ethnic and inter-religious tolerance.

However good families presuppose the prior and enabling existence of the good political and socioeconomic governance provided by what Ervin Staub considers as good societies (Staud 2005: 76). Apart from programs addressing the poverty that 'creates stress and negatively affects parenting', good societies construct 'cultural and societal institutions in a manner that helps adults and children fulfill their needs in constructive ways' and leverages upon the 'resulting potential and inclinations' to further promote inclusiveness instead of out-group 'devaluation' and 'discrimination' (Staub, 2005). Moreover, the good-family/good- society relationship is mutually reinforcing as well: strong and stable families help 'build commitment to mainstream values in the larger social system'; hence Wills and Resko reiterate the importance of 'social policies that are 'friendly' toward children and families' so as to ensure that parents are empowered 'to act supportively'. This is needed they tellingly add, to generate salutary 'long-range effects in terms of pro-social behavior' (in Miller, 2005: 419-36). In sum, a suite of policies that promote good families via good societies would arguably go a long way to enhance the preventive capacity of communities to discourage youth recruitment into violent extremism (Ozerdem and Podder 2011: 71). If, as the UN Secretary-General recently warned, the world ignores the need to 'harness the idealism, creativity and energy of young people' in the struggle against ISIS and its ilk, the prognosis for the future will be that much bleaker. The hearts and minds of today's youth therefore, is one battlespace that we 'need to reclaim' (Report of the UN Secretary-General, 2015*)*.

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Mexico

Of Cartels and Jihadists: Misconceptions and Provocative Suggestions

Written by David Martínez-Amador*

Monday, 08 February 2016

US Marines in Operation Enduring Freedom

In this analysis of the similarities between Islamic terrorist groups and Mexican cartels, David Martínez-Amador explores how the strategy to confront the former has influenced that of the latter.

During the six-year presidency of Felipe Calderón, Mexican intelligence agencies underwent a leverage process unprecedented in Mexico-United States bilateral relations. The hope (and hope it was) was to finally build an atmosphere allowing for the sharing of data without the usual distrust. Ultimately it happened, but under the guidelines proposed by the United States. Although it was frustrating, it brought about a homogenization in the strategy against drug trafficking. And this was serious.

What do I mean?

In concrete terms, I mean the United States applied in Mexico the same methods, procedures, and tactics it uses to address the Middle East: the strategy known as "Suppression of High Value Targets." The US military seeks to nullify the heads of terrorist organizations, similar to the strategy in Mexico of decapitating cartel leadership. By the end of Calderon's six-year administration, this strategy resulted in 25 out of 37 criminals being "taken out of circulation" (nine killed and 16 detained). It is this strategy, originally designed for the volatile situation in the Middle East, which we should thank for the mutation of large cartels into highly volatile micro-organizations.

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In the design of the "suppression of high value target" strategy, the US attempted to frame the Mexican insecurity phenomenon into pre-existing parameters in which it did not fit. One of these references was the dynamic used for the al-Qaeda organization. As expected, using these references in a rigid and literal way led to the overlooking of differences that resulted in devastating effects.

The Original Model

The US military operation in Afghanistan, "Operation Enduring Freedom," was supposed to eliminate the "visible heads" of jihadist organizations, hopefully generating such a level of systemic stress in the groups that it would be practically impossible for them to continue operating both inside and outside of Afghanistan.

Some of this was also transferred and written into the Mérida Initiative without noting -- as we have pointed out -- that the environment in which al-Qaeda operated was substantially different from that of the criminal environment in Mexico. Until that time, 2005, the Mexican criminal mosaic was stable and multipolar: it had clear leadership, respected routes, and territorial autonomy. On the other hand, the jihadist mosaic had always maintained a structurally hyper-competitive environment.[1] The Mexican criminal organizations had never lived in a context of hyper-competitive violence. But thanks to fragmentation, the forms of drug violence entered a spiral not only of competition but also of "constant renewal." Websites like the famous Blog del Narco were a reflection of how even the discussion of drug trafficking in Mexico came to discuss the genre "narco-snuff."

In essence, all of this was a direct product of the intellectual frameworks used to understand new generation conflicts -- characterized by the asymmetry between sides -- which called for the application of military force. Anyone who has attended training seminars conducted by the US Southern Command or the US Northern Command -- in which Mexico participates as an equal member -- will notice this. More than a decade after the September 11 attacks, it is clear that jihadist terrorism and drug trafficking did not have similar traits.

