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# Defence Against Terrorism Review

The Propaganda of ISIS/DAESH through the  
Virtual Space

**Luna SHAMIEH & Zoltán SZENES, Ph.D.**

Understanding the Principles of Terrorism  
Risk Modeling from Charlie Hebdo Attack in Paris  
**Gordon WOO, Ph.D.**

Boko Haram in Context: The Terrorist  
Organizations's Roots in Nigeria's Social History  
**János BESENYŐ, Ph.D. & Ádám MAYER**

26/11 Terror Attack in India: Measuring the  
Operational Cost  
**Balasubramaniyan VISWANATHAN**

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*Editor's Note*

Dear Defence Against Terrorism Review (DATR) readers,

It is always a pleasure for us to reach each of you by publishing a new issue, and we are happy to introduce the Summer 2015 issue (10th issue). However, taking into account the recent grievous terror incidents within and outside of Turkey, we once again underline the significance of defence against terrorism on both national and international levels. The changing environment and accordingly changing description of terrorism brought us to a point where we need to use a new term to define people engaging in terrorist activities. We intend to find a term which does not blame or accuse any group, region or religion. What we offer instead of terms like 'Islamist extremist', 'radical Islamist groups' etc. is 'extremist claiming affiliation with Islam', in short *ECAI*. In this issue, we have four articles covering different dimensions of terrorism from the different regions around the globe.

The issue starts with Luna Shamieh's and Dr. Zoltán Szenes's article titled "The Propaganda of ISIS/DAESH through Virtual Space". Luna Shamieh is a Ph.D. candidate and Dr. Zoltán Szenes is a professor at the National University of Public Service, Hungary. In their article, they discuss the usage of social media and cyberspace by ISIS/DAESH. They elaborate how ISIS/DAESH uses social media channels like Twitter and Youtube mostly, first of all, to send their initial message, to recruit new members, to justify their actions by abusing religion, and all in all to show how much strength they have. In addition, the authors analyze the ability of ISIS/DAESH to conduct cybercrimes by using the cyberspace.

The second article of this issue titled "Understanding the Principles of Terrorism Risk Modeling from the Charlie Hebdo Attack in Paris" is written by Dr. Gordon Woo. Dr. Woo works as a catastrophist at Risk Management Solutions (RMS) and as an adjunct professor at the Institute of Catastrophe Risk Management at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. His article is a very good example of terrorism risk modeling, in which he uses a recent and eminent terror incident, Charlie Hebdo attack as a case study. In the article, he identifies eight principles regarding to the Charlie Hebdo attack in terms of its maximum impact leverage, its publicity impact, target substitution, choice of weaponry, post-attack response, longevity of the *ECAI* problem, and so forth.

The third article of this issue titled "Boko Haram in Context: The Terrorist Organizations's Roots in Nigeria's Social History" is written by Dr. János Besenyő, Lieutenant Colonel at Hungarian Defence Forces, and Ádám Mayer, instructor at the Department of International and Comparative Politics at American University of Nigeria. As a starting point, they state that the efforts and the endeavors of the Nigerian government in countering Boko Haram threat, which they argue, has already failed. In their article, they propose the withdrawal of Western backing for the local Fulani leaders, who rule the region according to the local 'law of the land', as the source of legal jurisdiction. Also, they underline the need for the modernization of Nigeria in line with democratic values in order to create alternatives to the current environment which enables terrorists to act smoothly.

The issue ends with Balasubramaniyan Viswanathan article titled "26/11 Terror Attacks in India: Estimating the Operational Cost". Mr. Viswanathan is a Research Scholar at the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies at Gurunanak College, India. In his article he discusses that due to the focus on the etiological aspects of terrorism and the little respect given to the other aspects prior to the 9/11 attacks, studies on the financial issues of terrorism is at infancy level. After the 9/11 attacks and within the consequent fight against terrorism concept, disrupting the finances of terror groups gains importance. It is essential for policy makers, law enforcement and military bodies, and scholars to understand the finance networks of such

organizations and their cost overheads. Mr. Viswanathan, in his article examines the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, which is considered as an equivalent of 9/11 attacks for India, within the financial aspect of terrorism and attempts to find an estimated cost for such a terrorist attack.

