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Terrorism in Africa

Terrorisme : se serrer les coudes face aux menaces djihadistes en Afrique

Samedi 8 Août 2015 - 15:00

Ce qui s'est passé au Mali les vendredi 7 et samedi 8 août lors d'une prise d'otages qui a coûté la vie à au moins douze personnes, dont un membre de la Minusma après l'attaque de l'hôtel Byblos de Sévaré, en plein cœur de la capitale malienne, et le fait que certains pays d'Afrique soient toujours les cibles d'attaques meurtrières, prouvent à l'évidence que les islamistes ont un objectif clair. Ils sont déterminés à tuer pour intimider les dirigeants africains ou d'ailleurs, opposés à leurs ambitions hégémoniques d'étendre des croyances fondamentalistes partout.

Pour ce qui est du Mali, il faut rappeler que ce n'est pas la première fois que ce pays fait l'objet d'attaques visant des sites fréquentés par des Occidentaux. En mars dernier, un assaut lancé par des terroristes dans un restaurant à Bamako avait déclenché une fusillade qui avait fait au moins cinq morts dont un Français, deux Maliens et un Belge.

Si chacun des États concernés par des attaques djihadistes – Nigeria, Cameroun, Tchad, Niger, Mali, Somalie, Kenya, Égypte, Tunisie, pour ne citer que ceux-là, tente de faire quelque chose pour lutter contre le terrorisme, leurs dirigeants doivent comprendre que l'heure n'est plus aux querelles d'égo. L'urgence est plutôt aux résultats, étant donné que le Nigeria n'y est pas parvenu quoique son nouveau président Muhammadu Buhari soit arrivé au pouvoir.

Ceux de ces pays qui sont de plus en plus menacés par des attaques quasi quotidiennes, bien qu'on fasse des efforts de lutter contre le terrorisme, doivent prendre des mesures sécuritaires qui s'imposent pour les contrer. Cela pour la simple raison que la plupart des groupes d'insurgés qui ont fait allégeance à l'Organisation États islamique (EI) sont plus que déterminés à multiplier les attaques contre les nations visées.

D'où la nécessité de l'opérationnalisation de la Force d'intervention conjointe multinationale déjà placée sous commandement nigérian et dont le déploiement était initialement fixé au 30 juillet. Cette force régionale doit compter 8 700 militaires, policiers et personnels civils venus du Nigeria, du Cameroun, du Tchad, du Niger et du Bénin.

Les services de renseignement sont tous appelés à jouer leur rôle en prenant de sérieuses dispositions de telle sorte que les terroristes ne mettent à exécution les menaces qu'ils vocifèrent dans des vidéos diffusées sur Internet. Ainsi, fouille au corps, examen des bagages et des véhicules, contrôles d'identité, etc. devraient se faire scrupuleusement. Dans cet ordre d'idées, il faut saluer les pays où des détecteurs de métaux sont en cours d'installation à l'entrée des bâtiments « sensibles » et dont les autorités ont pris des mesures courageuses en appelant la population à signaler

tout comportement suspect.

Plus n'est besoin de rappeler que le partage du renseignement est l'une des réponses les plus efficaces pour prévenir les attentats-suicides. Une telle coopération a déjà porté ses fruits entre Yaoundé et N'Djamena. En effet, selon une source au sein des services de sécurité du Cameroun, les autorités de ce pays avaient, en janvier, prévenu les dirigeants tchadiens de l'imminence d'une attaque contre le président Idriss Déby Itno. Ces services avaient, en effet, intercepté des communications dont les auteurs s'informaient des itinéraires empruntés par le cortège du président tchadien, de la fréquence de ses déplacements et de l'importance de son dispositif de sécurité. Le projet a été déjoué. Et les terroristes ont dû s'attaquer à des cibles de moindre importance dans la capitale tchadienne, même si le bilan humain – une soixantaine de tués entre le 15 juin et le 11 juillet – est très lourd.

Face à la menace djihadiste, une coalition formée du Nigeria, du Cameroun, du Tchad et du Niger a certes lancé en début d'année une vaste opération militaire contre les insurgés de Boko Haram en leur infligeant de lourdes pertes sans parvenir à les neutraliser. Ce qui n'a nullement empêché une nouvelle vague de violences ayant fait plus de 800 morts depuis l'investiture, fin mai, du nouveau président nigérian. Pourtant, ce dernier a fait de la lutte contre le terrorisme l'une de ses priorités.

Les attaques perpétrées par Boko Haram et la répression de l'insurrection par les forces nigérianes ont fait plus de 15 000 morts et 1,5 million de déplacés au Nigeria depuis 2009. En outre, même si les armées de la région se mobilisent, les attaques ne cessent pas dans les pays concernés. La sécurité est loin d'y être réinstallée.

En Afrique centrale, des attaques sans précédent en territoires camerounais et tchadien doivent susciter une vigilance régionale puisque Boko Haram continue d'enchaîner raids meurtriers et enlèvements dans l'extrême-nord, en même temps qu'il mène des attentats-suicides au Tchad.

<http://adiac-congo.com/>

Botswana

Botswana: Human Trafficking Real

4 August 2015

Palapye — Human trafficking is unfolding as a global risk and a challenge to progress made towards the improvement of quality of life, especially for women and children.

This was said by the acting minister of Defence, Justice and Security, Mr Moiseralee Goya when giving a key note address on World Day against human trafficking in Palapye. The day's theme was "Human Trafficking is Real: Do Not Become a Victim.

Mr Goya said Botswana like all SADC countries and the rest of the world, abhor this heinous trade, which thrives and regards other human beings as tradable commodities, which often times the victims of this trade are women, children, with preference being adolescent boys and girls.

He said the most vulnerable are those people experiencing difficult social conditions; either because they have lost parents or faced poverty and unemployment.

The acting minister described human trafficking as recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons in exchange of payment.

He said often times one falls a victim of human trafficking by being promised a lucrative job or a lifetime opportunity, only to realise late that one has unwittingly walked into a horrifying trap of bondage, in the form of forced labour, prostitution or slavery.

Mr Goya urged the audience to be on high alert at individual, family and country level to prevent these kind of crimes.

The acting minister said in 2014, the government took a deliberate step to enhance the national human security environment through the adoption of several security related acts, such as Anti-Human trafficking Act, the Counter -Terrorism Act and the proceeds and instruments of serious crime.

He said they were in the process of amending the Cyber Crime Act and the Arms and Ammunition Act, as they believe all these acts were critical for the enhancement of human security in Botswana.

He emphasised that there was need to put in place effective risk analysis mechanisms relevant for the elimination of human trafficking.

The ministry of Defense, Justice and Security, he added, has already set out structure for achieving multi-sectorial intervention measures through the establishment of Anti-Human Trafficking Committee comprising security agencies and members from key ministries as well as other stakeholders.

He noted that the committee's key role would be to determine policy, operational strategies and guidelines for the prevention and interventions against human trafficking incidents in Botswana.

The committee is also expected to provide leadership in the operationalisation of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act No. 32 of 2014 to ensure that Botswana does not become a source, transit route or destination for trafficking.

He appealed to Botswana and the rest of SADC to commit themselves to the adoption of all the relevant global instruments relating to anti-human trafficking and other global crimes.

The acting minister also applauded SADC community, the European Union, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other collaborating partners for supporting Botswana government initiatives of raising public awareness on human trafficking.

He said through team work human trafficking in all its forms could be defeated, adding that the ministry of Education and Skills Development was going to become one of the greatest partners in fighting it.

<http://www.dailynews.gov.bw/>

Chad

Don't Negotiate with B/Haram – Chad Leader



Abubakar Shekau used to appear regularly in Boko Haram videos

Chad's President Idriss Deby has said Boko Haram is no longer led by the fearsome Abubakar Shekau and that his successor is open to talks.

Deby made the revelation Tuesday while addressing reporters in the capital N'Djamena on the 55th anniversary of Chad's independence (AFP) reported yesterday. He did not say what had happened to Abubakar Shekau, but said he had been replaced by Mahamat Daoud - who has not been heard of before.

"There is someone apparently called Mahamat Daoud who is said to have replaced Abubakar Shekau and he wants to negotiate with the Nigerian government. "For my part, I would advise not to negotiate with a terrorist," he said.

He added: "Boko Haram is decapitated. There are little groups (of Boko Haram) scattered throughout North-East Nigeria, on the border with Cameroon. It is within our power to definitively overcome Boko Haram.

"The war will be short, with the setting up of the regional force, it will be over by the end of the year," Deby added, referring to a new five-country force aimed at ending Boko Haram's six-year insurgency.

He added that the force would be "operational in a few days".

Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria have all pledged troops towards the new force.

While claiming progress against the insurgents, who have repeatedly hit border areas of Cameroon, Chad and Niger, and wrought havoc in northeast Nigeria, Deby admitted that suicide bombers still posed a threat.

In the past few weeks, suicide bombers, many of them women, have staged several attacks in Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad.

The challenge, Deby said, was to "avoid terrorist acts and that's why we must organise at the regional level to prevent bomb-making materials and other explosives entering our countries."

He said the efforts to comb through Boko Haram insurgents had succeeded in "decapitating" the group and would be wrapped up "by the end of the year". It has been noted however that this is not the first time that reports have emerged claiming Shekau's demise. Reports from the Nigerian military and the media have declared him dead on several occasions, although experts also believe that the various videos that have appeared purporting to be him sometimes featured lookalikes.

The Chadian leader was said to have brokered peace talks with Boko Haram but the negotiations never really happened and were widely seen as a sham. Defence spokesman Colonel Rabe Abubakar yesterday told Daily Trust that whether there is a new Boko Haram leader or not, would not deter the military in its counter terrorism operations.

Colonel Abubakar emphasized that the tempo and nature of military operations at the flash points of terrorism activities in the north east will be maintained. "We will continue to dominate the area and conduct our counter terrorism operations until we rid the country of terrorists," he stated.

<http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/>

Kenya

Kenya: Why U.S.-Kenya Anti-Graft Deal Is Most Significant International Pact Since the Rome Statute

"People who break the law and violate the public trust need to be prosecuted" - President Obama on corruption in Kenya.

Perhaps the most important deal that the US and Kenyan governments signed during bilateral talks at State House, Nairobi, on Saturday July 25, is the one on anti-corruption.

The Obama administration committed the US to helping the Kenyatta administration to deal with the crisis of graft.

In an exclusive report, the Star observed: "The US also committed to support Kenya's efforts to join the Egmont Group, and to work with Kenya in meeting the requirements for membership. The Egmont Group is a network of financial intelligence units that regularly meets to promote the development of FIUs and to cooperate, especially in the areas of information exchange, training and the sharing of expertise on money laundering and terrorism financing cases."

Not since Kenya signed the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court has this country committed itself to a more significant and actionable pact.

There is great irony in the timing of the signing of this all-important pact. Kenya is being held by the hand by the US and taken into the Egmont Group at a time when the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission is in very bad repair indeed.

Massive looting at both levels of government

There is also the elephant in the Kenyan room of the report of the Auditor General, David Ouko, for the last financial year that has found massive looting and misappropriation of tens of billions of shillings at both levels of government - national and devolved.

The Kenyan cases at the ICC that included Kenyatta's own prosecution (now withdrawn for lack of evidence) clearly demonstrated that Kenya and the rest of the African Union do not read the fine print in international agreements, treaties, pacts and deals attentively enough.

Have any lessons been learnt since Kenya, unlike the United States, joined the ICC? Did President Kenyatta and his team sign up to anti-corruption cooperation with President Obama's team having weighed and considered every element, including the fine print?

Did they consider the fact that under Egmont Group rules of engagement and a treaty with the US, very senior, wealthy and powerful Kenyans will find themselves

monitored and investigated to world standards for the first time and therefore in really deep trouble? And that this will happen in the near future, perhaps even as early as before Obama leaves the White House, Air Force One and The Beast for the last time on January 20, 2017?

The US-Kenya anti-graft deal, seen by the Star, more than hints at the speed of its coming implementation. The document states: "By late 2015, the US government also plans to provide technical assistance to the Independent Policing Oversight Authority, the National Police Service Commission, and the National Police Service's Internal Affairs Unit to help them enhance police accountability."

There are vastly rich, powerful and influential - in Kenyan terms - individuals who have considerably contributed to slowing down the EACC who will in the near future have reason to remember the commission fondly. They shall rue the day they so haughtily disabled homegrown anti-graft efforts.

Kenyatta's unique position

The US-Kenya deal leaves President Kenyatta in a unique position. He hails from one of the country's wealthiest families. He is the only sitting head of state and government to have had a case at the ICC, although it started before he entered office, and to have survived the process.

President Kenyatta is a man who, in the Kenyan context, is as rich as King Croesus and, on the world stage, found himself second only to Admiral Karl Donitz of Germany as an incumbent head of state and government hauled before an international tribunal. The hapless Donitz was Adolf Hitler's successor at the end of World War II. In a riveting analysis headlined "Germany's Other Führer", the authoritative British magazine History Today, in its May 2015 issue, points out that Donitz's regime, which lasted for only three weeks in May 1945, after the dictator's suicide on April 30, was hauled off to the Nuremberg trials. Donitz thus became the first incumbent head of state to face an international tribunal.

The idiomatic English phrase "as rich as Croesus" refers to the king of the Asia Minor kingdom (six centuries before Christ), who was fabulously rich. Croesus made the world's first coins and is celebrated as the father of liquidity and cash flow.

Kenyatta's wealth and near-unique experience at the ICC make him the perfect head of state and government for the US to partner with in this country at this juncture of our history. This is good news for hardworking and long-suffering Kenyans, but extremely bleak news for the high and mighty corrupt, including individuals around the Presidency.

The narrative that the Jubilee administration should drive the US-Kenya compact against corruption with is that Kenyatta is not a thief, has no need for the proceeds of theft, and is in fact so law-abiding that he submitted himself to the ICC process, even when President of Kenya.

The very rich, even the corruptly very rich, never face justice in the Kenyan system. And this is largely because they are never properly investigated (audit reports like Ouko's current horror story are apparently written for the far distant future, when they might be dug up by archeologists).

The significance of the US-Kenya deal was clear to alert observers from the outset. For instance, Obama was even more circumspect in his approach to the corruption crisis in Kenya than he was about homosexuality. This is how he approached the subject:

"Corruption is not unique to Kenya. I mean, I want everybody to understand that there's no country that's completely free of corruption. And I want to assure you I speak about it wherever I go, not just here in Kenya. So I don't want everybody to get too sensitive."

"But the fact is, too often, here in Kenya -- as is true in other places corruption is tolerated because that's how things have always been done."

As the Star reported, the deal requires new ways of doing things for Kenya:

"The Government of Kenya pledges to review and expand its mutual legal assistance framework and partnership with key strategic countries. This work would especially target enabling asset seizures and recovery, detection and investigations, and arrests and prosecutions."

Bad habits die hard, and Kenya's culture of corruption is one of the most resistant anywhere. The US and Kenya have a great deal of work to do on anti-corruption, going forward - beginning now.

<http://www.the-star.co.ke/>

Libya

JEAN-PIERRE CHEVÈNEMENT, ANCIEN MINISTRE FRANÇAIS "Nous avons livré la Libye au chaos"

Dimanche 09 Aout 2015

Le Monde arabe est dans un état de décomposition profond. L'Occident y a une certaine responsabilité.

Pour Jean-Pierre Chevènement, aucune démocratie n'a chaviré à cause du terrorisme: «Il s'agit d'une réalité douloureuse, mais à laquelle un grand Etat doit savoir faire face. J'ai dit à l'époque que nous allions avoir devant nous des décennies de terrorisme.

Le but des islamistes est de créer un affrontement du monde musulman tout entier contre l'Occident.» La même source estime qu'il y a lieu d'assécher le terrain sur lequel le terrorisme djihadiste se développe: «C'est beaucoup plus difficile qu'à l'époque d'Action directe. Aujourd'hui, un certain nombre de jeunes «paumés» peuvent être tentés par une démarche de radicalisation». Ce grand ami de l'Algérie sait de quoi il parle lorsqu'il réfute l'idée du choc des civilisations tel que prôné par Daesh: «Ne tombons pas dans ce piège. Mais la menace de ruptures majeures pour la France vient incontestablement non pas de l'Est, mais du Sud, notamment pour des raisons démographiques. Dans l'Afrique subsaharienne, il existe des pays dont le taux de fécondité va jusqu'à sept enfants par femme.» Il sera impossible de promouvoir le développement dans ces pays, soutient cet observateur averti, a fortiori lorsque les pays en question ne font pas l'effort de se responsabiliser. Il faut aussi, martèle-t-il, prendre conscience que le Moyen-Orient reste un baril de poudre qui demande une vigilance particulière du point de vue de la sécurité de la France car il concentre la moitié des réserves de pétrole et de gaz mondiales. Dans l'entretien accordé à Alexandre Devecchio, il parle aussi des tensions liées à la situation économique et des dissonances engendrées par la forte concentration de populations immigrées dans certains quartiers ou dans certaines zones comme la Seine-Saint-Denis ou les quartiers Nord de Marseille: «Tout cela témoigne d'une grande cécité historique de la part des pouvoirs publics. Il faut mener une politique d'intégration, mais cela suppose d'abord que la France s'aime assez elle-même pour donner envie à ses enfants de s'intégrer à elle.» L'Islam est-il pour autant compatible avec la République?