The Scenario Changes

The attacks in Paris and San Bernardino forced the word "terrorism" to appear yet again in the public discourse. What is not new this time are the solutions that are being suggested. The Obama administration has been careful not to use the term "radical Islam," and to avoid a US invasion of Syria. There are multiple reasons for this, but it is perhaps Jeffrey Sachs who said it best when he explained the concept of BlowBack Terrorism: "The terrorism boomerang effect is a terrible, unintended result of repeated military action, covert or overt, by Europe and the United States, throughout the Middle East, North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Central Asia, aimed at overthrowing governments and installing regimes amenable to Western interests."

If the FBI and other law enforcement and national security agencies believe they

will never face an enemy that is impossible to infiltrate and manipulate, I think that day has come.

Therefore, while military operations -- on the ground, covert, or by the use of drones -- continue, the West should be prepared to face the results of the boomerang effect.

New Models

This is where the current counter-terrorism model can learn some lessons from the experience of combating cartels, because we must recognize that what happened in San Bernardino is a brutal failure of US intelligence agencies. Although the popular conservative outcry in the United States is to close the borders with Mexico and Canada, the reality is that the terrorist attack was the result of individuals who should have easily appeared on the radar.

If the FBI and other law enforcement and national security agencies believe they will never face an enemy that is impossible to infiltrate and manipulate, I think that day has come.

A simple example: After 2001, the intelligence unit of the New York City Police Department published a document entitled *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*. It aimed to lay out characteristics of the process of radicalization in the Muslim population in the United States, assuming that these are homogeneous processes and require a center of worship. This is where an error -- one of many -- occurred in the strategy. A more orthodox religious practice does not necessarily mean radicalization (e.g., practices such as growing a beard or changing the style of dress). On the contrary, in using the Islamic principle of "taqiyya," entire cells of jihadists have gone unnoticed in the West because they drink alcohol, eat pork, dress in western style, and associate with non-Muslim women. Some of this applied to the September 11 Saudi hijackers.[2]

Suffice it to say that the same religious practices can also be modified. One of the perpetrators of the slaughter in San Bernardino, Syed Farook, although radicalized in his religious practice, appears to have stopped going to a mosque for nearly two years.

The previous does not make sense if one does not know that the preaching and worship of radical forms of Islam -- like "tarfirismo" and "wahabismo" -- can be performed in private homes, and not necessarily only in a mosque. The radicalism of young Muslims living in the Parisian "banlieue," the neighborhoods on the outskirts of the big cities of France, has taught us this.

The behavior of these new radical jihadist groups is beginning to resemble the dynamics of the new cells of organized crime: there is no hierarchy, no clear leadership, and we talk about small cells without direct membership to the large, known organizations. More than 32 mini-cartels operate in Mexico without being directly linked to the remnants of the big cartels, although that does not mean that they do not interact. Syed Farook and his wife (the two responsible for the San Bernardino attack) were recruited directly by ISIS, did not travel to Syria to join the effort of the Islamic State, but they sympathized with their actions. ISIS, in fact, did not dismiss the advertising of or the product of terror. In both cases, the key is the outsourcing of

the actors.

Mapping these cells can be incredibly difficult for any intelligence agency. At least, with regard to the case of gangs and mini-cartels, individual monitoring is not necessary because some organizational leadership remains. But this new profile of jihadist (in cases like the French with a list of 11,000 people) is not only unmanageable but constantly forces the creation of profiles based on racial prejudice.[3] There will be those who think that these structures can be infiltrated in the same way that security agencies have infiltrated gangs and cartels. But unlike the cartels, in these radical Islamic groups there is a political ideology and religious conviction. And it is not easy to penetrate. If we add the fact that the new profile of a terrorist is called lone wolf, there is little you can actually do.

Celerino Castillo was a DEA agent who infiltrated various criminal groups in Peru,Guatemala, and Mexico. He concluded: "Drug trafficking can never be stopped." I think that the same must be said about Islamic terrorism.

A Way Out?