As a last word, we all should bear in mind that terrorism has no nationality, no race, no language, no region, and no religion. It is a problem of all nations, all people living in this world. Hence, the responsibility to counter terrorism is an international even a global task. Before concluding, we would like to convey our regards to the valuable authors, vigilant referees, and our precious readers, all of whom make this journal worth publishing. We hope you all enjoy the content of this issue and looking forward to meet you on the 11<sup>th</sup> issue.

Atasay ÖZDEMİR, Ph.D.  
Editor-in-Chief

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## **The Propaganda of ISIS/DAESH through the Virtual Space**

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**Abstract:** *The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS/DAESH) is orchestrating well through the information and communication technology in its different means. Despite the counterattacks it is still remaining strong in the YouTube, Facebook and most extensively on twitter. Through the analysis of their websites and the different social media tools, the ISIS/DAESH is able to send its messages to the world, not only its aggressiveness, but also its positive impact on people, as they perceive it. They aim with their messages to recruit more people, to justify their attacks religiously, and to show their strength virtually and on the ground. The ISIS/DAESH is able to post their messages and images through their supporters and those whom they recruit, and they are able to publish through institutions merely established for supporting the ISIS/DAESH. All publications were developed with well-established techniques with emotional messages that touch all those who look for the rule of religion.*

**Keywords:** *ISIS/DAESH, Information and communication technology, social media, propaganda, terrorism*

## **Introduction**

The military sector as in all other sectors has developed through the advancement of technology. The use of advanced tanks, aircrafts and other weapon systems has been affected from one side. Another advancement included the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the sector. And the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS/DAESH) is indeed finding their way through using the ICT to express their opinions and spread their message worldwide.

The ISIS/DAESH has used a wide range of technology in their strategy implementation. They have used social media including Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. The ISIS/DAESH has its own websites that defines their strategy and accomplishments; a strategy that has clearly recognized the shift in the warfare nature.

The effective use of social media has brought to the ISIS/DAESH efficient results and accomplishments, especially in recruiting youth worldwide. Social media has helped the ISIS/DAESH disseminate their views and stories across societies around the globe. This has been the case in a changing world where social media has become the commonplace for communication, exchanging information, and for most political activism.

The new media sources have thus changed the means with which information is moving throughout the communities. It has increased the speed of disseminating information; additionally, it has permitted more transparent and effective information that it is supporting and competing with formal media. This new source is characterized by ease of access and possibility to communicate widely in an open sphere, and the ability to communicate and provide public discourse even with anonymous individuals and groups.

This paper aims at presenting and analyzing the means with which the ISIS/DAESH was able to send its messages and to maintain its virtual existence throughout the different means. The article analyzes the messages that are delivered through their videos, twitter accounts, Facebook accounts, and through their websites. Finally it makes conclusions about the experience of using modern communication technology by the ISIS/DAESH.

## **Literature Review**

Terrorism groups have always extensively used information and communication technology in their attacks and operations. They have used them for planning, command control and communication. Additionally, ICT has been used to obtain and disseminate information to impact their people and their enemies. Moreover, technology has also been used for intelligence gathering. They have been used to gather information about members affiliated or against the group. This includes gathering information from emails, social media users, and other means that are technically possible. ICT has also been used for propaganda through sending messages, engaging in cybercrime and solicitation of financial and human resources.

In order to achieve the desired impact and reach a wide range of people, terrorism has used social media to help them share their ideas in a convenient effective and accessible manner. They

are using websites, emails, and chat rooms for disseminating their views to wider audiences. Hence, they are heavily investing in producing audio, video and imagery messages.

The very early adapters were the Chechen rebels<sup>1</sup>. The presence of terrorist and other extremist groups online has risen sharply over the last two decades. According to the American sources<sup>2</sup>, in 1998 less than half of terrorist organization had websites. The real concern started after September 11, through Al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda is considered the ‘first guerilla movement’ to transform the war from an era of physical battles to Cyberspace<sup>3</sup>. Although Al-Qaeda utilized the cyberspace for their activities including training, communication, and suicide bombing information, it was relying on the less advanced Web platforms<sup>4</sup>.