A cette question posée par le journaliste, l'un des animateurs de l'association France-Algérie répondra en ces termes: «Je m'intéresse beaucoup à l'Islam depuis que j'ai été sous-lieutenant en Algérie. Il y a dans le Coran énormément d'invocations à la rationalité, même s'il ne comporte pas que cela. Il faut que l'Islam se dégage des dogmatismes excessifs, dont sont imprégnés certains de ses courants. Il faut que les

musulmans se prennent en main et séparent eux-mêmes le bon grain de l'ivraie.» Abordant les raisons à l'origine de la colère des peuples musulmans et des forces éprises de liberté et de justice, Jean-Pierre Chevènement épiloguera sur la démarche périlleuse et assassine des Etats-Unis d'Amérique: «Prenons l'exemple de l'Irak. Les Etats-Unis ont considéré qu'ils pouvaient supprimer un Etat, dissoudre son armée, renvoyer ses fonctionnaires...Pour mettre à la place quoi? Un régime pseudo-démocratique dans un pays qui était un grand Liban et qui a été livré aux partis chiites qui vont prendre leurs ordres à Téhéran. Nous avons le résultat auquel il fallait s'attendre: la prépondérance iranienne dans la région et l'envol du terrorisme sunnite après l'écrasement d'un nationalisme laïc.»

S'agissant de la Libye, il avouera que la France aurait pu faire l'économie d'une intervention tragique: «Nous pouvions protéger Benghazi, comme le préconisait le mandat de l'ONU, sans pour autant faire tomber Kadhafi. Nous avons livré la Libye au chaos, comme les Américains l'ont fait avec l'Irak. Dès lors, il ne faut pas s'étonner de voir les migrants déferler sur les côtes italiennes.» Socialiste et non-interventionniste, il est pour la reconstitution de l'Irak et de la Syrie dans leurs frontières. Il se demande même si le mot d'ordre «Bachar doit partir» était bien raisonnable: «Nous avons aujourd'hui trois partenaires en lice: le régime de Bachar el-Assad, Daesh et al-Nosra, c'est-à-dire Al Qaïda. Je ne suis pas sûr que l'on doive émettre une préférence pour Daesh ou pour al-Nosra. Nous sommes dans une situation où la France devrait jouer les intermédiaires entre un certain nombre de courants démocratiques et le régime de Damas, si déplaisant soit-il. Le régime syrien est un régime brutal et violent, mais qui a au moins le mérite de ne pas chercher à instaurer un Califat, y compris en Seine-Saint-Denis.» Jean-Pierre Chevènement se félicite du fait que le bonapartisme syrien ne soit pas tombé comme préconisé alors par Nicolas Sarkozy et sa tête pensante Bernard-Henri Lévy:

«Heureusement, les Russes et les Américains nous ont évité ce qui aurait été une grave erreur. Le Monde arabe est dans un état de décomposition profond. L'Occident y a une certaine responsabilité. Il faut favoriser un accord de sécurité entre le Monde perse et le Monde arabe et trouver un équilibre de sécurité entre les sunnites et les chiites. Cela peut passer par un pacte de sécurité impliquant l'Iraq et garanti par les cinq grandes puissances avec l'Iran chiite qui est la puissance dominante dans la région et qui est une grande civilisation.» Pour l'ancien ministre de l'Intérieur et de la Défense, cette démarche ne pourrait aboutir que si elle était portée par le règlement du conflit israélo-palestinien.

<http://www.lexpressiondz.com/>

Mali

Mali: AQMI - La loi de la terreur reprend ses droits

12 AOÛT 2015



Affrontement entre l'armée et des éléments terroristes d'AQMI

Par Elhadj Abdoulaye Diallo

Les islamistes d'Al-Qaïda pour le Maghreb qu'on croyait très affaiblis par la coalition internationale est entrain de démontrer depuis un certain temps qu'il est capable de porter ses actions terroristes dans des endroits jusqu'ici inespérés.

Les habitants du nord - Mali le savent plus que quiconque, même si les islamistes qui s'étaient rendus maîtres des lieux agissent aujourd'hui avec un camouflage qui porte la terreur même dans les garnisons militaires de l'armée malienne.

Les pertes enregistrées ces derniers temps par les soldats maliens prouvent à suffisance que les terroristes ont eu le temps de se réorganiser mieux, et affiner une stratégie qui donne vraiment à réfléchir.

Si à un moment la cible principale était les forces internationales de paix pour ensuite progresser jusqu'au cœur de Bamako, passant par des attaques sporadiques à maints endroits du pays, force est de reconnaître que le défi ne saurait être circonscrit à ce seul pays.

L'étendue des actions terroriste démontre chaque jour que les islamistes suivent des objectifs bien programmés qui visent l'ensemble des pays de la sous- région et

du continent tout entier.

Ces derniers camouflets portés par eux à l'armée malienne et à la communauté internationale invitent à une meilleure réflexion sur les nouvelles dispositions à prendre pour mettre fin à la nébuleuse.

Une nébuleuse dont on ne connaît pas assez encore toutes les sources de financement, d'équipement et de formation.

D'où la nécessité pour le Mali, la CEDEAO, L'union africaine et la communauté internationale de mieux s'impliquer et développer une nouvelle stratégie dans une solidarité d'action pouvant mettre fin au programme de déstabilisation entreprise par les islamistes.

Dans ce cadre, il faudra développer un renseignement plus efficace, capable de couper le cordon de solidarité des terroristes islamistes en Afrique. Bien sûr, la guerre devrait être générale et professionnelle sans perdre de vue d'autres pistes porteuses d'une paix durable.

Car, au regard même de la durée que sont entrain de prendre les guerres en Afghanistans, au Pakistan, au Moyen Orient, en Somalie et ailleurs, on devrait explorer de nouvelles pistes de réflexion favorables à l'instauration d'une paix durable dans le monde.

<http://aminata.com/>

L'escalade du terrorisme au Mali vue par la presse africaine



une route menant à Sévaré

L'attaque de Savaré qui a fait 13 morts a fait couler beaucoup d'encre au Mali mais aussi dans de nombreux journaux du continent ce lundi matin. Petit tour d'horizons.

L'attaque de Sévaré au Mali a été très commentée dans la presse africaine. Pour le quotidien malien *Le Républicain*, certains de ces groupes terroristes, auteurs de l'attaque de Sévaré, « se sont formés après l'intervention des forces françaises et africaines en 2013 au Mali, qui ont eu le mérite de déloger les djihadistes des villes de Tombouctou, Gao, Douentzan, Konan et Diabaly. Mais les milliers de combattants endoctrinés qui n'ont pas été neutralisés se sont dispersés dans la nature et ceux d'entre eux qui avaient infiltré les habitants de certaines zones rurales au nord du Mali ont très tôt repris les activités en opérant des attaques, notamment dans la région de Gao. »

Et le *Républicain* d'ajouter : « Suite aux récentes attaques terroristes, beaucoup de citoyens se sont interrogés sur l'utilité de l'accord d'Alger. Un accord de paix signé avec seulement les groupes armés qui ont renoncé au terrorisme », soulignant qu'« aujourd'hui, bien que l'accord trouvé entre le Mali et les ex-rebelles suscite un espoir de paix, notre armée et les forces étrangères venues l'épauler pour stopper les groupes terroristes n'ont pas encore gagné la guerre. »

« La dégradation de la situation sécuritaire mérite d'être prise au sérieux par Bamako »

Pour sa part, le journal *Liberté Algérie* estime que « banditisme ou terrorisme, il est

aujourd'hui certain que la dégradation de la situation sécuritaire au Mali mérite d'être prise au sérieux par Bamako, mais surtout par ses partenaires régionaux et onusiens. » Selon *Liberté Algérie*, « l'assassinat de dix villageois est un autre signal d'alerte pour se mobiliser contre les groupes terroristes, principalement Aqmi et Ansar Eddine d'Iyad Ag Ghali qui ont refait surface depuis la conclusion à Alger de l'Accord pour la paix et la réconciliation nationale, entre les autorités maliennes et les mouvements politico-armés du Nord-Mali. » *Liberté Algérie* constate également que « les récentes violences, cinq en l'espace d'une semaine, menacent aussi bien l'avenir de cet accord que celui des populations locales, lassées de subir les méfaits de la présence des terroristes islamistes dans le nord du Mali et le diktat des groupes politico-armés, à l'origine de la rébellion de 2012 contre Bamako ».

Revanche d'Ansar Dine ?

Le journal *Guinée Conakry info* se demande de son côté, s'il ne s'agit pas d'une revanche des principaux responsables de ces groupes armés. « Beaucoup y voit une revanche macabre du chef de file d'Ansar Dine, le terrible Iyad Ag Ghali. Cependant l'attentat n'est toujours pas revendiqué, ce qui laisse place à toutes les conjectures possibles. »

L'opération Serval n'a pas servi à grand chose

Pour le journal guinéen *Ledjely.com*, le problème c'est que « depuis que des jihadistes mêlés aux indépendantistes touarègues ont foutu le bordel, la région a du mal à retrouver son climat ordinaire. Au contraire, la gangrène donne l'impression de s'attaquer à tout le pays. C'est à croire que l'opération Serval n'a pas servi à grand-chose. Au regard des problèmes qui sont de plus en plus récurrents dans cette partie du pays, on oublierait presque qu'un accord a été dernièrement conclu entre mouvements indépendantistes touarègues et gouvernement malien. »

Le quotidien burkinabè *l'Observateur Paalga*, de son côté, se pose la question suivante : « Cette première prise d'otages au Mali (sauf erreur ou omission de notre part) traduit-elle un essoufflement de djihadistes de moins en moins capables de mener des actions militaires sur le terrain et qui changent ainsi leur modus operandi (mode opératoire) ? ». Et le journal burkinabè de poursuivre : « Il est en effet plus facile de prendre des otages dans les cinémas, restaurants, hôtels et autres lieux publics à moins que les autorités maliennes fassent surveiller, voire garder tous ces endroits, ce qui n'est certainement pas à la portée de Bamako. Et comme, en plus de rester médiatisés, les kidnappeurs se procurent le nerf de la guerre... » Tout porte à croire que la guerre contre les groupes terroristes dans le nord-Mali n'est pas prête d'être achevée.

<http://www.afrik.com/>

Prise d'otages dans un hôtel au Mali: au moins 12 morts

Terrorisme Les forces spéciales maliennes ont donné l'assaut samedi contre l'hôtel de Sévaré, au Mali, libérant les quatre otages d'islamistes présumés. Au moins douze personnes ont été tuées.



Les forces maliennes avaient bouclé la zone et tentaient, depuis lors, de «déloger» les islamistes de l'hôtel. Image: AFP

08.08.2015

«Il y a eu douze morts au total» durant les opérations dans cette ville à plus de 620 km au nord-est de Bamako, a affirmé samedi à l'AFP un responsable militaire malien: «Cinq Fama (membres des Forces armées maliennes), cinq terroristes et deux Blancs» dont les identités et nationalités sont en cours de vérification.

Deux autres sources militaires distinctes ont confirmé à l'AFP ce bilan de douze tués. Pourtant, si l'on tient compte des dernières déclarations de l'ONU, ce bilan pourrait être plus lourd et atteindre quinze morts. Sollicité, un responsable de l'armée malienne a indiqué qu'aucun bilan définitif n'était arrêté et qu'il pourrait y avoir «probablement» plus de décès.

Dans un communiqué, la Mission de l'ONU au Mali (Minusma) annonce en effet que cinq employés travaillant pour des sous-traitants ont péri: «Un Malien, qui

était le chauffeur de la compagnie sous-traitante de la Minusma, un Népalais, un Sud-Africain et deux Ukrainiens».

Ban Ki-moon soutient le processus de paix

Elle fait également état de quatre rescapés : deux Sud-Africains, un Russe et un Ukrainien. «Ils sont tous en bonne santé. Leur présence à l'hôtel n'a pas été détectée par les assaillants et la Minusma était en contact permanent avec eux tout au long de l'attaque et jusqu'au dénouement de la situation», précise-t-elle.

Plus tôt, le secrétaire général de l'ONU Ban Ki-moon avait réaffirmé dans un communiqué son soutien au processus de paix dans le pays.

Des sources militaires maliennes mentionnaient vendredi la possible présence de clients français dans l'hôtel. L'état-major des forces armées françaises a par ailleurs précisé que le contingent français présent au Mali dans le cadre de l'opération Barkhane n'était pas intervenu directement sur le terrain, contrairement à ce qu'a laissé entendre Bamako.

Menace permanente des islamistes

Les auteurs de l'attaque avaient fait irruption vendredi matin dans l'hôtel Byblos, fréquenté par le personnel de la Minusma. Ils s'y étaient retranchés avec plusieurs otages. Un témoin a rapporté que l'assaut lancé par les forces spéciales maliennes avait été mené entre 04h00 et 05h00 samedi.

Située non loin de Mopti, dans le centre du Mali, Sévaré se trouve à quelque 600 km au nord-est de la capitale, Bamako. L'attaque du Byblos, bien plus au sud des zones où opèrent traditionnellement les islamistes, illustre la menace que ceux-ci continuent de représenter plus de deux ans après l'intervention des soldats français de l'opération Serval et de soldats africains.

Le mois dernier, le groupe Ansar Dine, lié à Al Qaïda, a revendiqué une série d'attaques contre des casques bleus de l'ONU et des soldats maliens à Bamako et dans des secteurs proches des frontières avec la Côte d'Ivoire et la Mauritanie.

Le groupe djihadiste n'a pas pris part aux discussions qui ont abouti en juin à la conclusion d'un accord de paix et de réconciliation entre les principaux groupes rebelles touaregs et le gouvernement malien.

<http://www.24heures.ch/>

Nigeria

Who is Boko Haram's 'new leader'?

August 13, 2015

If it is true that the group has a new leader, that he is who we think he is, and that he's willing to negotiate, it could be a game changer in the battle against Boko Haram.



According to Chad's president, Idriss Deby, the Islamist militant group Boko Haram has a new leader. Speaking in a press conference, Deby claimed that the notorious Abubakar Shekau, who has long led the group responsible for tens of thousands of deaths mostly in northern Nigeria, was no longer at the helm.

Instead, the president said that a man named Mahamat Daoud had now taken over and, moreover, was open to dialogue with the Nigerian government.

Where exactly Deby got his information from is unclear, but even if there is truth to it, we should not rush to conclusions. For example, although the announcement that Shekau is no longer in charge has provoked fresh rumours of his demise, it is worth noting that Shekau's death has been reported and then retracted several times in the past. It is also worth noting that Boko Haram is not a monolithic organisation – there are internal divisions and different groups all labelled as Boko Haram because of their shared origin, and many spokespeople have claimed to speak for the group in the past to little real effect. If the group does have a 'new leader', what this would mean is not straightforward.

Nevertheless, there are some questions we can answer.

Firstly, is it true that Shekau has been replaced?

Well, yes, in that he is no longer the sole head of Boko Haram. He now reports to a boss in charge of Islamic State West Africa, who reports to a boss in Syria, who in his turn reports to the so-called Caliph Ibrahim (aka Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi), the supreme leader of Islamic State.

What is also clear is that not all members of Shekau's circle were happy about the decision to join Islamic State, and there have been talks of several defectors over the months.

What is less clear is whether Shekau has really now been replaced in his role within Boko Haram – though we can still answer some questions around Deby's claims, such as: who is this Mahamat Daoud?

If this who I think it is then this news is significant. First of all, his real name is Muhammad Daud. He is said to be about 38 years old and is a Shuwa Arab from Maiduguri with a Kanambu mother from Chad. He is one of the earliest students of Muhammad Yusuf, Boko Haram's original leader, and is said to have been one of the few amongst the close circle of Yusuf's students that disagreed with the 2009 Uprising in which the group launched attacks on Nigerian security forces. Daud apparently argued that Boko Haram was not yet strong enough to take over the area.