We are facing a complex spiral of violence. If at one point the possibility that states negotiate with the cartels is raised, it is perhaps reasonable to assume that at some point, during this exhausting and foolish war against terrorism, it will be necessary to negotiate with the Islamic State. The proposal may seem farfetched, but Jonathan Powell -- former chief of staff during Tony Blair's administration and former member of the negotiating team in the peace process with the Irish Republican Army, and the current special envoy of the British government in Libya -- articulates it in a very interesting manner in the text, "Terrorists at the Table: Why Negotiating Is the Only Way to Peace."

More than a decade after the September 11 attacks, it is clear that jihadist terrorism and drug trafficking did not have similar traits.

The current strategy is useless if we really suppose it is possible to win militarily without opening communication channels. A prolonged war again produces an occupation scenario. If it were possible to militarily humiliate ISIS, the possibility of dialogue would be opened after. Or not?

The United States has done that with the Colombian cartels, Mexicans, with the Italian mafia, and with the Mexican Mafia in California prisons. It has negotiated with Sunni tribes who initially supported the Abu Musab Zarqawi insurgency (achieving the expulsion of this insurgency from Iraqi territory). We need to remember that the Israelis themselves have negotiated with the PLO, Fatah, and Hamas. It's not about winning but containing.

Absurd? Maybe. But as the strange Plan Yinón states,[4] ISIS is an artificial creation by the United States to maintain a Middle East that is burned, fragmented, and divided. Perhaps the United States can decide that it is time to negotiate with its own creation.

Endnotes

[1] Some academic scholars that study Islam, like John Esposito ("Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam"), believe that the hyper-competitive nature of the jihadist

organizations is actually a product of constant and recurring intervention of Western foreign policy, which serves to override ideological differences between different factions and provide a common goal. In this goal, the greater amount of terror that can be generated is welcome, even if it comes come from doctrinally different groups.

[2] In the interest of intellectual honesty, it is important to note that the principle of "taqiyya" is originally a doctrinal element that is not directed toward the act of terrorism. Historically, Shiite Muslims live between the majority Sunni (almost 90 percent of the Muslim world) and, to avoid persecution, they learned to hide some of their specific religious practices. That is why taqiyya is understood as a "deception" to save ones life. The use that members of jihadist groups use it for is illegitimate, similar to how the original principal of jihad has been distorted. For a better understanding of Islamic principles in their original sense it is worth reading John Esposito's "Islam: The Straight Path." Esposito is an Islamic scholar, and professor of International Relations and Islamic Studies at Georgetown University.

[3] In response to the text prepared by the intelligence section of the NYPD for tracking and mapping of Muslim communities, the Muslim American Civil Liberties Coalition (MACLC) created a document to make clear the mistakes committed by the authorities.

[4] There is a lot of controversy surrounding the so-called Yinon Plan. However, serious internationalists like Alfredo Jalife-Rahme have brought it to the discussion table. It is a long and complex document. You can view it here.

**This article was originally published by Plaza Pública. It was translated, edited for clarity, and reprinted with permission, but it does not necessarily reflect the views of InSight Crime. See Spanish original here.*

http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/of-cartels-and-jihadists-misconceptions-and-provocative-suggestions

Pakistan

Pakistan's Hand in the Rise of International Jihad

FEB. 6, 2016

The funeral of Saeed Jawad Hossini, 29, who was killed in a Taliban suicide attack in Kabul in January.CreditShah Marai/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

TUNIS — PRESIDENT ASHRAF GHANI of Afghanistan has warned in several recent interviews that unless peace talks with Pakistan and theTaliban produce results in the next few months, his country may not survive 2016. Afghanistan is barely standing**,** he says, after the Taliban onslaught last year, which led to the highest casualties among civilians and security forces since 2001.

"How much worse will it get?" Mr. Ghani asked in a recent television interview. "It depends on how much regional cooperation we can secure, and how much international mediation and pressure can be exerted to create rules of the game between states."

What he means is it depends on how much international pressure can be brought to bear on Pakistan to cease its aggression.

Critics of the Afghan leadership say it's not Pakistan's fault that its neighbor is falling apart. They point to the many internal failings of the Afghan government: political divisions, weak institutions, warlords and corruption.

But experts have found a lot of evidence that Pakistan facilitated the Taliban offensive. The United States and China have been asking Pakistan to persuade the Taliban

to make peace, but Afghanistan argues that Islamabad has done nothing to rein in the Taliban, and if anything has encouraged it to raise the stakes in hopes of gaining influence in any power-sharing agreement.