The ISIS/DAESH represents a new era in utilizing the cyberspace for terrorism as it has developed and using a highly sophisticated media strategy<sup>5</sup>. Their media strategy is in compliance with their strategy for existence *baqeya wa tatamadad*, ‘remaining and expanding’; a strategy that inflicts damage in the areas they control to inflict fear on their adversaries. In June 2014, the ISIS/DAESH entered the global conflict and started its use of social media and cyber security worldwide<sup>6</sup>. One major method they used was the hacking of websites. After the assassination of the Charlie Hebdo for instance the group hacked the websites of two French towns and replaced the website with a black page and a message. One of the messages sent were: ‘The ISIS/DAESH Stay *Inshallah*<sup>7</sup>, Free Palestine, Death to France, and Death to Charlie’<sup>8</sup>.

Several countermeasures have been taken towards terrorism operations including ISIS/DAESH active utilization of the ICT sector. One main measure taken included suppression of the activities; several chat rooms were closed, websites were blocked, and emails hacked. Another countermeasure is again the intelligence gathering to help identify the enemy’s resources, which helps in their attacks against them. The European Union for instance is just setting up a special police force for this purpose<sup>9</sup>. Other counter measures that are usually used include the battle of ideas by confronting the others’ discourse.

<sup>1</sup> James Lewis, “The Internet and Terrorism. Proceedings of the annual meeting” *American Society of International Law*, 99, March 30 – April 2 (2005), available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25659982> (accessed 08 January 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Carol K. Winkler, Cori E. Dauber (Eds), *Visual Propaganda and extremism in the online environment* (US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2014) available at <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1213> (accessed 30 March 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Steve Coll, Susan Glasser, “Terrorists Turn to the Web as Base of Operations. *Washington Post*, (2005), available at [http://msl1.mit.edu/furdlog/docs/washpost/2005-08-07\\_washpost\\_www\\_weapon\\_01.pdf](http://msl1.mit.edu/furdlog/docs/washpost/2005-08-07_washpost_www_weapon_01.pdf), (accessed 28 June 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Laura Ryan, “Al-Qaida and ISIS use Twitter Differently. Here’s How and Why. Islamic State’s online efforts reveal how extreme the group is, even among extremists” *National Journal*. (10 October 2014), available at <http://www.nationaljournal.com/tech/al-qaida-and-isis-use-twitter-differently-here-s-how-and-why-20141009> (accessed 28 June 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Yasmin Tadjdeh, “Government, Industry Countering Islamic State’s Social media Campaign”, National Defense Industrial Association, (2014b).

<sup>6</sup> James P. Farwell, “The Media Strategy of ISIS” *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, 56(6) (2014).

<sup>7</sup> Meaning: If God wills.

<sup>8</sup> David Barrett, “French Websites targeted by Islamic State hackers”. *The Telegraph*. (2015), available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11334514/French-websites-targeted-by-Islamic-State-hackers.html> (accessed 09 January 2015).

<sup>9</sup> Ivett Körösi, “Online against the Islamic State” *Népszabadság* (Budapest, 23 June 2015).

Despite all countermeasures taken to defeat the operability of the ISIS/DAESH technology, the ISIS/DAESH is able to find ways through. It has started working using open source diaspora. Facebook's rules include the possibility of banning pages or groups according to content; however twitter does not have this rule. Twitter does not screen content but does prohibit the publication of violent or pornography imagery<sup>10</sup>.

This article is based on analyzing accessed websites and accounts while conducting the research; especially that many sites and accounts were banned during the analysis process. It is mainly focused on sites that are primarily developed by the ISIS/DAESH leaders and supporters.

### **Research Methodology**

The methodology used to conduct the desired analysis was based on Google search to help identify the sites and means used by the ISIS/DAESH. Snowball sample was used to identify the sample of sites and sample YouTube videos analyzed. Both Arabic and English sites were analyzed for the purpose of this research. During the research a twitter account was also established in order to follow ISIS/DAESH users and the content of the followers and the following accounts were analyzed.

The research was based on accounts, videos and sites that are produced by the ISIS/DAESH itself or by affiliates of the State. None of the videos presented by other members, international organizations, or media groups were taken into consideration.