Daud is also said to be a trader in perfumes and an ex-serviceman, although the particular service he was in is not known by the majority of my sources. He is also one of the scholars of Islamic State of West Africa and is regarded as their Imam of the Science of Hadith. He was said to be a staunch Yusufi, opposing the polarising policies of Shekau after Yusuf's death in 2009; despite swearing an oath to Shekau, he was one of the few top dogs against the pledge of allegiance made to Islamic State, rejecting it as a betrayal of the teachings of Yusuf.

If Daud really is seeking negotiations, it means he has broken away from Shekau with a faction of men loyal to him. And if he is claiming to have replaced Shekau as the head of the group, it probably means Shekau and his followers are now in Daud's rifle sights. Daud's hatred of Shekau may very well surpass his hatred for the Nigerian State.

How does this change anything?

Firstly, Daud is a powerful commander within the group, in charge of Boko Haram's counter-intelligence and internal security arm known as Amniyah. Before that, he was in charge of the unit responsible for operations in Maiduguri and other major Nigerian cities, meaning he oversaw the training of suicide bombers, the planning of operations in major cities, the selection of targets, and the dispatching of the human weapons to their assigned strike areas. He also ran the group's intelligence unit and

was responsible for collecting the hundreds of millions of naira many state governors were paying the militants to avoid Boko Haram attacking their states.

Daud has a significant support base – I expect hundreds of fighters to follow him if he has left Shekau – and would have tons of information about sleeper cells and operatives of Islamic State West Africa. He could expose the money generation and transfer methods the group uses, reveal critical intelligence about the group's inner structure, and maybe even offer up information as to how to kill Shekau. If Daud is really seeking negotiations, the Nigerian government should hurry and take the offer as having him on side could well be a game changer.

However, the risk of course is that this is all just a ruse to buy time. And looking back at Boko Haram's history of behaviour, this possibility cannot and should not be ruled out either.

<http://africanarguments.org/>

Nigeria: Political Will Is Key to Rebuilding North East - Senator Kyari

10 August 2015

Senator Abubakar Kyari represents Borno North in the Senate. In this interview, he explain the rationale behind the recent visit of Senate President and other senators to the volatile northeast region. He stressed that President Muhammadu Buhari has shown political will that will end the Boko Haram crisis and the need for the political class to support him. Excerpts:

The Senate President and other Senators recently converged on Maiduguri. What prompted the trip?

You are well aware of the issue of the moment, the greatest challenge facing the nation and the new administration of President Muhammadu Buhari which is insecurity and the insurgency in the northeast. And of course, Borno is the epicenter of the whole crisis. There was a motion at the floor of the Senate, sponsored by George Thompson Sekibo and co-sponsored by almost 89 senators, including my humble self on the need for the federal government to set up an intervention committee to look into the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the northeast. In that motion, I particularly mentioned that unless someone goes to see for himself, there is no story that can tell you the level of devastation and brutality that occurred in the last six years. And that is what also prompted the Senate Leader, Senator Ali Ndume to call for a resolution that the Senate President and some leaders of the Senate should take a trip to Borno and Adamawa. One team to be led by the Senate President and the other by the Deputy Senate President. The objective of the mission is to commiserate with the people and governments of the affected states and to also visit the IDPs (internally displaced persons), to tell them that the whole country is behind them and the national assembly is solidly behind the steps taken so far by President Muhammadu Buhari.

As you know, all the diplomatic shuttles that the president has been doing, including the one to the G7 meeting, and the ones to Chad, Niger, Benin, Cameroon as well as his invitation by the U.S President Barrack Obama are all hinged on finding solution to the insurgency in the northeast. The whole problem started from a small group and now look at the dimension that it has taken, simply because of lack of commitment. However, you will agree with me that President Buhari has shown commitment. With what he has done so far, to my mind, it is not only through military force that the problem will be resolved. Whatever you want to do, is better you do it from the position of strength and, of course, the military action is necessary though you have to have a cocktail of economic and social policies. It is an economic problem because there is abject poverty in the northeast which makes the region a fertile ground for conscription of members. And if you look at the ideology aspect, the way and manner the Boko Haram fighters are carrying out their barbaric activities, we have never seen it before and this is basically due to pollution of belief. We have also seen the influence of ISIS, Al-Qaeda and other terrorists' groups on the Boko Ha-

ram.

:Is the visit by the Senate President a departure from what obtained before whereby politicians would only go and make statements for political reasons?

This visit is definitely a deviation from what obtained in the past because I can not recall if there was any visit of this sort in recent past or even since the beginning of the insurgency when the Senate President visited Borno to commiserate with the people. I know that there was a committee that visited Maiduguri on the issue of what happened in Baga and this was because, at that time, the senator representing Borno north was from Baga. The joint committee on defence and army, police and security visited the area and made an assessment. The leader of the delegation is the same Senator Sekibo and the visit is over a year ago but as you can see, it is now that the issue is coming up again at the floor of the senate. That was the best attention we got from the senate or even from the national assembly.

:Borno north is said to be worst affected by the Boko Haram crisis, how would you describe the level of devastation?

I mentioned it in the floor of the senate that I have ten local government areas but even during my election, people from eight local government areas cast their votes at IDP camps and Maiduguri. And elections in the remaining two- Gubio and Magumeri were held at the local government headquarters, not in the wards or the units. So, you can imagine the level of devastation when over eighty percent of your people are scattered and displaced.

The other aspect is the massive destruction of houses, personal property, government infrastructures, including hospitals, police stations and water points among others. There is no single town or village in northern Borno that has not suffered the brunt of the insurgency. So, like I said, regardless of how I explain to you, you will not fathom the experience or the picture unless you go and see for yourself. The visit by the Senate President is therefore very important.

:But why did the Senate President limit his visit to Maiduguri, the state capital instead of going to the localities?

As the governor of Borno State rightly said, we have 26 IDP camps in Maiduguri and therefore we visited three of the camps where people from the three senatorial districts are being taken care of and this means the senate visited the whole of Borno. Some places in the state were not accessible though some are relatively safe now because we have a change in the leadership and the commitment is one hundred percent. Nobody is playing to the gallery, no more rhetoric on the issue of restoration of peace. This is also evident in the appointment of service chiefs. We now have people of impeccable integrity and character. And as you can see, immediately after his appointment, the new Chief of Army Staff swung into action. He immediately went to Yobe and from there, he moved to Borno and he is fully participating in the

frontline with his troops which gingers and motivates the soldiers.

:Now that the visit is over, is the senate planning to come up with a resolution on the way forward or everything ended up with just the visit?

No, no, no. Certainly there is follow up. A day after our return, the Senate President made an appeal to the German ambassador to Nigeria on the need for assistance to come from outside. The problem on ground in the northeast is definitely a heavy burden on the government. The Victims Support Fund is there and even the World Bank is planning to come in. There are bills that are in the works which would have far reaching impact on the issue of the northeast in terms of rehabilitation and reconstruction. I don't want to preempt them.

Again, there is another angle to the whole issue. You cannot rehabilitate or reconstruct when there is no peace. We have seen in the past, the efforts of the Borno State government when schools that were destroyed or burnt would be reconstructed only for the insurgents to destroy them again. So, I think we need to look at it from a holistic point of view and make the intervention in stages-secure and then rehabilitate.

:It seems you are satisfied with the approach to the crisis by President Buhari though there were suggestions that some of you from the north are not with him. What is your take on this?

Certainly we are not anti Buhari. I don't know where some people came up with that idea or notion. Passing a vote of confidence on the Senate President does not mean a vote of no confidence on Mr President. I think it is just politics and of course we know what is going on. Some detractors are trying to play games and incite our constituents against those that did not play the other way. When you look at the vote of confidence (on Senate President), it was signed by I think 85 senators that cut across north and south. What we are saying is that Senator Bukola Saraki is now the Senate President and so far, he has exhibited that quality of leadership and we passed a vote of confidence on him. But, if he does something in the contrary, we would pass a vote of no confidence on him and he can even be removed. So far, he is doing very and we are with him and that does not mean that senators are against President Buhari.

I have been exposed to the politics of both the federal and the state governments. What Buhari did in six weeks was not done in the past six years. This is evident in the commitment, the diplomatic shuttle and many other things. My people are suffering and it is time to end these barbaric killings; we need peace, we need to move on and Buhari is honestly working towards achieving these goals. It is therefore not fair to say I am against my president?

:You made allusion that you rather vacate your seat than to go against Buhari... (cuts in).

Yes, I am very loyal to President Buhari. I have been voting for him since 2003, in fact, there was a time I voted for him when we were from different political parties which goes to show how loyal I am. Sadly, I read in one online medium that I said I rather kill myself than going against Buhari; I don't know where they got their story. What I said is that I rather vacate my seat than go against him as an individual, or to belong to a group that want to go against him. As a Muslim, there is no way I can say I would commit suicide. It is against my religion.

:With all the problems in the senate, when would you be ready for business?

The rumour that there are problems in the senate is insinuation because President Buhari has recognized the Senate President and the chairman of the party (APC) has came out and said it. As you can see, the Senate is sitting normally, passing resolutions and passing motions. I believe all shall be well.

<http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/>

Attentats terroristes - Qui arrêtera Boko Haram ?

13 AOÛT 2015

Le 13 août dernier, alors que la nouvelle hiérarchie militaire prêtait serment au Nigeria, dix personnes dont deux soldats trouvaient la mort dans le Nord du Cameroun, dans une attaque perpétrée par la secte islamiste Boko Haram.

Déjà, près d'une cinquantaine de morts avaient péri, le 12 août 2015, dans une explosion qui avait eu lieu dans un marché dans le septentrion du Nigeria. C'est dire qu'au Cameroun comme au Nigeria, les autorités semblent avoir perdu totalement le Nord, au propre comme au figuré.

Car tout se passe comme si Boko Haram était décidé à narguer sans cesse le nouveau président nigérian et son homologue Paul Biya du Cameroun, sans oublier le Tchadien Idriss Déby qui, naguère, déclarait que « Boko Haram était décapité ».

Dans ces conditions, comment expliquer l'optimisme et l'engagement du président Muhammadu Buhari, qui donne trois mois à la nouvelle hiérarchie militaire pour venir à bout des insurgés islamistes ? Surtout que tarde à se mettre en place la force multinationale dont on parle tant depuis plus de trois mois.

Les djihadistes ont changé leur fusil d'épaule

Entre-temps, on avait pointé du doigt la nonchalance et l'incurie de l'ex-président nigérian, mais on a aujourd'hui la fâcheuse impression que jamais la bête n'a été aussi féroce que depuis l'accession de Buhari au pouvoir.

A preuve, la comptabilité macabre est vertigineuse. Au Nigeria, au Cameroun comme au Tchad, on tue, on massacre.

Et conscients qu'ils ne peuvent pas tenir face à des armées coalisées dans une guerre classique, les djihadistes ont changé leur fusil d'épaule en développant des attentats-kamikazes.

Ce qui justifie d'ailleurs la mesure d'interdiction de la burqa prise par les autorités tchadiennes et camerounaises, qui, pour l'instant, n'a pas encore produit les effets escomptés.

Plutôt donc que de rester sur la défensive, il est donc temps pour les forces de la coalition de passer à l'offensive en procédant à une « purification djihadiste ».

Dans le cas contraire, on court le risque d'une somalisation de toute la sous-région. Surtout qu'après leur allégeance à l'Etat islamique, les islamistes nigériens ont changé de dénomination pour devenir « la province ouest-africaine de l'organisation de l'Etat islamique ». Cela en dit long sur leurs ambitions.

<http://lepays.bf/>

Afrique: Lutte contre le terrorisme - Et si le continent demandait une trêve aux djihadistes?!

12 Aout 2015

L'idée peut paraître banale. Mais sur un continent où les Etats n'ont visiblement pas les moyens de prévenir, encore moins de faire face au fléau du terrorisme qui fait des dizaines de victimes presque toutes les semaines, il y a peut-être lieu de changer le fusil d'épaule.

A défaut de disposer de la stratégie idoine et des moyens humains et logistiques pour éviter le pire, il vaut mieux engager des discussions politiques sérieuses avec ces groupes islamistes qui sèment la désolation sur le continent.

Pendant que le Mali se mêle les pinceaux et que le processus de paix en cours dans ce pays tangué, alors que le Nigeria et ses voisins ne savent plus à quel saint se vouer contre la secte islamiste Boko-Haram désormais ralliée à l'organisation Etat islamique, il est peut-être temps de prendre les choses autrement.

Non pas en sacrifiant la souveraineté si chère à ces Etats, mais en alliant négociant politique et lutte armée contre le terrorisme.

Quand on sait que la plupart de ces pays n'ont pas toujours les moyens de leur politique sécuritaire, la recherche de voies plus pacifiques s'avère un impératif humanitaire.

Il est inadmissible de laisser tuer d'honnêtes citoyens, et de surcroît des civils à longueur de temps par des hommes sans foi ni loi, prêts à se faire exploser, en même temps que leurs engins de la mort sur des places publiques, très souvent bondées de monde.

L'attentat qui a fait, une fois de plus, des dizaines de morts ce mardi à Sabon Gari, dans l'Etat de Borno, au nord-est du Nigéria, n'est qu'un supplice de plus pour des populations africaines qui ne demandent qu'à vivre en paix.

<http://www.fasozine.com/>

Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamists: Who Are They?

August 3, 2015



PHOTO VIA FLICKR/CREATIVE COMMONS

NIGERIA - Nigeria's militant Islamist group Boko Haram - which has caused havoc in Africa's most populous country through a wave of bombings, assassinations and abductions - is fighting to overthrow the government and create an Islamic state, according to analysis by Farouk Chothia of BBC Africa.

Chothia writes, in analysis for the BBC, that Boko Haram promotes a version of Islam which makes it "haram," or forbidden, for Muslims to take part in any political or social activity associated with Western society. This includes voting in elections, wearing shirts and trousers or receiving a secular education.

The BBC article states that Boko Haram regards the Nigerian state as being run by non-believers, even when the country had a Muslim president - and it has extended its military campaign by targeting neighboring states.

Boko Haram has attacked many schools in northern Nigeria, the group launched its insurgency in 2009, and it has targeted both civilians and the military, the BBC explained in the analysis.

The BBC says the group's official name is Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, which in Arabic means "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad."

Resisting British rule

But residents in the north-eastern city of Maiduguri, where the group had its headquarters, dubbed it Boko Haram. Loosely translated from the region's Hausa language, this means "Western education is forbidden".

Boko originally meant fake but came to signify Western education, while haram means forbidden.



Quick Facts about Boko Haram:

- *Founded in 2002
- *Official Arabic name, Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, means "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad"
- * Initially focused on opposing Western education
- * Launched military operations in 2009 to create Islamic state
- *Designated a terrorist group by US in 2013
- *Declared a caliphate in areas it controlled in 2014
- *Most territory now recaptured by army

The BBC explained that since the Sokoto caliphate, which ruled parts of what is now northern Nigeria, Niger and southern Cameroon, fell under British control in 1903, there has been resistance among some of the area's Muslims to Western education.

Recruiting ground

They still refuse to send their children to government-run "Western schools," a problem compounded by the ruling elite which does not see education as a priority.

The BBC states that against this background, charismatic Muslim cleric Mohammed Yusuf formed Boko Haram in Maiduguri in 2002. He set up a religious complex, which included a mosque and an Islamic school.

Many poor Muslim families from across Nigeria, as well as neighboring countries, enrolled their children at the school. But Boko Haram was not only interested in education. Its political goal was to create an Islamic state, and the school became a recruiting ground for jihadis.

Boko Haram means "Western education is forbidden" in the Hausa language.

In 2009, Boko Haram carried out a spate of attacks on police stations and other government buildings in Maiduguri, capital of Borno state. This led to shoot-outs on Maiduguri's streets. Hundreds of Boko Haram supporters were killed and thousands of residents fled the city.

The BBC says Nigeria's security forces eventually seized the group's headquarters, capturing its fighters and killing Mr Yusuf. His body was shown on state television and the security forces declared Boko Haram finished. But its fighters regrouped under a new leader, Abubakar Shekau, and stepped up their insurgency.

In 2013, the US designated Boko Haram as a terrorist organization, amid fears that it had developed links with other militant groups, such as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, to wage a global jihad.

Facial marks

The BBC explained that Boko Haram's trademark was originally the use of gunmen on motorbikes, killing police, politicians and anyone who criticized it, including clerics from other Muslim traditions and Christian preachers.

The group has also staged more audacious attacks in northern and central Nigeria, including bombing churches, bus ranks, bars, military barracks and even the police and UN headquarters in the capital, Abuja.

Amid growing concern about the escalating violence, President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in May 2013 in the three northern states where Boko Haram was strongest - Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. A state of emergency is currently in force in those three northern Nigerian states.

Thousands of reinforcements were sent to Maiduguri after the military recaptured the city from Boko Haram, the BBC said.