This behavior is not just an issue for Afghanistan. Pakistan is intervening in a number of foreign conflicts. Its intelligence service has long acted as the manager of international mujahedeen forces, many of them Sunni extremists, and there is even speculation that it may have been involved in the rise of the Islamic State.

The latest Taliban offensive began in 2014. United States and NATO forces were winding down their operations in Afghanistan and preparing to withdraw when Pakistan decided, after years of prevarication, to clear Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters from their sanctuary in Pakistan's tribal area of North Waziristan.

The operation was certainly a serious endeavor — Taliban bases, torture chambers and ammunition dumps were busted, town bazaars were razed and over one million civilians were displaced.

But the militants were tipped off early, and hundreds escaped, tribesmen and Taliban fighters said. Many fled over the border to Afghanistan, just at the vulnerable moment when Afghanistan was assuming responsibility for its own security. Ninety foreign fighters with their families arrived in Paktika Province that summer, to the alarm of Afghan officials.

Further along the border in Paktika Province, Taliban fighters occupied abandoned C.I.A. bases and outposts. A legislator from the region warned me that they would use the positions to project attacks deeper into Afghanistan and even up to Kabul. Some of the most devastating suicide bomb attacks occurred in that province in the months that followed.

Meanwhile, in Pakistan, the Haqqani network, the most potent branch of the Taliban, moved from North Waziristan into the adjacent district of Kurram. From there it continues to enjoy safe haven and conduct its insurgency against American, international and Afghan targets.

Pakistan regards Afghanistan as its backyard. Determined not to let its archrival, India, gain influence there, and to ensure that Afghanistan remains in the Sunni Islamist camp, Pakistan has used the Taliban selectively, promoting those who further its agenda and cracking down on those who don't. The same goes for Al Qaeda and other foreign fighters.

Even knowing this, it might come as a surprise that the region's triumvirate of violent jihad is living openly in Pakistan.

First, there's Sirajuddin Haqqani, the leader of the Haqqani network, and second in command of the Taliban. He moves freely around Pakistan, and has even visited the Pakistani intelligence headquarters of the Afghan campaign in Rawalpindi.

Then there is the new leader of the Taliban, Mullah Akhtar Muhammad Mansour, who has openly assembled meetings of his military and leadership council near the

Pakistani town of Quetta. Since he came to power last year, the Taliban has mounted some of its most ambitious offensives into Afghanistan, overrunning the northern town of Kunduz, and pushing to seize control of the opium-rich province of Helmand.

Finally, Al Qaeda's leader, Ayman al-Zawahri, enjoys sanctuary in Pakistan — one recent report placed him in the southwestern corner of Baluchistan. He has been working to establish training camps in southern Afghanistan. In October, it took United States Special Operations forces several days of fighting and airstrikes to clear those camps. American commanders say the group they were fighting was Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, a new franchise announced by Mr. Zawahri that has claimed responsibility for the killings of bloggers and activists in Karachi and Bangladesh, among other attacks.

Pakistan denies harboring the Taliban and Al Qaeda, and points out that it, too, is a victim of terrorism. But many analysts have detailed how the military has nurtured Islamist militant groups as an instrument to suppress nationalist movements, in particular among the Pashtun minority, at home and abroad.

Perhaps most troubling, there are reports that Pakistan had a role in the rise of the Islamic State.

Ahead of Pakistan's 2014 operation in North Waziristan, scores, even hundreds, of foreign fighters left the tribal areas to fight against President Bashar al-Assad in Syria. Tribesmen and Taliban members from the area say fighters traveled to Quetta, and then flew to Qatar. There they received new passports and passage to Turkey, from where they could cross into Syria. Others traveled overland along well-worn smuggling routes from Pakistan through Iran and Iraq.

The fighters arrived just in time to boost the sweeping offensive by ISISinto Iraq and the creation of the Islamic State in the summer of 2014.

If these accounts are correct, Pakistan was cooperating with Qatar, and perhaps others, to move international Sunni jihadists (including 300 Pakistanis) from Pakistan's tribal areas, where they were no longer needed, to new battlefields in Syria. It is just another reminder of Pakistan's central involvement in creating and managing violent jihadist groups, one Pakistani politician, who spoke on the condition of anonymity when talking about intelligence affairs, told me.