### **Research Results**

#### **The ISIS/DAESH websites**

ISIS/DAESH has developed several websites including formal and informal ones; some are developed by the ISIS/DAESH members and others are developed by supporters. Most recently the websites have had blocking problems and many stopped operating. However, some websites are still operating. The following websites were identified and analyzed for the purpose of the research:

#### **Jihad Platform Media<sup>11</sup>**

This site is a platform that provides the opportunities for members to exchange information and ideas about the so-called Jihad and the Islamic Sharia. The number of comments available within this site is 440,499 and the number of members is 3,188.

This site works as a forum where participants have the chance to join through a username and a password, and provide feedback and raise questions to the rest of the members.

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<sup>10</sup> Jacob Axelrad, "Islamic State Militants turn to alternative social network in wake of ban from Twitter", *Christian Science Monitor* (accessed on 21 August 2014).

<sup>11</sup> Jihad Media Platform – an interactive website for the ISIS/DAESH available at <https://www.alplatformmedia.com/vb/showthread.php?t=70116> (accessed 09 June 2015).

The main page of the site includes the latest news and publications. While the subpages include incidents and breaking news, other regions, analysis and articles page, foreign languages, Sharia section, Archive of Osama Bin Laden. The incidents and breaking news page includes an archive of the news along with an up-to-date follow up. The highest number of viewers of these incidents got to 1,316 for a photo report for journalists who work against Islam.

The other regions page include the subpages Arabian Peninsula, Somalia, Caucasus, Eastern Turkistan, Global supporters of Sharia, the environs of Jerusalem, Islamic Maghreb, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and other regions. This page presents personnel working in those different regions, along with accomplishments and perceived vision within such regions.

The 'Analysis and Articles' page includes the platform for military training including training videos and manuals, which they call 'cross demolition series'. These include subjects like explosives, science of explosives, forming and producing explosives (liquid and solid), along with methods to prepare specific types of explosives. Viewers of these sections reached to 54,200 viewers. This page provides online training and instructions for members.

Other subpages include a section with other languages including English, French and German. Some sections were news and articles written in English, while others are merely translation of the other sections in the before-mentioned languages. There are subpages about Islamic religion education called the 'Sharia Section': This includes a Holy Quran forum, Prophet Mohammad life forum, and other religious related forums. The archive of Osama Bin Laden, on the other hand, presents photos and speeches of Bin Laden.

#### Islamic State Archive<sup>12</sup>

This is an informal website that presents the archive of the ISIS/DAESH which includes a mirror standby website (<http://dawla-is.appspot.com>). It is considered a documentary platform that provides an archive of the following: speeches of the leaders, publications of the ISIS/DAESH media institutions, heroes (martyrs) stories and profiles, episodes of videos, messages of the land of battles, and general publications.

'Speeches of the leaders and the *Ameer*<sup>13</sup>' section provides speeches from the ISIS/DAESH leaders to the Islamic community and the international community as well. Some speeches are produced with a voice background of shooting and/or ISIS/DAESH music and songs, other speeches starts with Holy Quran recitation and others presented the ISIS/DAESH accomplishments during the speech. The leaders in this subtitle include: Sheikh Abu Musaab Zarqawi (27 videos), Sheikh Abu Hamza Al-Muhajer (fourteen videos), Sheikh Abu Omar Baghdadi (21 videos), Sheik Abu Baker Baghdadi (six videos), and Sheikh Abu Mohammed Al-Adnani (twenty videos).

Al-Furqan is one of the official media production institutes of the ISIS/DAESH. Under its subtitle includes all publications of the Al-Furqan Institute for media production; in this section 62 videos are presented with very high production quality. Based on the video analysis eight themes

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<sup>12</sup> Informal website for the ISIS/DAESH – with archive of publications available at <http://dawla-is.appspot.com> (accessed 09 June 2015).

<sup>13</sup> The Arabic word for the prince, commander, or head of state in the Islamic countries, it is the title of honor of the descendants of Muhammad.

were identified throughout the products: stories of the heroes (the martyrs), justification of the violence used by the ISIS/DAESH, exhibition of military attacks and operations, festivals of the ISIS/DAESH citizens about the accomplishments, messages for different reasons and different targets, training and preparations and windows on the battle land.