The group draws its fighters mainly from the Kanuri ethnic group, which is the larg-

est in the three states. Most Kanuris have distinctive facial scars and when added to their heavy Hausa accents, they are easily identifiable to others Nigerians. As a result, the militants operate mainly in the north-east, where the terrain is also familiar to them.

Foreign links

The BBC stated the deployment of troops and the formation of vigilante groups drove many of them out of Maiduguri, their main urban base and they retreated to the vast Sambisa forest to the south and the Mandara Mountains, close to the border with Cameroon.

From there, the group's fighters launched mass attacks on villages and towns, looting, killing, abducting women and children and conscripting men and boys into their army.

In April 2014, Boko Haram drew international condemnation by abducting more than 200 schoolgirls from Chibok town in Borno state, saying it would treat them as slaves and marry them off - a reference to an ancient Islamic belief that women captured in conflict are considered war booty. And it switched tactics, often holding on to territory rather than retreating after an attack.

In August 2014, Mr Shekau declared a caliphate in areas under Boko Haram's control, with the town of Gwoza its seat of power, the BBC said.

"We are in an Islamic caliphate," said Mr Shekau, flanked by masked fighters and carrying a machine gun. "We have nothing to do with Nigeria. We don't believe in this name." Later, Mr Shekau formally pledged allegiance to Islamic State (IS), turning his back on al-Qaeda.

IS accepted the pledge, naming the territory under Boko Haram's control as the Islamic State of West Africa Province and as being part of the global caliphate it was trying to establish.

Chronic poverty

But by March 2015, Boko Haram had lost all the towns under its control as a regional coalition - made up of troops from Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger - was formed to fight it.

Chadian forces helped retake town from the militants, the BBC said.

Once again, Boko Haram retreated to the Sambisa forest, where the Nigerian military pursued it, freeing hundreds of captives. But with Amnesty International saying that some 2,000 children were in captivity, many more are still to be freed. And while many fighters have been killed and weapons seized, some analysts say it is too early to write off Boko Haram.



The BBC further explained that Northern Nigeria has a history of spawning militant Islamist groups, but Boko Haram has outlived them and has proved to be far more lethal and resilient.

It has a fighting force of thousands of men - CIA officials had estimated around 9,000 - and cells that specialize in bombings. Through its raids on military bases and banks, it has gained control of vast amounts of weapons and money.

The BBC article concluded: "The threat Boko Haram poses will disappear only if Nigeria's government manages to reduce the region's chronic poverty and builds an education system which gains the support of local Muslims, the analysts say."

<http://www.crossmap.com/>

Eyewitness: the women and girls rescued from Boko Haram in Nigeria

Over the last few days the Nigerian army has liberated over a hundred Boko Haram captives. At a camp in Borno State, Unicef health specialist Gerida Birukila speaks to some of them

4 August 2015



A mother lies with her children in a camp for internally displaced persons in Yola, the capital of Adamawa, a state in the country's north-east. Photograph: Esiebo/Unicef 2015

It is terrible to see how weak and exhausted they are. When I arrive, a group of women and children are just lying quietly on the floor of the large tent, too sick and weak to move. Other children living at the camp, who have been displaced by the violence but have not been held by [Boko Haram](#), are playing outside, but these children don't have the energy. Several children have been injured during their rescue.

A little girl of about seven, terribly thin, is lying absolutely motionless under the watchful eye of her grandmother, sitting beside her. I am surprised to see she has a school backpack close by. Barely able to move, she whispers to me that she was given the backpack at the Unicef camp and that she is excited about going to school. All the children are extremely malnourished, the medic treating the girl tells me, assuring both me and her grandmother, that with treatment and care the girl will regain her strength.

The youngest child in the tent is a tiny girl, just six days old. Her mother Maimuna – that’s not her real name, she is afraid to be identified – tells me she was living under Boko Haram control for about a year. She tells me about her very difficult pregnancy, during which she probably had severe anaemia. “I was very sick, weak, dizzy and I couldn’t move,” she says. “On delivery day, two women helped me; it was very difficult, there was no health centre, nothing. I think my daughter’s legs are a bit unequal because of the pulling and the long labour. But I am grateful to God, she is alive. I know several women who were pregnant but didn’t make it, they died either in childbirth or during pregnancy.”

Maimuna’s story is hard to listen to; life under Boko Haram has been brutal. She tells me most of the men have been killed. “The few men who were still alive were not allowed to shave their beards, women were not allowed to leave their homes, and we stayed indoors. Those who did not obey were shot dead. In the place I was, dead bodies littered the area. They killed people anytime they felt like it. They also raped women and girls. We could not go to the farms, we could not fetch water or collect firewood. We tried to escape three times in the past year but every time we tried, they sent us back. We were trapped.”

As Maimuna talks, other women seem eager to tell their stories. Aisha – again, not her real name – is here with her three children and is keen to talk about the rescue. Several of her relatives were killed and injured in the fighting, she says, and at first it was difficult to believe they were really free. “We thought we were being attacked by Boko Haram and we were running. Then they convinced us that they were the Nigerian military. They took us in their vehicles and brought us here to Maiduguri. Now we are safe.”

Despite their ordeal, I find them in good spirits – glad to have made it out alive. Many have family in the area and are able to see relatives for the first time in a long time. Not all the children are thrilled about being vaccinated soon after they arrived at the Unicef tent, but it is important to protect them against disease. They are also now getting medical treatment for illness and injuries, as well as for malnutrition and clean, safe water. Maimuna is delighted her new baby has been vaccinated against polio and proudly shows me one of the girl’s tiny fingers marked with a pen to show she had had the vaccine. The children will be able to go to school, and Unicef will soon also provide much-needed psychosocial support.

Maimuna already has plans for her daughter, born in such tragic circumstances, but now with a more hopeful future. “I will make sure she goes to school,” she says. “And she can look after me when she grows up,” she adds with a smile.

<http://www.theguardian.com/>

Tunisia

Tunisie: Lutte contre le terrorisme - Et aux diplomates leur part

12 AOÛT 2015

Un plan d'action sera soumis prochainement à l'approbation du Conseil de sécurité nationale. Il prévoit que les représentations à l'étranger s'attellent à prémunir les jeunes Tunisiens contre les recruteurs jihadistes

Quand le président de la République, Béji Caïd Essebsi, a annoncé la guerre contre le terrorisme, on a compris que cette guerre allait être une guerre totale et constituer un tout indivisible où le sécuritaire, le social, le culturel, l'éducatif et l'économique sont interdépendants.

Partant du fait que les terroristes ne font pas de choix quand ils visent leurs cibles et s'attaquent à tous les secteurs de la vie, il est normal que la stratégie à mettre en œuvre dans le but de les contrer soit une stratégie multidimensionnelle et que toutes les compétences humaines soient invitées à y participer.

Et à observer la dynamique déclenchée, plus particulièrement depuis l'attentat terroriste de Sousse, on remarque que certaines structures étatiques ont changé totalement de méthode d'action et que certaines composantes de la société civile, à l'instar des intellectuels qui tiennent aujourd'hui un congrès national contre la violence, ont compris que l'heure n'est plus à la parlotte ou à la théorisation mais bien à l'action et à la proposition d'idées concrètes et de plans pratiques pouvant contribuer à démasquer les plans diaboliques des terroristes et à éviter que nos jeunes tombent dans leurs filets.

Au ministère des Affaires étrangères, la conférence annuelle des ambassadeurs et des consuls, tenue fin juillet, a donné le ton de ce que nos diplomates doivent faire à l'avenir afin de participer activement à la lutte contre l'hydre terroriste.

Désormais est né un nouveau concept qui est venu s'ajouter aux concepts traditionnels. Il s'agit de la diplomatie sécuritaire. Nos diplomates ne se contenteront plus de chercher les investissements extérieurs, d'encourager les bailleurs de fonds à choisir la destination Tunisie ou de motiver les Tunisiens résidant à l'étranger à retourner au pays y lancer leurs projets.

A l'avenir, les diplomates établis à l'étranger auront la mission d'anticiper en vue de dévoiler, à temps, les actions entreprises par les extrémistes agissant en Europe ou ailleurs en vue d'enrôler les jeunes Tunisiens émigrés, de les embrigader et de les envoyer en Syrie, en Libye ou en Irak rejoindre les jihadistes et s'entraîner au maniement des armes et des explosifs avant de regagner la Tunisie, constituer des cellules dormantes guettant les ordres pour commettre leurs attentats sur le sol national.

Quand, fin juillet dernier, cette nouvelle orientation de la diplomatie tunisienne a été dévoilée, beaucoup d'observateurs se sont posé la question : comment va-t-on

choisir ces nouveaux diplomates et le ministère des Affaires étrangères dispose-t-il des cadres qui allient l'expérience diplomatique à l'expérience sécuritaire ?

La question était légitime quand on sait que nos missions diplomatiques et consulaires n'étaient pas assez outillées aussi bien à l'époque du président déchu ou sous les gouvernements de la Troïka et de Mehdi Jomaâ en compétences qui pouvaient assumer cette mission à merveille. L'on se rappelle bien que nos ambassades ou consulats comprenaient généralement un seul cadre sécuritaire qui s'occupait particulièrement des opposants dans le pays où il exerçait et n'arrivait pas le plus souvent à détecter les mouvements de contestation où les jeunes terroristes s'activaient et ne pouvait pas aussi découvrir l'identité des embrigadeurs qui exerçaient dans de petites villes ou des banlieues qui étaient pratiquement fermées à nos policiers.

L'on se rappelle comment, en 2002, un terroriste a réussi à regagner Djerba et à monter son attentat terroriste contre le synagogue de la Ghriba, alors que les services secrets allemands le connaissaient déjà et ont révélé son identité quelques minutes après l'attentat.

Une stratégie d'action concertée

Aujourd'hui, les choses ont changé et nos ambassades et consulats sont sur le qui-vive pour parer à tous les imprévus grâce précisément à une stratégie d'action élaborée au sein du ministère des Affaires étrangères.

«La stratégie va être soumise dans les prochains jours au président de la République, puis au chef du gouvernement. Elle sera examinée lors de la prochaine réunion du Conseil de sécurité nationale.

Une fois adoptée par le gouvernement, elle constituera la feuille de route que nos diplomates auront à suivre dans leur action consistant à dévoiler ce que préparent les jihadistes tunisiens établis à l'étranger pour semer le désordre et le chaos sur le sol national», a déclaré, hier, Taïeb Baccouche, ministre des Affaires étrangères. Le ministre n'a pas voulu livrer les détails de cette stratégie d'action, estimant qu'elle doit rester confidentielle. Et en attendant qu'elle soit adoptée et porte ses fruits, l'on ne peut que s'en féliciter.

Seulement, cette démarche ne peut aboutir qu'à condition qu'elle soit en harmonie avec ce qu'entreprennent les autres ministères ayant un rapport avec les Tunisiens à l'étranger.

C'est le cas du ministère des Affaires sociales qui organise, aujourd'hui, sous la présidence du chef du gouvernement, Habib Essid, le forum annuel de nos compatriotes à l'étranger.

Malheureusement, le programme des communications qui seront données à cette occasion ne comprend aucune intervention sur la sécurité ou le phénomène des ter-

roristes établis à l'étranger et des recruteurs jihadistes qui sont aux trousses de nos jeunes en Europe.

<http://www.lapresse.tn/>

Tunisie: Lutte contre le terrorisme - Bronzage idiot pour les takfiristes !

12 AOÛT 2015

Depuis l'attentat de Sousse et l'installation de la canicule, les terroristes ne comptent plus les revers dans nos murs. Pourvu que leur traversée du désert perde...

L'été ne semble pas faire la joie des terroristes. Certes, il n'est pas rare de voir un barbu traîner sa jellaba sur la plage ou s'offrir une séance de bronzage sous son parasol, entouré de son armada d'enfants. Mais, sur le terrain des opérations, il brille par son absence ou, au mieux, il passe incognito et, au final, ne frappe plus. En effet, depuis le dernier attentat de Sousse, le compteur des takfiristes affiche un cinglant zéro : aucune attaque !

Et pour des tueurs sans foi ni loi, assis de surcroît sur des centaines de cellules dormantes aux effectifs pléthoriques et redoutablement armés, il y a de quoi aller chercher secours auprès du cerveau d'Einstein ! Questions : seraient-ils en perdition ? Nos forces de sécurité et l'armée y sont-elles pour quelque chose ? Serait-ce la conséquence d'une certaine lassitude engendrée par leur furia ramadanesque ? Nul le sait. Ce que l'on sait, par contre, c'est que les escadrons de la mort lancés par l'internationale intégriste n'ont pas chômé cet été, en continuant, en dépit d'un soleil de plomb, de semer la terreur, à coups d'attentats sanglants en Irak, en Syrie, en Libye, au Pakistan, en Afghanistan, en Arabie Saoudite, en Algérie, au Mali, au Nigeria, au Tchad, au Niger, au Cameroun et même en Turquie. Dans ce triste hit-parade, la branche terroriste sévissant en Tunisie est... le dernier de la classe ! Faut-il en remercier Dieu pour avoir épargné notre pays ?

Gare au relâchement

Pour le moment, touchons du bois, et -- pourquoi ne pas le lâcher -- pavoisons, surtout avec ce superbe rythme, presque quotidien, de démantèlement des cellules dormantes et d'arrestations de dangereux jihadistes dont le nombre, de l'aveu même du ministre de l'Intérieur, a dépassé le cap de 1.200 depuis précisément «la déroute de Sousse». Et là, on n'épiloguera jamais assez sur la réussite providentielle de ces coups de filet qui témoignent assurément d'un extraordinaire travail de sape doublé d'une meilleure maîtrise de la stratégie anticipative pour l'exécution de laquelle on appelait de toutes nos forces sur ces mêmes colonnes depuis 2012.

Aujourd'hui, nos forces de sécurité, conduites de main de maître par les Unités spéciales de la Garde nationale (Usgn), ne se contentent plus de s'occuper des traditionnelles régions de haute tension terroriste (Kasserine, Le Kef, Jendouba, Gafsa, Sidi Bouzid, Kébili, Gabès, Médenine et Kairouan), en touchant désormais d'autres zones dites jusqu'ici «sans risque», telles que les gouvernorats de Bizerte, Mahdia, Ben Arous et Nabeul. Mais attention, engranger des lauriers ne suffit pas, car en matière de lutte contre le terrorisme, l'autosatisfaction est le pire des défauts. D'abord, parce qu'on a affaire à un ennemi imprévisible qui peut revenir, à tout moment, à la charge et on en a fait l'amère expérience à maintes reprises. Ensuite, parce que, selon des sources sécuritaires bien informées, plus de la moitié des cellules dormantes

en Tunisie n'ont pas encore été remontées. Enfin, parce que les menaces potentielles émanant de nos frontières avec l'Algérie et la Libye persistent. En attendant, prions pour que le «bronzage idiot» des takfiristes perdure...

<http://www.lapresse.tn/>

Terrorists set sights on power infrastructure

Tourists not at greater risk despite attacks in Tunisia



Tunisia's tourist industry was rocked in June when 38 foreign tourists were gunned down in a [terrorist attack](#) in the resort of Sousse.

Just three months earlier 23 people, mainly tourists, had been killed in an attack at a [museum in Tunis](#).

The twin attacks revived painful memories of a series of attacks on tourists in Egypt in 2005 and 2006 and gave rise to fears that radical Islamists are increasingly targeting the industry as a way of both hurting the west and undermining the existing domestic political order.

"There are very clear reasons why terrorists go after tourists," says Henry Wilkinson, head of intelligence and analysis at The Risk Advisory Group, a global risk management consultancy.

"Tourists are intensely sensitive to insecurity. A bit like stock markets they overreact to sentiment, and when people go on holiday they can choose where they go," says Mr Wilkinson, who draws a comparison with an industry such as oil and gas, which has to go where the reserves are, almost irrespective of the degree of risk.

"If tourism is a mainstay of the economy you can directly weaken the government, harm the local economy and put people out of jobs, creating an environment of frustration and undermining the legitimacy of the government. It's provocative and destabilising," he adds.

Moreover, an attack on foreigners guarantees international media coverage, furthering the extremists' agenda.

Even before the Tunisian attacks there were signs that fears over insecurity were driving tourist behaviour.

Morocco, where 17 people, mainly foreigners, were killed in a bomb attack in Marrakech in 2011, saw a 5.6 per cent decline in tourist spending in the year to February, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council, while Kenya, another country wracked by [terrorism](#), reported a 9.4 per cent decline in the year to the fourth quarter of 2014.

In contrast, European sunspots such as Greece, Spain and Portugal have all enjoyed strong growth in the past year.