This has been going on for more than 30 years. In 1990, I shared a bus ride with young Chinese Uighurs, Muslims from China's restive northwest, who had spent months training in Pakistani madrasas, including a brief foray into Afghanistan to get a taste of battle. They were returning home, furnished with brand-new Pakistani passports**,** a gift of citizenship often offered to those who join the jihad.

Years later, just after Osama bin Laden was found and killed in Pakistan, I interviewed a guerrilla commander from the disputed region of Kashmir who had spent 15 years on the Pakistani military payroll, traveling to train and assist insurgents in Bosnia, Chechnya, Kashmir and Afghanistan.

In 2012 I came across several cases where young clerics, fresh graduates from the Haqqania madrasa in Pakistan, returned to their home villages in Afghanistan, flush with cash, and set about running mosques and recruiting and organizing a band of Taliban followers.

I visited that madrasa in 2013. It is the alma mater of the Afghan Taliban, where many of the leaders of the movement were trained. The clerics there remained adamant in their support for the Taliban. “It is a political fact that one day the Taliban will take power,” Syed Yousuf Shah, the madrasa spokesman, told me. “We are experts on the Taliban,” he said, and a majority of the Afghan people “still support them.”

The madrasa, a longtime instrument of Pakistani intelligence, has been training people from the ethnic minorities of northern Afghanistan alongside its standard clientele of Pashtuns. The aim is still to win control of northern Afghanistan through these young graduates. From there they have their eyes on Central Asia and western China. Pakistani clerics are educating and radicalizing Chinese Uighurs as well, along with Central Asians from the former Soviet republics.

No one has held Pakistan to account for this behavior. Why would Pakistan give it up now?

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http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/07/opinion/sunday/pakistans-hand-in-the-rise-of-international-jihad.html

USA

Drafting girls and turning Americans into terrorists

February 12, 2016

Breitbart.com recently reported, "President Barack Obama's administration is now deliberating whether to direct women to sign up for the Selective Service, because of its progressive preference for gender-blind policies. The administration has already forced the military to assign willing and unwilling women to combat tasks, where they are required to carry heavy loads, to quickly recover from routine injuries and to be engaged in direct combat."

But Barack Obama is not the only one supporting the idea of drafting America's young women into the armed forces (should the draft be reinstated). Republican presidential candidates Jeb Bush, Chris Christie, and Marco Rubio have also signed on.

"The Republican establishment hopefuls in the 2016 race want the government to make women sign up for the modern version of the emergency military draft.

"Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL), Jeb Bush, and Gov. Chris Christie all offered support during Saturday night's ABC News' 2016 debate for a federal mandate that would force young women to register for the Selective Service System.

"The Selective Service System was formed in 1917 and keeps a database on male U.S. citizens who are available for military conscription in some future emergency. Women are currently exempted, thanks to a 1981 Supreme Court decision that declared Congress' men-only rule did not thwart the Fifth Amendment requirement of equal treatment.

But the 1981 Supreme Court decision notwithstanding, the U.S. government is seriously considering making America's young women eligible for the draft. A PBS report states, "The government is deliberating whether to propose Selective Service changes that would make women eligible for the military draft, the White house said Friday, a day after the Pentagon said it would no longer bar women from combat jobs.

"The Defense Department has prepared an analysis of how the Pentagon change could affect the U.S. Military Selective Service Act, said White House spokesman Josh Earnest.

"'We're going to work with Congress to look at that analysis, to review it, to get others' opinions and determine if additional reforms or changes are necessary in light of this decision,' Earnest said."

The report concludes, "The Selective Service Act requires eligible men to register for the draft when they turn 18 or face fines. Registrants can be called up for compulsory service until they are 26 years old, though none have been drafted in decades.

"Carter has previously said he supports a review of the draft based on the growing role women play in the military."

The idea of placing women in combat and now possibly drafting women into the armed services is the mark of a nation that has truly lost its way.

My daughter is above draft age, but my granddaughters aren't; and I can promise you that it will be a cold day in Hades before my daughter and son-in-law allow their girls to be drafted. If our government really wants to create a resistance movement in this country, just start telling mommas and daddies that their daughters are going to be drafted into war. For starters, begin by asking our combat veterans if they are willing to offer their daughters to the horrors of war.

You can rest assured that the daughters of Barack Obama, Jeb Bush, Chris Christie, and Marco Rubio will never know one day of combat – law or no law

Yes, I realize that countless American wives and mothers valiantly defended their homes and families when under attack – whether from the French or British in Colonial America or from Indians on the trail west – but are we now prepared to force our young women into combat on foreign shores? What a horrible thought!

Our government is counting on America's technological superiority on the sea and in the air as the impenetrable wall of protection for our country. Therefore, they feel free to use our military for social radicalization. But one day we are going to face a REAL enemy (as opposed to the phony ones we have been fighting for the past umpteen years), and when we do, we are going to learn once again that REAL wars are won face to face and man to man. And when that day comes, God help us if our armed forces have already filled half or more (there are more girls than boys, you know) of its combat ranks with young girls.

I shudder just thinking about it.
And on another note: I am on record as warning the American people that a "war on Islam" could quickly become a catalyst for big-government toadies to use the same definitions and protocols against the American people.

It didn't take long to be proven right.

Countless television and radio talk shows, Internet blog sites, and churches all across America have spent the last two or three years regurgitating a hate-filled, anti-Muslim message. Both Donald Trump and Ted Cruz have repeatedly injected the anti-Muslim message into their presidential campaigns. Tens of thousands of pastors and thousands of "conservative" talking heads have made anti-Muslim vilification a daily staple. And of course, the solution to the Muslim problem is...you guessed it: MORE GOVERNMENT.

Since early 2014, U.S. laws have become very broad and very strict in prosecuting anyone who is connected or associated with alleged Islamic terrorists. People who are convicted of providing "material support" (federal prosecutors are able to define that phrase in just about any way they want to) face median sentences of over fifty years in prison.

John Carlin, the Justice Department's chief of national security, recently said in a Reuters news interview that his counter-terrorism team, including a recently hired counsel, is taking "a thoughtful look at the nature and scope of the domestic terrorism threat" and helping to analyze "potential legal improvements and enhancements to better combat those threats."

The Reuters interview continues saying, "The counsel, who was appointed last October and has not been named publicly, will identify cases being prosecuted at the state level that 'could arguably meet the federal definition of domestic terrorism,' a Justice Department official said.

"That would give the department a direct role in more domestic extremism cases."

The report began by stating, "The U.S. Justice Department is considering legal changes to combat what it sees as a rising threat from domestic anti-government extremists, senior officials told Reuters, even as it steps up efforts to stop Islamic State -inspired attacks at home.

"Extremist groups motivated by a range of U.S.-born philosophies present a 'clear and present danger,' John Carlin, the Justice Department's chief of national security, told Reuters in an interview. 'Based on recent reports and the cases we are seeing, it seems like we're in a heightened environment.'"

In other words, the U.S. Justice Department wants to start treating American citizens who are deemed to be "domestic terrorists" in the same way that Islamic terrorists are being treated.

Not coincidentally, the featured article in the current issue of Newsweek magazine is entitled "Right Wing Extremists Are A Bigger Threat Than ISIS." Of course, in the jaded world of the publishers of Newsweek, the SPLC, and scores of liberal think tanks and news outlets, there is no such thing as "Left Wing Extremists."

And prominently displayed in the Newsweek article is a large photograph of LeVoy Finicum, the man who was recently shot by an Oregon state police officer (or officers) for allegedly reaching for a handgun after having resisted arrest on a remote Oregon highway. Finicum – along with Ammon Bundy and about twenty others – had illegally mounted an armed occupation of a group of empty buildings on a national wildlife refuge outside the small town of Burns in protest over continued mistreatment of western farmers and ranchers by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Unfortunately, the death of Mr. Finicum has served to fuel more anti-government passions with comparisons to Waco and Ruby Ridge abounding – which, in my opinion, such comparisons do not exist. All this does is to play right into the hands of a U.S. Justice Department already looking for an excuse to pull American citizens – especially "right wing" Christians (albeit Bundy and Finicum both claimed Mormonism) – into the same category as Islamic terrorists.

To say that we Americans are living in jeopardous days is an extreme understatement. Very understandably, the American people are increasingly distrustful of their government, their news media, and even their future. We desperately need cool heads and wise hearts to peacefully and successfully navigate these troubled waters. And what we need most is leadership from America's pulpits. But it's the lack of pastoral leadership that has mostly created this mess to begin with. The good news is America's pastors could help lead our country out of this morass. If only they would.