Despite this, the data seem to suggest that terrorists are not stepping up attacks on the tourist industry.

Figures from The Risk Advisory Group show a remarkably stable trend of attacks since 2007, particularly since 2011 when the annual tally has oscillated between 28 and 32. This year's tally, 17 as of August 4, equates to an annual rate of 29.

Overall, TRAG's database records 297 terrorist attacks against commercial interests (rather than those targeting the security services, such as military and police, which account for the bulk of incidents) in the calendar year to early August, the vast majority of which will have been in emerging markets.

This puts 2015 on course for about 500 attacks on business interests, above the 443 witnessed last year, but down on the previous five years.

Retail is the most targeted industry, probably related to the ubiquity of the sector and its nature as a soft target. Many of the attacks are on open-air markets, according to Mr Wilkinson.

London police said it had "strong evidence" linking the terrorist rampage on the Tunisian beach resort of Sousse to an earlier attack on the country's national museum in which 22 people died.

However, while attacks against retail peaked at 45.8 per cent of all incidents in 2014, so far this year they account for just 28.9 per cent of attacks.

As much as there are any patterns to pick out of the data, there does seem to be a trend towards targeting infrastructure.

The 67 attacks on the electricity, telecoms and utilities industries so far this year mean 2015 is on course to be the worst year for such incidents since at least 2007. Electricity networks have borne the brunt of the onslaught, being hit 37 times as of early August, more than in any other full year, save 2010 when they hit 39.

Number of attacks per sector									
Sectors	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015*
Retail	121	128	118	113	91	116	175	203	85
Tourism	38	44	26	42	28	31	32	31	17
Construction	24	30	66	52	59	74	29	26	8
Agriculture	3	3	4	14	6	34	18	17	3
Electricity	13	24	33	39	24	30	32	20	37
Telecoms	11	10	40	34	25	27	17	2	11
Utilities	3	5	9	8	11	14	11	9	9
Mining	2	8	12	13	11	17	13	6	8
Gas	12	15	45	22	52	37	23	19	12
Oil	36	44	53	80	96	68	88	56	47
Financial	20	11	42	51	36	23	14	17	26
Media	47	34	62	60	19	45	35	28	18
Other business	24	14	34	50	77	82	63	9	16
Total	354	370	541	578	535	598	550	443	297

Source: The Risk Advisory Group | *data as of August 4

The oil and gas industries also appear to be in the line of fire a little more, accounting for 20 per cent of attacks on commercial interests so far this year, more than usual.

“Oil and gas and power-related infrastructure, such as power plants, pylons and power lines, are in some regions the second or third most targeted category,” says Jonathan Wood, associate director for global risk analysis at Control Risks, a consultancy. He says these industries are often targeted by transnational jihadi movements because they are crucial to both the government and foreign interests.

This was the case when al-Qaeda linked terrorists attacked a natural gas [facility in In](#)

[Amenas](#), Algeria, in 2013, killing 39 foreign workers.

“[In Amenas] was a key economic pillar of the government. It was one of the most prominent foreign-owned assets in the country,” he says.

Security services alarmed by Tunisia’s young killer and his progression to gun-wielding jihadi

This pattern is repeated elsewhere. In Colombia, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), the country’s predominant rebel groups, “primarily target power and oil and gas infrastructure”, says Mr Wood.

Separatist insurgents in Pakistan’s Baluchistan province have a similar modus operandi, he says. “Power disruption is one of the best ways of undermining and delegitimising the government.”

However this is far from uniform, says Mr Wood, with insurgent groups in Sudan and central Asia targeting the public sector, such as the government and security services, not the private sector or infrastructure, despite the presence of “vulnerable” oil and gas pipelines.

“They don’t want to lose public support in the area in which they operate,” he says, adding that Colombia’s Farc “do it specifically to punish certain towns and villages”.

Mr Wilkinson says attacks on power infrastructure also used to be a specialism of separatist and communist guerrillas in India, but such attacks have now dried up.

Although TRAG’s data suggest attacks against commercial interests have fallen from their 2012 peak, a public database maintained by the University of Maryland, which includes attacks on the security services, shows a sharp rise in terror incidents in recent years.

Despite this, Mr Wilkinson argues that “more of the world is becoming safer in net terms”.

For the past two years, TRAG has downgraded more countries than it has upgraded in terms of the perceived risk of political violence, with 21 downgrades versus 13 upgrades this year.

However, many of the least safe countries appear to be deteriorating still further, creating a more polarised world.

“There is a wider gap between those countries that are able to manage risks and those that are unable to contain problems within their borders,” he says.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/>

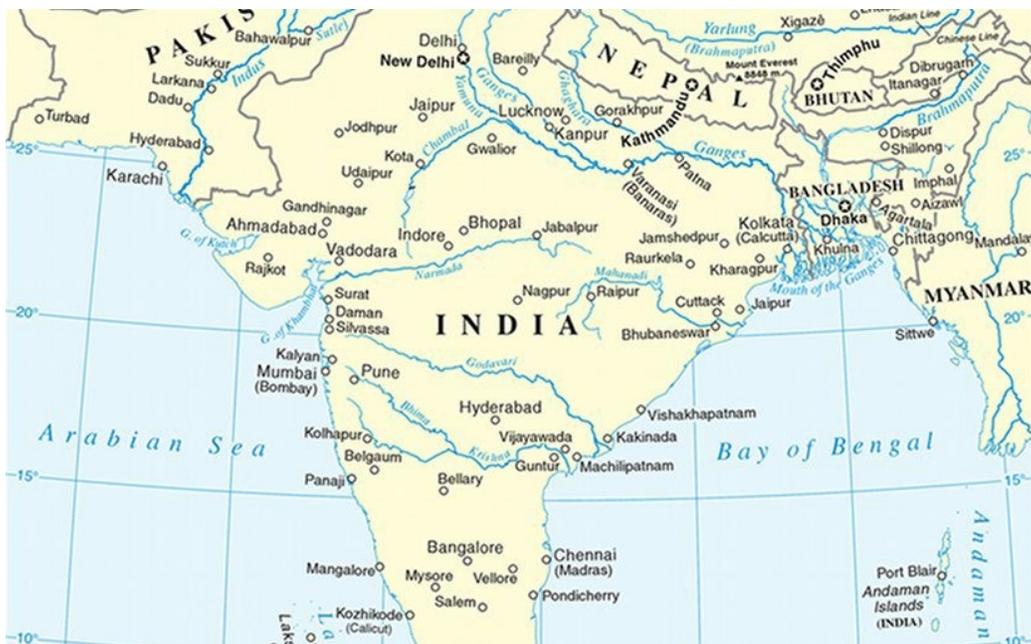
Terrorism in the World

South Asian-Level Cooperation Must To Counter Terror – Analysis

August 8th, 2015

By Surya Valliappan Krishna*

Recently, the Gurdaspur terror attack raised questions regarding collusion between Islamist groups such as Laskar-e-Toiba (LeT) and Sikh militant groups pushing for the revival of the Khalistan movement. Although, the idea of two forces with very little in common uniting to fight a common enemy seems like a really engaging narrative of Bollywood's next 100 crore blockbuster, it actually is seen in the real world.



This isn't the first time we're seeing collusion between terrorist groups. Often groups with different aims and agendas unite to fight a common enemy. Coordination and support takes the form of training, logistics, intelligence weapons supply and actual operation. Groups also show remarkable capacity to learn from each other, for instance the LTTE (Liberation Tamil of Tigers Eelam) popular use of suicide bombing was adopted by Al-Qaeda and now groups from around the world.

During the latter half of the 20th century, the LTTE was working closely with a number of terrorist groups. LTTE was associated with Harakat-ul-Mujahideen, Abu Sayyaf Group and pro-Palestinian groups; the relationship was critical to weapons supply and training. In addition the LTTE has extended a hand to the Naxalite and Khalistan movements in India and swore to support national liberation movements around the world. In 2007 it was found that the LTTE has sold hundreds of Norwegian passports to Al-Qaeda.

We see this trend with terrorist groups in other parts of the world too. In some cases we've seen extremely powerful collusions and mergers among groups. The Hezbollah was actually a merger of a number of Shia militias with members from a number of different factions. Strategic alliances too are seen very often with Al-Qaeda and its affiliates in the region. With the Islamic State, we see that a number of groups around the world are joining its bandwagon and pledging allegiance, for instance Boko Haram and Jundullah. Given that these groups have some hold in their countries and Islamic State's transnational network, financial and military might, attacks involving collusion between the Islamic State and its side-kicks are definitely on the cards.

Islamic State could potentially exploit home-grown terrorist groups in India; use groups such Indian Mujahideen (IM) and Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) as tools for its Indian challenge and South Asian agenda. These groups lack the kind of organization efficiency that the Islamic State can provide.

We also see that in certain cases, there is a sense of rivalry among terrorist groups. Although, turf wars are normally associated with intelligence agencies and bureaucratic frameworks, terrorist groups often emulate this. This is seen with Islamist groups, particular now with the Islamic State and Afghan Taliban. The Islamic State, which uses its propaganda magazine Dabiq, as a medium to denounce other Islamist groups, openly criticized the Afghan Taliban, its lack of activity and influence. Reports claims that the two groups had declared war on each other. In addition to this there is evidence to show that the Afghan Taliban has been discouraging its cadre from joining the Islamic State and warning the Islamic State against operating in Afghanistan. Turf wars among groups pose a problem in itself as civilian population is often a canvas for the expression of violent tendencies.

Collusion between groups does not always symbolize a collusion of ideologies; it is a merger of convenience and often nothing more. Co-operation among lethal forces is a threat to any government; a co-ordinated attack needs a co-ordinated response. Non-state groups exploit and escalate tensions between state forces. The only way to neutralize this hybrid threat is to de-politicise security issues and push for inter-governmental counter-terrorism cooperation.

India currently is working on what is calls as a 'radicalisation blueprint', keeping in line with the West. One can only hope that this has a ripple effect other countries in South Asia where the threat is equally imminent such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and Maldives. Any radicalisation or counter-extremism plan is unlikely to work if isolated from the international neighbourhood. While the state-wise radicalisation approach is commendable, what is needed is larger South Asian-level cooperation to counter Islamic State influence and the collusion between terror groups.

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/>

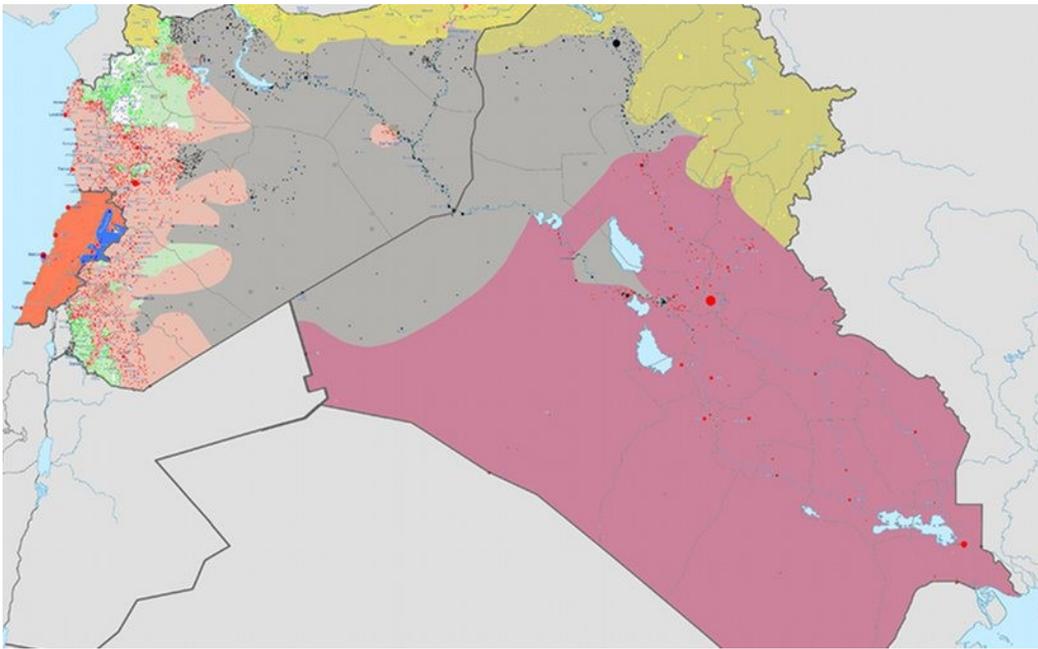
Iraq

A Wolf In Sheep's Clothing: An Analysis Of Islamic State's Takfir Doctrine

August 12th, 2015

ISIS is challenged not only on the battlefield, but also ideologically by mainstream Muslim scholars and within militant circles.

Hundreds of mainstream Muslim scholars have spoken out at international and local levels, both individually and collectively.[2] The most important one being the *Open Letter to Al-Baghdadi*.[3]



Areas controlled by Islamic State (grey) in Middle East as of July 26, 2015. Source: Wikipedia Commons.

The ideological challenge also comes from within militant circles especially rival groups operating in Syria and Iraq such as Jabhah Al-Nusrah and in other places such as Al-Qaeda which based in Yemen.[4]

One of the many criticisms directed against ISIS is its permissiveness in the practice of *takfir* (declaring a Muslim as apostate) which makes its status as a *takfiri* group deserved. This equates ISIS to the Kharijites who remain traditionally denounced and despised by Sunni and Salafi Muslims.

This article seeks to analyze ISIS' response to these challenges by mainstream Muslims and rival militants based on materials distributed online by sources known to

have an affiliation to ISIS and distributors of its materials.

ISIS' doctrine on *takfir* could be found in a 40-points list entitled '*Aqidah Wa Manhaj Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah Fi Al-Takfir* (ISIS' Creed and Methodology of *Takfir*).[5]

The list carries many similarities with ISIS' publication entitled *Muqarrar Fi Al-Tawhid Li Al-Mu`askarat* (Standard Text for Islamic Creed for Military Camps), dated 1436 (Hijrah calendar) / 2015.[6]

Some of the points are also found in another ISIS publication titled *Hazih `Aqidatuna Wa Haza Manhajuna* (This is our creed and our way).[7]

All the above mentioned documents are distributed online by ISIS online machineries and among its online supporters.

This article will focus on the 40-points list on *takfir* because of its concise and easily digestible content which also directly addresses the topic at hand.



Takfir according to ISIS

The 40 points could be summarised as follows:

The point begins with a warning against all types of extremism in *takfir*.

ISIS rejects the Murji`ite's doctrines, a) *al-irja'* (deferred judgment on faith) that views God as the sole authority to judge who is Muslim and who is not in the After-life, and b) Muslims should regard any person who is outwardly Muslim as part of the Muslim community even if he commits grave sin because sin has no adverse effect on salvation as long he remains faithful.

ISIS' stand on *takfir* is based on the creed of the Sunni and guided by the tradition of noble Sunni scholars.

ISIS regards all who proclaim the *Shahadah* (Testimony of Faith) as Muslims, until proven otherwise.[8]

ISIS' method of *takfir* on a specific person or organisation is premised on the following conditions

- it must be based on clear and strong evidences that are soundly established, not speculations
- it must meet all the necessary requirements required by the *shari`ah*
- it must be free from inhibitions recognised by the *shari`ah*
- the person involved must be presented with the right argument and evidence first
- it must be issued by ISIS' authorised bodies.[9]

ISIS do not perform *takfir* on all Muslims today, or those who commit sins except if

they regard them as halal,[10] or those who do not join ISIS, or those who differ, criticise or fight ISIS, or Muslims who live in non-Muslim countries.[11]

ISIS rules the following people as *kafir* (disbelievers)

- a person who performs any of the ten nullifiers of faith[12]
- all Twelver Shiites – both ordinary person and scholars[13]
- those who reject the *takfir* of Twelver Shiite scholars (not the *takfir* on an ordinary person), as disbelievers
- all parties based on communism, secularism, nationalism and liberalism;[14] proponents of democracy and those who participate in its process; all governments that do not rule by the *shari`ah* and members of its military, police officers, intelligence, executive and judiciary apparatuses[15]
- all those who seek to judge by civil laws[16]
- those who mock and insult the Prophet and his noble family members[17]
- all Baathist[18]
- all leaders of Islamic Party of Iraq, not its ordinary members
- all practitioners of sorcery.[19]

Unmasking ISIS

One feature which stands out from ISIS' materials on the issue of *takfir* is its attempt to deflect criticism from various parties that it is a *takfir* movement which is deserving of its status as a modern day Kharijite who is denounced in various authentic *hadiths* and in Sunni tradition and to subsequently portray itself as a staunch Sunni movement that deserves support especially from jihadist circles and from Sunni Muslims in general.

This could be deduced from the way the list was composed.

Firstly, the first point in the list ironically asserts ISIS' denunciation of all forms of extremism in *takfir*.

Secondly, the first eight points seek to inform what ISIS is *not* in the matter of *takfir*, instead of describing what its stand on *takfir* actually is. This indicates its apologetic tone due to various accusations of takfirism against it. This accusation which comes together with the Kharijite label does not come only from prominent individual scholars and Muslim bodies all over the world but also from radical jihadist circles such as leaders of Al-Qaeda.

Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi who led Al-Qaeda in Iraq – the group that preceded ISIS – was counselled by his religious mentor Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi on, among other things, the former's permissive approach to *takfir* as a justification for Al-Qaeda's indiscriminate bombing of Iraqi civilians.[20]

However, three examples could be highlighted here that would expose ISIS' mask of fidelity to mainstream Sunni tradition and its claim of rejection of all types of extremist understandings of *takfir*.

Example no. 1

Hamzah Yusuf

First example is ISIS' pronouncement of *takfir* on Hamzah Yusuf and Yasir Qadhi.

Hamzah Yusuf is a Muslim scholar who heads Zaytuna College based in Berkeley, California, United States of America.[21]

Yasir Qadhi is also a Muslim scholar based in the United States. He holds a doctoral degree in religious studies from Yale University and a teaching position in the Religious Department of Rhodes College and is also the Dean of Academic Affairs at Al-Maghrib Institute.[22]



This pronouncement was publicly made known in Dabiq, which is ISIS' official online magazine, issue number 7. Photo of both scholars were published with the caption "*murtad*" (apostate) for their condemnation of the assault on Charlie Hebdo.[23]

Theologically, this pronouncement falls under *takfir mu'ayyan* (*takfir* made against specific individuals or organisation).

Yasir Qadhi

Other than the photos with the above mentioned caption published under an article that seeks to offer theological justification for the attack on Charlie Hebdo and condemn those who denounce it, there was no detailed explanation for this



specific *takfir* based on the statement made by both scholars such as which aspects of the statements are deemed to cause apostasy and why and on what theological basis do these statements cause apostasy. There was also no clear explanation on the part of ISIS in detailing the process it has taken to make such pronouncements; whether ISIS has communicated to them its ruling and given them a chance to defend themselves against ISIS' arguments and who were the scholars involved in making such rulings.

These are pertinent questions which require answers which are as pertinent from ISIS based on the *takfir* methodology that it has laid down for itself in the list – *takfir* cannot be made based on speculation and must go through proper processes and no Muslims should be ruled otherwise except with evidence that is beyond doubt (*yaqin*).

On this respect, ISIS has failed to adhere to its own doctrine of *takfir*. Since this is a serious theological matter, this failure is a serious non-compliance to the *shari`ah* on the part of ISIS.

Example no. 2

The second example which exposes the fundamental flaws of ISIS is its pronouncement of *takfir* on all Muslims who accept democracy, regard it as compatible to Islam and participate in its process.

This pronouncement is problematic on many grounds.

Firstly, the issue whether democracy is compatible with Islam or Muslims' participation in it could be ruled permissible on rational and pragmatic ground are contentious among Muslim scholars.

However, many Muslim scholars today would support democratic governments and permit Muslims' participation in its process, regardless whether they live in Muslim countries or non-Muslim countries or their participation involves them being voters, election candidates or members of parliament.[24]

In addition to many works that promote such position such as Al-Qaradhawi's *Fiqh Al-Dawlah* (Islamic Jurisprudence on Government),[25] it is also supported by the participation of Islam based parties in democratic processes and also democratic governments in many Muslim majority countries which include Muslim scholars amongst their membership.

Not only did ISIS' pronouncement go against the mainstream position of Sunni Muslim scholars, it is also tantamount to pronouncing *takfir* on them and a significant number of ordinary Muslims.[26]

Secondly, the established Sunni doctrine is to restrain from *takfir* in contentious theological issues where differences of opinion out of *ijtihad*(independent reasoning) is inevitable such as the case of democracy in Islam. Many conservative scholars who reject the compatibility of democracy with Islam and discourage Muslims' participation in it prefer prudence and refrain from pronouncing *takfir* on the opponents due to the seriousness of *takfir* in Islam[27] and guided by a *hadith* (the Prophetic tradition) that says, "Avert the legal penalties from the Muslims as much as possible, if he has a way out then leave him to his way, for if the Imam makes a mistake in forgiving it would be better than making a mistake in punishment." (Narrated by Al-Turmuzi)

It is argued that this pronouncement of *takfir* by ISIS itself contradicts point 10 of the list that proclaims the foundation of ISIS' creed and doctrine on the premise set by Sunni Islam which it explicitly affirms in *Muqarrar Fi Al-Tawhid*. [28]

Example no. 3

The third example is ISIS' pronouncement of holding Sunni Muslim scholars in high esteem and respect, although it also denounces those who take the crooked path and sell the religion for worldly pleasures.



Open Letter to Al-Baghdadi

This pronouncement is problematic in view of the letter signed by more than 100 Muslim scholars from all over the world denouncing ISIS. The letter lists down more than 20 points of ISIS' serious transgression of Islamic teachings.

Takfir is one of the points addressed by the letter. It states;

".....disbelief requires the intention of disbelief, and not just absentminded words or

deeds. It is not permissible to accuse anyone of disbelief without proof of the intention of disbelief. Nor is it permissible to accuse anyone of being a non-Muslim without ascertaining that intention. It is, after all, possible that the person was coerced, ignorant, insane or did not mean it. It is also possible that he misunderstood a particular issue....

It is forbidden to interpret the implications of a person's deeds; only the person himself or herself may interpret their own deeds – particularly when there is a difference of opinion among Muslims regarding that particular deed. It is also forbidden to declare others non-Muslim (*takfir*) based on any matter in which there is a difference of opinion among Muslim scholars. It is forbidden to declare an entire group of people non-Muslim. Disbelief applies only to individuals depending on their deeds and intentions..... scholars – including Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Al-Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah – distinguish between the actions of a disbeliever (*kafir*) and declaring people non-Muslim (*takfir*). Even if a person performs a deed that has elements of disbelief, this does not necessitate that that person be judged as a disbeliever for the reasons presented earlier. Al-Dhahabi related that his teacher, Ibn Taymiyyah, used to say near the end of his life: 'I do not declare any member of the ummah non-Muslim ... The Prophet said: "Anyone who maintains his ablution is a believer", so whoever observes the prescribed prayers with ablution is a Muslim.'...."[29]

The above statement from the letter is relevant to ISIS' pronouncement of *takfir* against Hamzah Yusuf and Yasir Qadhi mentioned in the above first example where there is no explanation on the ground and processes that lead to it.

The statement also contradicts ISIS' use of *takfir* in contentious theological issues such as the permissibility and compatibility of democracy with Islam.

Up till now, there is no known response to this letter from ISIS.

Finally, ISIS' application of *takfir* against a wide range of people such as all members of unIslamic government apparatuses and unIslamic political parties is permissive and goes against the prudence recommended in the final part of the quoted statement.

ISIS' doctrine and application of *takfir* contradicts also with the Amman Message that have been endorsed by hundreds of eminent Muslim scholars and thinkers. This, in particular, relates to ISIS' declaration of all Shiites as disbelievers.

The Amman Message pronounces,

"1) Whosoever is an adherent to one of the four Sunni schools (Mathahib) of Islamic jurisprudence (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali), the two Shi'i schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*Ja'fari and Zaydi*), the Ibadi school of Islamic jurisprudence and the Thahiri school of Islamic jurisprudence, is a Muslim. Declaring that person an apostate is impossible and impermissible. Verily his (or her) blood, honour, and property are inviolable [emphasis added]. Moreover, in accordance with the Shaykh Al-

Azhar's fatwa, it is neither possible nor permissible to declare whosoever subscribes to the Ash'ari creed or whoever practices real Tasawwuf (Sufism) an apostate. Likewise, it is neither possible nor permissible to declare whosoever subscribes to true Salafi thought an apostate.



THE THREE POINTS OF THE AMMAN MESSAGE V.1

Frequently Asked Questions

Tell a friend

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

May peace and blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad and his pure and noble family

(1) Whosoever is an adherent to one of the four Sunni schools (Mathahib) of Islamic jurisprudence (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali), the two Shi'i schools of Islamic jurisprudence (Ja'fari and Zaydi), the Ibad'i school of Islamic jurisprudence and the Thahiri school of Islamic jurisprudence, is a Muslim. Declaring that person an apostate is impossible and impermissible. Verily his (or her) blood, honour, and property are inviolable. Moreover, in accordance with the Shaykh Al-Azhar's fatwa, it is neither possible nor permissible to declare whosoever subscribes to the Ash'ari creed or whoever practices real Tasawwuf (Sufism) an apostate. Likewise, it is neither possible nor permissible to declare whosoever subscribes to true Salafi thought an apostate.

Equally, it is neither possible nor permissible to declare as apostates any group of Muslims who believes in God, Glorified and Exalted be He, and His Messenger (may peace and blessings be upon him) and the pillars of faith, and acknowledges the five pillars of Islam, and does not deny any necessarily self-evident tenet of religion.

Amman message

Equally, it is neither possible nor permissible to declare as apostates any group of Muslims who believes in God, Glorified and Exalted be He, and His Messenger (may peace and blessings be upon him) and the pillars of faith, and acknowledges the five pillars of Islam, and does not deny any necessarily self-evident tenet of religion.”[30]

This declaration also rejects ISIS' claim that Sunni Muslim scholars are in consensus about the disbelief of all Shiite scholars which it subsequently used to justify *takfir* against those scholars who refuse to perform it on Shiite scholars after explanation has been given (to the Shiite scholars).

Any person familiar with Islamic jurisprudence would know that any claim of consensus (*ijma'*) among scholars is hardly uncontested, be it in the classical period or current times. This declaration is a contemporary testimony to it.

It must be highlighted that the Amman message pre-exists ISIS. If ISIS is truthful about honouring Sunni scholars and the creed of Sunni Islam, it must not disregard the message. At the very least, it should explain why it deviates from the pronounce-

ment endorsed by hundreds of contemporary eminent scholars.



Mardin Conference

The third source highlighting the contradiction between ISIS' doctrine of *takfir* and the position held by Sunni Muslim scholars is the Mardin Declaration.

The declaration is an outcome of the Mardin conference which was attended by a group of renowned Muslim scholars in March 2010.

It was convened to discuss the use of Ibn Taimiyah's fatwa by radical and extremist groups to justify *takfir*, shedding blood of Muslims deemed to have apostatised and waging perpetual violent jihad against non-Muslims.

Among the content of the declaration is;

"1) Ibn Taymiyya's fatwa concerning Mardin can under no circumstances be appropriated and used as evidence for leveling the charge of kufr (unbelief) against fellow Muslims, rebelling against rulers, deeming game their lives and property, terrorizing those who enjoy safety and security, acting treacherously towards those who live (in harmony) with fellow Muslims or with whom fellow Muslims live (in harmony) via the bond of citizenship and peace. On the contrary, the fatwa deems all of that unlawful, notwithstanding its original purpose of supporting a Muslim state against a non-Muslim state. Ibn Taymiyya agrees with all of this, and follows, the precedent of previous Muslim scholars in this regard, and does not deviate from their position. Anyone who seeks support from this fatwa for killing Muslims or non-Muslims has erred in his interpretation and has misapplied the revealed texts....

7) The notion of loyalty and enmity (al-wala wa al-bara) must never be used to declare anyone out of the fold of Islam, unless an actual article of unbelief is held. In all

other cases, it actually involves several types of judgement ranging according to the juridical five-fold scale: (permissible, recommended, not-recommended, non-permissible, and required). Therefore, it is not permissible to narrow the application of this notion and use it for declaring a Muslim outside the fold of Islam.”[31]

This declaration also precedes ISIS. Similar to the Amman Message, ISIS ought to explain its *takfir* doctrine vis-à-vis this declaration if it is truthful in honouring Muslim scholars, past and present. Al-Qaeda of the Arabian Peninsula, at least, took the effort to explain its disagreement with the content of this declaration via the late Anwar Al-Awlaki in its official magazine, Inspire no. 2.[32]

Here, it could be concluded that the above mentioned letter to Al-Baghdadi, the Amman Message and the Mardin declaration endorsed by hundreds of contemporary Muslim scholars are enough evidences that ISIS’ doctrine of *takfir* is incompatible with the position held by many contemporary Sunni scholars.

ISIS’ doctrine does not tally with the position of contemporary Sunni scholars and in view of the contradiction, ISIS’ claim of upholding the scholars in high esteem is, in reality, a hollow statement. Its position also deviates from the Prophet’s advice, “My people/followers will not be in agreement over misguidance. When you differ in opinions, be with the *Al-Sawad Al-A`zham* (the majority).” (Narrated by Ibn Majah).

Conclusion

ISIS’ attempt to deflect the label of *takfiri* and Kharijite falls apart in view of the above three examples cited in this article.

The examples expose ISIS as a wolf in the sheep’s clothing. ISIS tries to paint an image of a movement that is truthful to Sunni Islam but the reality is that it is an enemy that is destroying it.

The analysis by this article is significant because it provides an ideological challenge and contestation which further downgrades ISIS’ appeal. One who is familiar with the online debate especially when they come from within jihadist circles can appreciate why such ideological contestations matter to ISIS. An example can also be found in several issues of Dabiq where ISIS dedicates lengthy article disparaging Al-Qaeda and its associates in response to their ideological challenge.[33]

Notes:

[1]I would like to thank Mr. Hafiz Kusairi for his valuable technical assistant in preparing this article.

[2]Muhammad Haniff Hassan and Mustazah Bahari, “An Analysis of Muslim Voices Against IS”, *Eurasia Review*, 1 October 2014.

[3]See www.lettertobaghdadi.com (11 Aug. 2015)

[4]Muhammad Haniff Hassan and Mustazah Bahari, “An Analysis of Muslim Voices

Against IS”, *Eurasia Review*, 1 October 2014; Abdullah Ladadwi, *Conclusively scholarly opinion on ISIS*, available at <http://www.islam21c.com/politics/conclusive-scholarly-opinions-on-isis/> (4 Aug. 2015); Muhtasib Al-Sham, *Al-Halqah Al-Thaniyah Min Niqash Hadi’ Hawl Fikr Tanzim Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah Fi Al-’Iraq Wa Al-Sham*, available at <http://islamsyria.com/portal/article/show/4721> (4. Aug. 2015); Mu`taz Al-Khatib, “*Tanzim Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah: Al-Buniyah Al-Fikriyah Wa Ta`qidat Al-Waqi`*”, Aljazeera Center For Studies, 24 Nov. 2014, available at <http://studies.aljazeera.net/files/isil/2014/11/2014112355523312655.html> (4 Aug. 2015)

[5] *Aqidah Wa Manhaj Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah Fi Al-Takfir*, available at <http://justpaste.it/l8mp> (4 Aug. 2015)

[6] *Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah Hai’ah Al-Buhuth Wa Al-Ifta’*, *Muqarrar Fi Al-Tawhid Li Al-Mu`askarat*, 1436H, available at <https://dump.to/muqarartawhed> (4 Aug. 2015).

[7] *Hazih `Aqidatuna Wa Haza Manhajuna*, Maktabat Al-Himmah, available at <http://justpaste.it/matweat> (4 Aug, 2015).

[8] See *Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah*, *Muqarrar Fi Al-Tawhid*, p. 31-2; *Hazih `Aqidatuna Wa Haza Manhajuna*, p. 3-4.

[9] See *Ibid*; *Ibid*, p. 3.

[10] See *Hazih `Aqidatuna Wa Haza Manhajuna*, p. 3.

[11] See *Ibid*, p. 4.

[12] See *Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah*, *Muqarrar fi Al-Tawhid*, pp. 23-50.

[13] See *Hazih `Aqidatuna Wa Haza Manhajuna*, p. 4.

[14] See *Ibid*.

[15] See *Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah*, *Muqarrar Fi Al-Tawhid*, pp. 34-9.

[16] See *Ibid*.

[17] See *Ibid*, p. 2; *Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah*, *Muqarrar Fi Al-Tawhid*, pp. 41-2.

[18] See *Hazih `Aqidatuna Wa Haza Manhajuna*, p. 4.

[19] See *Ibid*, p. 43-6.

[20] See Joas Wagemakers, (2011) “Reclaiming Scholarly Authority: Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi’s Critique of Jihadi Practices”, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 34: 7, pp. 523-39.

[21] See Hamza Yusuf’s short biography at https://www.zaytuna.edu/academics/faculty/hamza_yusuf and <http://shaykhhamza.com/biography/> (4 Aug. 2015).