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http://www.renewamerica.com/

Fact Check: Is most U.S. terrorism homegrown?

Kelcie T Grega and Emily L. Mahoney,

. MST February 1, 2016

(Photo: handout)

THE MEDIA: Internet

WHO SAID IT: M. Zuhdi Jasser

TITLE: President of the American Islamic Forum for Democracy

THE COMMENT: "First of all, most attacks against the homeland have been done by homegrown terrorists."

THE FORUM: On-camera interview with 12 News (KPNX), published online on Dec. 7

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING AT: Whether more attacks against the U.S. have been committed by American citizens or permanent residents than foreign terrorists.

ANALYSIS: Jasser defines homegrown terrorism as being carried out by people radicalized while living in the U.S. for an extended period**.**

One example of homegrown terrorism is the Boston Marathon bombing in April 2013, which authorities say was carried out by two brothers who were brought to the U.S. as children after their parents were granted visas and asylum.

In contrast, one suspect in the San Bernardino mass shooting, Tashfeen Malik — a legal, permanent resident — arrived in the U.S. in July 2014, and officials suspect she had been radicalized before she entered the country.

Peter Bergen, co-director of Arizona State University's Center on the Future of Warand author of "United States of Jihad." told AZ Fact Check in an email that every deadly act of jihadist terrorism in the U.S. since 9/11 has been carried out by an American citizen or legal permanent resident. "The other cases involving the refugees involve much lesser charges, such as conspiring to support a terrorist group and the like," he said.

According to widely referenced data collected by New America, a Washington, D.C., research center, 397 U.S. citizens have launched extremist attacks in the U.S. since 2001, compared with 39 legal residents, 10 refugees and eight visa holders. Thirty-seven attackers were listed as having unknown or "other" citizenship status.

Individuals were counted as extremists if they have been indicted on or convicted of terrorism-related crimes, or had been killed and "widely and credibly reported" as having extremist motives, according to New America's website.

David Schanzer, director of the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security at Duke University, said he agrees with Jasser's assessment, and that the vast majority of terrorist attacks in the U.S. have been conducted by people who have lived here at least five years.

"Since 9/11 we've had much tighter border controls, we've been very successful at keeping pressure on Al-Qaeda abroad through military actions, surveillance, a tightening of their finances (and) drone strikes, so that it has been very difficult for them to plan sophisticated attacks that would require them to bring people in from outside the U.S.," he told AZ Fact Check. "Both Al-Qaeda and ISIS have preferred to inspire people who are already here to engage in violence. … They probably think it's easier to do that than to bring operatives in from outside who have a much higher likelihood of getting caught."

Although the expert consensus appears to support Jasser's claim that most attacks on the homeland have been carried out by "homegrown terrorists," there is still a question about which acts should be defined as terrorism.

The FBI defines "international terrorism" as violent acts that violate federal or state law and are meant to intimidate the civilian population or to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination or kidnapping. It also occurs primarily outside the territorial jurisdiction of the U.S.

"Domestic terrorism" occurs primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the U.S., according to the FBI definition.

But David Rothenberg, co-director of ASU's Center on the Future of War, said there is no single agreed-upon definition of terrorism. Terrorism "is a judgment call, not just a description," he told AZ Fact Check.

In June, Dylann Roof shot and killed nine African-American churchgoers during a prayer service at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C., with the goal of igniting a race war. Although Roof faces hate-crime charges rather than terrorism charges, some would argue his actions were domestic terrorism.

"If we think of Charleston, it plays much differently than just an act of violence," Rothenberg said. "It still fits the bill of domestic terrorism."

Robert Dear faces charges related to a November mass shooting that killed three people and injured nine others at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs. Jasser said this could be considered an act of terrorism because "it had a political motive with the goal to inspire fear into people (he) disagreed with."

BOTTOM LINE: Although definitions of terrorism vary, experts and data support Jasser's claim that since 9/11 "most attacks against the homeland have been done by homegrown terrorists."

THE FINDING: Four stars: True

Sources: *Local Islamic leaders react to Trump's call to refuse muslims entry to US on 12 News, San Bernardino shooter Tashfeen Malik: What we know on CNN,Homegrown Extremism 2001-2015 on International Security, Definition of Terrorism in the U.S. Code*

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