[22] See Yasir Qadhi’s short biography at <http://almaghrib.org/instructors/yasir-qadhi#profile> and https://www.facebook.com/yasir.qadhi/info?tab=page_info (4

Aug. 2015).

[23]“The extinction of the gray zone”, *Dabiq* no. 7, Rabi` Al-Akhir 1436H, pp. 60-1.

[24]Tauseef Ahmad Parray, *Democracy in Islam: The Views of Several Modern Muslim Scholars*, The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences, 27:2, pp. 140-8; Yaser Ellethy, *Islam, Context, Pluralism and Democracy*, New York: Routledge, 2015; Rashid Al-Ghanushi, *Al-Dimuqratiyah Wa Huquq Al-Insan Fi Al-Islam*, N.p: Aljazeera Centre for Studies and Arab Scientific Publishers, 2012; Muhammad `Ammarah, *Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah: Bayn Al-`Ilmaniyah Wa Al-Sultah Al-Diniyah*, Qahirah; Dar Al-Shuruq, 2007; Muhammad Salim Al-`Awwa, *Fi Al-Nizam Al-Siyasiyah Li Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah*, Qahirah: Dar Al-Shuruq, 2007; Muhammad, Muslih, Muslih Muhammad and Browsers Michaelle. “Democracy”, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, available at <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0185> (10 Aug. 2015).

[25]See Yusuf Al-Qaradhawi, *Min Fiqh Al-Dawlah Fi Al-Islam: Makanatuha, Ma`alimuha, Tabi`atuha, Mawqifuha Min Al-Dimuqratiyah Wa Al-Ta`addudiyah Wa Al-Mar`ah Wa Ghayr Al-Muslimin*, Qahirah: Dar Al-Shuruq, 2001.

[26]See “Most Muslim Want Democracy, Personal Freedom and Islam in Political Life”, *Pew Research Center’s Global Attitude Project*, 10 July 2012, available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2012/07/10/most-muslims-want-democracy-personal-freedoms-and-islam-in-political-life/> (11 Aug. 2015).

[27]See “Ruling on democracy and elections and participating in that system”, *Islam Questions and Answers*, available at <http://islamqa.info/en/107166> (11 Aug. 2015).

[28]Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah, *Muqarrar Fi Al-Tawhid*, pp. 32-3.

[29]See Open Letter to Al-Baghdadi, point 9, available at www.lettertobaghdadi.com (4 Aug. 2015).

[30]See The Three Points of the Amman Message, available at http://ammanmessage.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=91&Itemid=74 (4 Aug. 2015).

[31]See The New Mardin Declaration, available at <http://www.binbayyah.net/portal/en/tasrehaat/1038> (4 Aug. 2015).

[32]Shaykh Anwar Al-Awlaki, “The New Mardin Declaration: An Attempt at Justifying the New World Order”, *Inspire* no. 2, Fall 1431 – 2010, pp. 33-40.

[33]See *Dabiq* no. 7, 8 and 9.

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/>

Where does ISIS get its guns?

15 2015 2:19AM



ISIS soldiers

Like the mystery surrounding Boko Haram's rise from a rag-tag army of abstemious youths to a bloodthirsty gang of marauding murderers, the sudden and horrific rise of ISIS or ISIL has been a subject of great wonder among Muslims. For sure neither group represents what Islam stands for, in their wanton killing and destruction of innocent lives.

And this leads to the question just who are these terror groups, who are they working for and how do they arm themselves? This piece by Mr Cartalucci seeks to explain away the situation, in the case of ISIS. We hope to be able to find out the truth about Boko Haram soon.

The current conflict consuming the Middle East, particularly in Iraq and Syria where the so-called "Islamic State" (ISIS) is operating and simultaneously fighting and defeating the forces of Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran, we are told, is built upon a logistical network based on black market oil and ransom payments.

The fighting capacity of ISIS is that of a nation-state. It controls vast swaths of territory straddling both Syria and Iraq and not only is able to militarily defend and expand from this territory, but possesses the resources to occupy it, including the resources to administer the populations subjugated within it.

For military analysts, especially former members of Western armed forces, as well as

members of the Western media who remember the convoys of trucks required for the invasions of Iraq in the 1990s and again in 2003, they surely must wonder where ISIS' trucks are today.

After all, if the resources to maintain the fighting capacity exhibited by ISIS were available within Syrian and Iraqi territory alone, then certainly Syrian and Iraqi forces would also possess an equal or greater fighting capacity but they simply do not.

And were ISIS' supply lines solely confined within Syrian and Iraqi territory, then surely both Syrian and Iraqi forces would utilize their one advantage - air power - to cut front line ISIS fighters from the source of their supplies. But this is not happening and there is a good reason why.

ISIS' supply lines run precisely where Syrian and Iraqi air power cannot go. To the north and into NATO-member Turkey, and to the southwest into US allies Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Beyond these borders exists a logistical network that spans a region including both Eastern Europe and North Africa.

Terrorists and weapons left over from NATO's intervention in Libya in 2011 were promptly sent to Turkey and then onto Syria - coordinated by US State Department officials and intelligence agencies in Benghazi - a terrorist hotbed for decades. The London Telegraph would report in their 2013 article, "CIA 'running arms smuggling team in Benghazi when consulate was attacked'," that: [CNN] said that a CIA team was working in an annex near the consulate on a project to supply missiles from Libyan armouries to Syrian rebels.

Weapons have also come from Eastern Europe, with the New York Times reporting in 2013 in their article, "Arms Airlift to Syria Rebels Expands, With Aid From C.I.A.," that: From offices at secret locations, American intelligence officers have helped the Arab governments shop for weapons, including a large procurement from Croatia, and have vetted rebel commanders and groups to determine who should receive the weapons as they arrive, according to American officials speaking on the condition of anonymity.

And while Western media sources continuously refer to ISIS and other factions operating under the banner of Al Qaeda as "rebels" or "moderates," it is clear that if billions of dollars in weapons were truly going to "moderates," they, not ISIS would be dominating the battlefield.

Recent revelations have revealed that as early as 2012 the United States Department of Defense not only anticipated the creation of a "Salafist Principality" straddling Syria and Iraq precisely where ISIS now exists, it welcomed it eagerly and contributed to the circumstances required to bring it about.

Just How Extensive Are ISIS' Supply Lines? While many across the West play willfully

ignorant as to where ISIS truly gets their supplies from in order to maintain its impressive fighting capacity, some journalists have traveled to the region and have video-taped and reported on the endless convoys of trucks supplying the terrorist army.

Were these trucks traveling to and from factories in seized ISIS territory deep within Syrian and Iraqi territory? No. They were traveling from deep within Turkey, crossing the Syrian border with absolute impunity, and headed on their way with the implicit protection of nearby Turkish military forces. Attempts by Syria to attack these convoys and the terrorists flowing in with them have been met by Turkish air defenses.

Germany's international broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW) published the first video report from a major Western media outlet illustrating that ISIS is supplied not by "black market oil" or "hostage ransoms" but billions of dollars worth of supplies carried into Syria across NATO member Turkey's borders via hundreds of trucks a day.

The report titled, "'IS' supply channels through Turkey," confirms what has been reported by geopolitical analysts since at least as early as 2011 - that ISIS subsides on immense, multi-national state sponsorship, including, obviously, Turkey itself.

Looking at maps of ISIS-held territory and reading action reports of its offensive maneuvers throughout the region and even beyond, one might imagine hundreds of trucks a day would be required to maintain this level of fighting capacity. One could imagine similar convoys crossing into Iraq from Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Similar convoys are likely passing into Syria from Jordan.

In all, considering the realities of logistics and their timeless importance to military campaigns throughout human history, there is no other plausible explanation to ISIS's ability to wage war within Syria and Iraq besides immense resources being channeled to it from abroad.

If an army marches on its stomach, and ISIS' stomachs are full of NATO and Persian Gulf State supplies, ISIS will continue to march long and hard. The key to breaking the back of ISIS, is breaking the back of its supply lines. To do that however, and precisely why the conflict has dragged on for so long, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and others would have to eventually secure the borders and force ISIS to fight within Turkish, Jordanian, and Saudi territory - a difficult scenario to implement as nations like Turkey have created defacto buffer zones within Syrian territory which would require a direct military confrontation with Turkey itself to eliminate.

With Iran joining the fray with an alleged deployment of thousands of troops to bolster Syrian military operations, overwhelming principles of deterrence may prevent Turkey enforcing its buffer zones.

What we are currently left with is NATO literally holding the region hostage with the prospect of a catastrophic regional war in a bid to defend and perpetuate the carnage perpetrated by ISIS within Syria, fully underwritten by an immense logistical network streaming out of NATO territory itself.

<http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/>

Pakistan

Pakistan Supreme Court allows military trials for terrorism suspects

6 August 2015



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[JURIST] Pakistan's **Supreme Court** [official website] on Wednesday **ruled** [opinion, PDF] to allow military trials for cases involving suspects of terrorism. The ruling follows a number of petitions to allow such trials, and is seen as a victory to the government that has been increasing its efforts against terrorism in past years. However, those opposed to the ruling are concerned over the government's potential ability to now hold secret, speedy trials, that could violate due process of law. A Pakistani human rights group believes this ruling specifically may lead to an **increased number of executions** [AFP report] in Pakistan.

Pakistan, as the main place of operations of the **Taliban** [JURIST news archive], has been a focal point of global anti-terrorism efforts. In May, Pakistan and Afghanistan **agreed to cooperate against terrorism** [JURIST report] in a Landmark Intelligence Deal, in which the parties agreed to share information in relation to facilitating "coordinated intelligence operations." In July 2014 Pakistan **passed** [JURIST report] a strict anti-terrorism bill that allows police to use lethal force, search buildings without a warrant and detain suspects at secret facilities for up to 60 days without charge "on reasonable apprehension of commission of a scheduled offense." Also that year Pakistan's prime minister **pledged** [JURIST report] that the country's

anti-terrorism laws would be amended to more effectively combat modern threats.

<http://jurist.org/>

Switzerland

Fighting money laundering, drugs or dictator's funds

Conspiracy theories abound about corrupt governments, their mandarins and how these embezzled money and robbed the people they're meant to serve

13 August 2015, 2:34pm



7

It comes as no surprise but certainly with a touch of envy when one reads how, for many years, the use of Swiss banking secrecy has lured many illuminati (including an unpublished list from Malta) to accumulate and protect their wealth.

Not all were honest persons trying to hide their hard earned riches from prying eyes of home dictators – on the contrary these included drug traffickers, oil barons, arms dealers, and terrorists wanting to launder money and create financial infrastructures that have made them look less like criminal gangs operating in dirty cash and more like honest enterprises earning interest, making legitimate investments, and sending electronic cash transfers.

Conspiracy theories abound about corrupt governments, their mandarins and how these embezzled money and robbed the people they're meant to serve. Regrettably these are no longer conspiracy theories created by the have nots but true stories leaked by recent investigations instigated by a team of global journalists in the Swiss Leaks project of 60,000 files that provided details on over 100,000 HSBC account holders.

Bank secrecy has a history spanning many decades and emanates from jurisdictions with extensive banking sectors that offered absolute confidentiality for clients to facilitate anonymity.

In the past, secrecy restricted competent authorities from obtaining or sharing information on banking relationships and account activities which recent banking scandals have unashamedly revealed.

Massive flows of illicit money can damage the stability and reputation of any financial sector and threaten the growth of international development. The veil of secrecy has been identified to shroud in opaque

terms various forms of money laundering traditionally composed of three stages – starting with the placement stage, followed by the layering stage and finally the integration stage.

In the placement stage money derived from illegal activities is often initially introduced by breaking up large amounts of cash into less conspicuous smaller sums that are then deposited directly into a bank account. Once the money has been sanitized, the launderer engages in a series of movements to distance them from the source.

Typically they would integrate the funds by investing in real estate, luxury goods, or business ventures, for example selling imported used cars or running multiple petrol stations, enabling the business to look entirely legitimate. In order to facilitate their criminal activities, money launderers and terrorist financiers do take advantage of the freedom of capital movements and the freedom in Europe to supply financial services which the integrated single market area entails.

At the same time, the objectives of protection of society from crime and protection of the stability and integrity of the European financial system should be balanced against the need to create a regulatory environment that allows companies to expand businesses without incurring disproportionate anti-money laundering compliance costs.

A recent scandal has hit a global bank in Argentina where authorities are investigating a possibly deliberate fire in which documents from major financial institutions

were lost – documents that contain information about economic fraud committed in the country.

After a police analysis determined that the fire that burnt down two warehouses belonging to the Iron Mountain company in Buenos Aires in 2014 was intentional, leading to suspicions about a conspiracy between Iron Mountain and its major clients – such as banks HSBC, BNP Paribas and JP Morgan – to destroy documentation involving economic crimes, by causing a fire in the company’s warehouses as the head of Economic Development of the City, former HSBC executive Francisco Cabrera, intervened in order to give the company these tax benefits.

Locally we meet article 435AA of the Criminal Code, which is applicable to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) where the Criminal Court may order a bank to monitor the banking operations being carried out through one or more accounts of a person suspected of having committed an offence of money laundering for a specified period.

Provisions are also provided for international mutual assistance in the implementation of measures relating to confiscation, freezing, and other court orders related to the investigation of an offence of money laundering. Therefore the crusade to detect any covert money laundering activities is getting hotter.

Readers may be surprised to know that land based casinos can be exempted where, following an appropriate risk assessment, jurisdictions may decide to exempt fully or in part providers of certain gambling services from national provisions transposing the provisions of the Directive on the basis of the proven low risk posed by the nature and, where appropriate, the scale of operations of such services.

Naturally, in their risk assessment one needs to consider a number of factors to assess the degree of vulnerability of the underlying betting transactions, in particular to type of payment methods in use. It is interesting to note that strict rules of know your client now apply to all fiduciaries and trustees where they are obliged to report a rigid matrix of certified information on the underlying beneficiary before accepting any assignment. The immediate disclosure to the governing body by administrators, nominees or trustees within three days of any suspicious transactions of the client is now mandatory and has to be in writing. Gone are the days when easy international business can be signed based on a mere recommendation as all relationships have to be thoroughly vetted before acceptance.

This means conducting an ongoing risk assessment of the client ‘s business operations such that over the years, we note how the rule of mandate and later on that of trustees, has become quite popular in Malta. We find 42 accredited companies as administrators of private foundations in terms of Article 43(12)b of the Trusts and

Trustees Act while more numerous are the authorisations of 143 companies by the MFSA empowered to act as a Trustee or Co-Trustee to provide fiduciary services in terms of the Trusts and Trustees Act.

It is strange to read how Alternativa Demokratika (AD) recently advocated that the provision of fiduciary services be rendered illegal as in its opinion and in the context of online betting companies it says that “It seems that professional firms and the Malta Gaming Authority did not carry out due diligence appropriately on ultimate beneficial owners of the companies they have registered and represented”.

Here one may disagree with its views since fiduciaries and/or trustees cannot cover up for clients knowing full well that disclosure can and is always be demanded by banks, the tax department, MFSA, FIAU, and of course the Malta Gaming Authority – the latter rigorously carries out probity checks and due diligence on all betting company applicants.

Equally sensational is the revelation in The Sunday Independent about a chartered accountant from Mosta who allegedly was offering over the counter residency permits gifted with the opening of local bank accounts and incorporation of over 800 shell companies to patronise business friends and members of the family of the late Col Gaddafi.

It appears that the registrar of companies was alerted by recent allegations that have been made in court concerning such covert operations. The Sunday Independent’s sources recount the highly dubious practice incorporating a wide-ranging network of fixers ranging from Customs agents to government employees and from financial regulators to banks – which ensures that predominantly Libyan clients are given fast track company formation procedures and residency permits with allegedly hardly any questions being asked, if any at all.

The newspaper alleges that hundreds of companies were registered at the Malta Financial Services Authority, again with very few questions being asked or background checks being carried out. The story continues to describe how foreigners applying for a residence permit (one admitted in court he does not speak English) during a short visit to Malta are whisked to Identity Malta’s permit office, where the chartered accountant is allegedly well known, and unashamedly paperwork is processed in record time.

The icing on the cake is a swift introduction to a local bank where VIP treatment is meted out resulting with a quick opening of company or personal bank accounts. With hindsight one recalls that there are millions of euros held by a nominee in name of the dead son of Muammar Gaddafi – currently frozen in Bank of Valletta.

In conclusion, a journalist at the Sunday Independent reported the BOV chief executive saying that FIAU did not investigate the bank nor its executives in connection with the ex-Libyan dictator's business – more developments on the story may be revealed once the police conclude interrogations.

<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/>

Confronting Islamism

August 9th, 2015

This summer, as the British parliament take its annual break from business, civil servants are hard at work preparing an unprecedented assault on Islamist extremism. The UK's Counter-Extremism Strategy, to be published in the autumn, will set out a detailed analysis of the threat posed by Islamism to the nation, and what the British government intends to do to combat it. This plan of campaign promises to be the first effort by a world power to tackle domestic Islamism head-on. There is to be no shilly-shallying around the nature of the danger facing Britain – and, by extension, the civilized world – nor the multi-faceted effort that needs to be taken to counter and conquer it.

The groundwork for Britain's forthcoming Counter-Extremism Strategy was laid in a seminal speech delivered on July 20 by the UK prime minister, David Cameron. Uniquely among world leaders who have spoken on this issue, Cameron addressed his Muslim co-citizens candidly. Without beating about the bush, he asserted that condemning violence was not enough. Too many ordinary decent Muslim citizens, he maintained, while thoroughly disapproving of violence, allowed themselves to be seduced by Islamism to the extent of subscribing to intolerant ideas which actively promote discrimination, sectarianism and segregation, thus fostering the very climate in which extremists can flourish. It was clear from what he said that Cameron places high on his list of "intolerant ideas" the mindless anti-Semitism that is endemic to Islamism.

Also, said Cameron, ideas "based on conspiracy: that Jews exercise malevolent power; or that Western powers, in concert with Israel, are deliberately humiliating Muslims, because they aim to destroy Islam. In this warped worldview, such conclusions are reached – that 9/11 was actually inspired by Mossad to provoke the invasion of Afghanistan; that British security services knew about 7/7, but didn't do anything about it because they wanted to provoke an anti-Muslim backlash."

Cameron pointed out that the backgrounds of those convicted of terrorist offences often reveal that they were first influenced by what some would call non-violent extremists.

"It may begin," he said, "with hearing about the so-called Jewish conspiracy, and then develop into hostility to the West and fundamental liberal values, before finally becoming a cultish attachment to death. Put another way, the extremist world view is the gateway, and violence is the ultimate destination."

The adherents of this ideology, he claimed, are overpowering other voices within the Muslim debate, especially those trying to challenge it.

To counter this threat Britain intends to confront, head on, the extreme ideology that underpins Islamism – the cultish worldview, the conspiracy theories, and its malevolent appeal to the young and impressionable. The new strategy will involve exposing Islamist extremism for what it is – a belief system that glorifies violence and subjugates its people, not least Muslim people – and will contrast the bigotry, aggression and theocracy of Islamism with the liberal, democratic values that underlie the Western way of life.

A key part of the subsequent action programme will be to tackle both the violent and the non-violent aspects of the creed. Cameron was clear that this would mean confronting groups and organisations that may not advocate violence, but which do promote other parts of the extremist narrative.

“We’ve got to show that if you say ‘violence in London isn’t justified, but suicide bombs in Israel are a different matter’, then you too are part of the problem. Unwittingly or not,” he said, “and in a lot of cases it’s not unwittingly, you are providing succour to those who want to commit, or get others to commit to, violence.”

He insisted that condemning a mass-murdering, child-raping organisation was not enough to prove that a person was challenging the extremists. The new strategy would demand that people also condemn the wild conspiracy theories, the anti-Semitism, and the sectarianism.

Acknowledging the religious aspect of Islamist extremism has proved a stumbling block for many previous attempts to combat the problem. Britain’s Counter-Extremism Strategy will face the issue fairly and squarely. As Cameron pointed out, simply denying any connection between the religion of Islam and the extremists doesn’t work, because these extremists are self-identifying as Muslims.

“They all spout the same twisted narrative, one that claims to be based on a particular faith. It is an exercise in futility to deny that. And more than that, it can be dangerous.”

To deny that Islamism has anything to do with Islam, claimed Cameron, means that the critical reforming voices from within the faith are disempowered – religious heads who can challenge the scriptural basis on which extremists claim to be acting, and respected leaders who can provide an alternative worldview that could stop a teenager’s slide down the spectrum of extremism. The UK’s Counter-Extremism Strategy will empower, support and fund those individuals and organisations from within the Muslim community that are dedicated to countering extreme Islamism and its nihilistic philosophy.

Although an independent Counter-Extremist Project has been running in the US for the past year, and a European counterpart, [CEP Europe](#), was launched in Brussels on June 29, the only government to have grasped the nettle is the UK’s.

Britain alone seems to have taken on board the extent of the threat facing the civilized world, to have analysed the issues coolly and hard-headedly, and to be in the

process of devising a comprehensive strategy for countering it. In short, the UK is seizing the initiative in the major struggle of our times – a war to the death between a liberal way of life, rooted in parliamentary democracy and the rule of law, and those intent on destroying those values and substituting their own narrow and extremist version of sharia, not shared by the majority of the world's Muslims. It is a war the world can, must, and surely will, win.

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/>

EDITORIAL: Who threatens America most?

14 AUGUST 2015

In what order does the Obama administration rank the biggest external threats to America's national security? The short answer: It depends on whom and which agency you ask.

Official opinion is all over the lot, a sign of a rapidly changing world, different bureaucratic priorities and confused thinking. Which raises this question: If officials cannot agree on what the most pressing threats are, how can they develop the right strategies and properly allocate resources?

Start with America's military establishment. Last month, the Pentagon put Russia at the top of its threat list. Gen. Joseph Dunford Jr., the incoming chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, branded Russia the No. 1 "existential threat" in his confirmation hearings, followed by North Korea, China and the Islamic State, or ISIS. Other top military officials have said much the same thing in testimony before Congress.

There is no doubt that relations with Russia have taken a dangerous turn, given Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine and reckless exercises over NATO airspace. The Pentagon is also chafing under budget cuts, and rattling Cold War sabers may be a good way to pry more money out of Congress. But the idea that Russia is America's top threat is not shared by other important players in Washington, including the White House. General Dunford's comments reflected "his own view and doesn't necessarily reflect the view of — or the consensus — analysis of the president's national security team," Josh Earnest, the White House spokesman, said last month.

Last September, Mr. Obama declared that "at this moment, the greatest threats come from the Middle East and North Africa, where radical groups exploit grievances for their own gain." But which groups — Al Qaeda or ISIS?

For some time, the administration has considered Al Qaeda the more serious threat because it carried out and is still planning attacks on American territory while ISIS was mainly focused on seizing territory in Iraq and Syria to establish a caliphate. Many terrorism and counterintelligence officials still hold that view and have warned that Qaeda operatives in Yemen and Syria are exploiting the chaos in those countries to lay the ground for much more damaging "mass casualty" attacks.

But on July 22, the FBI director, James Comey, declared ISIS to be the bigger threat. He told the Aspen Security Forum he was particularly worried about ISIS' social media campaign, which it uses to prey on "troubled souls" in the United States to either join the fight in Syria or Iraq or launch attacks in America. In February, James Clapper Jr., the director of national intelligence, cited threats in cyberspace, including from Russia, as the chief danger, followed by counterintelligence, terrorism and weapons

of mass destruction.

To some extent, the different emphases result from different responsibilities. The FBI has the lead role in preventing attacks in this country. The Pentagon has forces deployed against Al Qaeda and ISIS and is responsible for defending America's NATO allies if Russia becomes aggressive with the Baltics or other allied countries.

While military commanders seem persuaded that the chance of war with Russia (the only country whose nuclear arsenal is on par with the United States) has increased, the risk is only slightly higher than before. The administration remains committed to working with Moscow when possible to achieve peaceful outcomes, as it must.

Gen. Martin Dempsey, the departing chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said in the 2015 national military strategy, "Today's global security environment is the most unpredictable I have seen in 40 years of service." A formidable challenge for the administration is deciding what its priorities should be.

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Activists want more transparency in counterterrorism efforts

August 7, 2015

BOSTON (AP) — Muslim groups and civil rights activists across the nation Thursday called for greater transparency in a program by President Barack Obama's administration that's aimed at countering homegrown terrorism.

Organizers, including representatives from the American Civil Liberties Union and the Council on American-Islamic Relations, spoke out at coordinated events in Boston, Los Angeles and Minneapolis — the three cities where the Countering Violent Extremism program is being piloted.

Among their concerns is that organizers still refuse to share basic information about what the localized efforts will actually look like. They also object to federal authorities conducting invitation-only discussions about the program, referred to as CVE, to the exclusion of dissenting groups.

Last week, more than 200 academics, terrorism experts and government officials gathered for a conference in Arlington, Virginia, sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice. It was titled "Radicalization and Violent Extremism: Lessons Learned from Canada, the UK and the US."

Among the attendees and panelists were leaders of the CVE efforts in the pilot cities, according to a copy of the program provided to The Associated Press.

"This isn't a community-based process," Nadeem Mazen, a city councilor in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and board member of the local CAIR chapter, said during a small gathering in front of Boston City Hall. "This is a whole different level of federally coordinated assault on our civil liberties."

The Homeland Security Department in Washington said it was committed to participating in the CVE effort "at all levels," noting that Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson had personally taken part in meetings in communities across the country.

"As we have often said, CVE efforts are best pursued at the local level and we will continue to support efforts across the country toward this goal," said spokeswoman Marsha Catron.

In Los Angeles, opponents announced Thursday they've filed public records requests of federal, state and local authorities in an effort to obtain all available information about the operation of the program in California. Boston opponents said they, too, were crafting a similar request.

In Minnesota, opponents speaking at a Somali marketplace delivered a message shared by their Boston and Los Angeles counterparts — that Muslims are being unfairly targeted by the pilot programs.

"We believe it is morally and democratically repugnant to single out a community based solely on its religious affiliation and ethnic makeup," said Kassim Busuri, education director at the Da'wah Institute in St. Paul, speaking at an event.

Family members of some of the men who face trial for conspiring to go to Syria to join the Islamic State group were in attendance and said they were opposed to the CVE program.

Minneapolis' pilot program focuses on its sizeable Somali community, which has been a target for terror recruiters in recent years, first for al-Shabab and now for the Islamic State group.

U.S. Attorney Carmen Ortiz in Massachusetts, whose office is coordinating the Boston program, promised to take steps to bring her program out of the shadows.

In a statement, she said organizers will be holding publically noticed events focused on violent extremism and prevention strategies. They'll also be launching a competitive grant process for about \$216,000 in federal funds dedicated toward Massachusetts' counter extremism efforts.

But a planned September meeting of law enforcement, community and religious groups involved in the program will assess its progress and their meeting will not be public, Ortiz's office said. However, the meeting minutes will be made public later.

Robert Trestan, who has been involved with the Boston initiative as regional director of the Anti-Defamation League, a national organization that fights anti-Semitism, cautions that it's still too soon to cast judgment on local efforts.

Efforts in Boston are still young, although the Obama administration announced the pilot cities nearly a year ago, he said.

"Some of the questioning is understandable," Trestan said. "But nothing I've seen or participated in has gone anywhere near proposing or suggesting anything close to surveillance, crossing the line of people's civil rights or profiling."

In Minneapolis, supporters of the local CVE initiative — known as "Building Community Resilience" — hastily called a news conference Thursday to explain their work.

They said they've been meeting since the start of the year to develop youth programs, such as mentorships and sports competitions, as well as mental health services. They said they hope to release more details in about a month.

The group has also signed a memorandum of understanding with Minnesota's U.S. attorney stating the pilot project will not be used to conduct surveillance on the Somali community or build intelligence databases.

"We have nothing to hide," Jibril Afyare, one of the volunteer organizers, said.
"Nothing to be afraid of, except kids being recruited."

<http://www.shepherdstownchronicle.com/>

Yemen

Yemen Alert: Seize the Chance to End the Conflict

12 Aug 2015



REUTERS/Faisal Al Nasser

The military tide has turned against Huthi fighters in Yemen. Emboldened by recent gains, the Saudi-led coalition has started to push into the centre of the country from Aden, the southern port city taken in mid-July, and may even attempt to capture the capital, Sanaa, further north. To avoid a new and potentially more deadly phase of conflict, the Huthis should honour the concessions they made through UN mediation efforts in Muscat on 8-9 August, including among others a militia withdrawal from cities in accordance with Security Council Resolution 2216 (14 April). In turn, their opponents should accept a compromise that produces an immediate ceasefire, negotiations over the details of an orderly withdrawal of militias from cities and a return to a Yemeni political process to settle outstanding questions.

Widespread conflict broke out in March, when political talks collapsed and Huthi fighters, supported by military units affiliated with former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, marched south, forcing President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi to flee to Riyadh. Saudi Arabia, which views the Huthis as Iranian proxies, promptly launched an air campaign and imposed a de-facto naval and air blockade to roll back the advances and reinstate Hadi's government. By the end of June, the Saudi-led coalition, which includes nine other, mostly Arab states, had slowed Huthi advances in the

south and east, where domestic opposition to them is strongest.

In July, the stalemate was broken. A combination of new ground troops (both Yemeni and coalition), an injection of Western-made armoured vehicles and intense airstrikes overwhelmed the overextended Huthis in Aden. On 15 July, anti-Huthi fighters captured the international airport there and within two weeks consolidated control over most of the city. Since then, they have wrested control of surrounding governorates from war-weary Huthis, who are thinly spread and ill at ease in areas far from their northern home territory. This has changed the war's psychology and inspired opposition forces to intensify their fight against the Huthis farther north in Taiz, Ibb, Sanaa and Marib provinces.

There is now legitimate fear that the Saudi-led coalition may be tempted to forego a political compromise and seek a more decisive military victory throughout the country, including the capital. Coalition actions indicate that this is its plan. But a military campaign in the northern highlands and particularly Sanaa would likely open a longer, more deadly military phase, compound a catastrophic humanitarian crisis and push Yemen further away from any chance of a durable political solution.

The coalition is on the verge of repeating the Huthis' principal mistake: rapid expansion into inhospitable terrain difficult, if not impossible, to hold. Coalition victories thus far are predominately in the south and east, majority Shafai (Sunni) areas where resistance to the Huthis is strongest. The northern highlands are very different. There the Huthis have a popular base and familiar, mountainous terrain conducive to prolonged guerrilla warfare. They have many enemies as well, of course, especially among tribal families such as the Ahmars and affiliates of the Sunni Islamist party Islah. But latent opposition to the Huthis from other groups, such as Saleh's General People's Congress Party (GPC) and affiliated military units, is tempered by widespread resentment of the Saudi-led military campaign, President Hadi and Islah. Coalition attempts to support anti-Huthi fighters in this multi-layered environment are more likely to fuel a thriving war economy than to produce a decisive military victory against a well-entrenched local militia.

Instead of prompting more violence, recent coalition gains could and should serve as a pivot to a political solution. The UN special envoy has already met with Huthi and Saleh's GPC representatives in Muscat to discuss a package deal that would facilitate a durable ceasefire and a move to political negotiations. Significant progress was made, with the Huthis for the first time showing willingness to treat seriously their opponents' demands, including withdrawal from cities and working within the framework of Security Council resolutions. The changed balance of power on the ground seemingly has produced an opportunity for compromise, but only if the Hadi government in Riyadh and its Saudi backers seize the moment.

Several steps are needed so that this opportunity is not lost:

1. The Yemeni government in Riyadh and the Saudi-led coalition should support pro-

gress made in Muscat and work with the UN envoy to secure a framework plan that provides, among other things, for an immediate ceasefire, withdrawal of militias from cities and a return to a political process, all in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2216.

2. Both sides should then publicly agree to the UN-brokered framework. Some components of a plan will take longer than others to negotiate and implement, but combatants can do two things at once to build confidence:

release political prisoners; and

withdraw militias from the southern city of Taiz in accordance with a locally brokered plan to return control of the city to the local security committee. The Taiz plan is ready and could be a model for other cities, including Sanaa.

3. As soon as a ceasefire is in place, the Huthis should remove heavy weapons from the Saudi border and Saudi Arabia should expedite aid to the northern Yemeni governorate of Saada.

4. The permanent members of the UN Security Council, especially the U.S., which has been providing weapons and other support for the coalition war effort, should clearly back the UN envoy's efforts to broker a political solution in line with Resolution 2216 and be willing to adopt a follow-up resolution supporting the political process and criticising any side that rejects a compromise backed by the UN envoy.

The diplomatic breakthrough in Muscat, for which Oman deserves much credit, is a real opportunity to arrest Yemen's downward spiral. The war has already cut deeply into the social fabric, exacerbating and militarising political, sectarian and regional divides in ways that make reconciliation more challenging. Over 4,000 have died in the fighting, and the country is on the brink of man-made famine. If this opportunity is missed, the next round of violence promises to be more devastating, not only in the north, but also in the south and east, where a range of anti-Huthi fighters – from southern separatists to al-Qaeda – are heavily armed and likely to turn on each other.

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/>

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