For recruiting new personnel the ISIS/DAESH uses quotes from the Holy Quran to encourage other members to join and be part of the brotherhood as they call it. These messages are uploaded in different languages targeting both locals and internationals, focusing on two major recruitment strategies: religious and the glory of revenge beheading and terror. Other messages or themes are direct messages to the World including the United States and their allies. The political messages informing the world they should fear the capability and faith of the ISIS/DAESH warriors and knights. 'Knights of the martyrism series' section presents the series of nine videos that manifested the story of the martyrs who kill themselves in the name of God. Each video starts with a truck driving towards a building that has a cross, which is then exploded, while shouting *Allah Akbar*<sup>14</sup>, which resembles the explosion of the church by the group. Then a picture of the martyr and his profile is presented, and finally the story of the attack he participated in. Another subtitle is *The Living Word Uprising Intafada Hayya*. This includes a series of videos that again presents martyrs and their profiles. The videos start with a plate full of blood; where the logo of the ISIS/DAESH washes out all the blood on that plate. The series presents words that remained live from martyrs after their death. This is the reason why the subtitle of this series is called 'living word'.

Presentation of victorious battles also plays very important role in recruitment of fighters. 22 videos are dedicated to the land of battles. All videos start with a message to all people to join the brotherhood so that all will be under the name of God and the name of the prophet since this is the way to wisdom and belief. The videos present different incidents and interviews with the aim to expose the Islamic belief and recruit personnel in accordance to those beliefs. Some videos also reflect the impact of Islamic Sharia on the daily life, including education and courts. All of this should be judged and lead by the ISIS/DAESH leaders who are the ones knowledgeable and the ones who can decide who can do what, when and how. Therefore ISIS/DAESH with its leaders and structure is a Sharia enforcement tool and the leader (*Al-Ameer*) of the Nation (*Ummah*) has the final say. Different videos all in Arabic language present different messages and values.

In a video showing the courts work of the ISIS/DAESH. Two tribes in Iraq were fighting, and a man from the first tribe was killed. The ISIS/DAESH interfered, they went to the second tribe asking about their expectations (receiving money or killing the killer). The tribe requested that the killer be killed. Hence, the ISIS/DAESH approached the first tribe, and asked that according to Sharia this killer should be killed, and in order to prevent bloodshed, the ISIS/DAESH should be the one executing the judgment. Hence, they killed the killer, did the appropriate prayers in front of the family, and buried the body.

Then they interviewed the families asking about the difference between the Iraqi court and the ISIS/DAESH system to get the desired answer:

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<sup>14</sup> Meaning: God is great.

1. Speed in court
2. Justice
3. Stopping bloodshed, since courts will not kill the killer

Publication Series of the 'Al-Itisam Institute for media production' is representing another topic. In this series, 21 publications start with Holy Quran recitation, then a video to show their power including trainings and real attacks and operations using innovative methods of presentations. These videos identify the believers loved by God and the disbelievers as per the ISIS/DAESH. According to the videos the ISIS/DAESH leaders have the right to judge believers from disbelievers, prosecute the cases, and kill them. Judging, prosecuting, and killing are all rights granted for the leaders; a right they claim is mentioned clearly in the Holy Quran. Hence, their source of power is the Islamic Sharia. Another major message sent through these media products is the establishment of an Islamic state (a state governed by Islam/Sharia) with extended boundaries to reach the globe. In general, the videos work explicitly on the ISIS/DAESH nation branding based on two factors power and religion.

Al-Hayat Media Center Publications shows eleven videos in English which are generally reveal the vision of the ISIS/DAESH that has no boundaries to reach the globe while using the strategy of so called Jihad and power that is justified by the Holy Quran and the Islamic values, and governed by the ISIS/DAESH leaders who have the power for law enforcement. The website also includes publications of the media offices and 151 videos of the ISIS/DAESH accomplishments.

The analysis of the videos available along with the different products posted on the websites, exhibits the ISIS/DAESH's clear and consistent communication strategy that complies with its military strategy. This strategy uses technology as part of the psychological war causing fear and disparity amongst people in the areas they control, thus causing pandemonium that reaches the globe. Throughout their posts and publications the ISIS/DAESH prevail themselves as a brotherhood group where everybody can belong despite ethnicities. Hence, they believe that warriors have no limits, all should fight regardless of the age, the ethnicity or gender, each has his specific role. Moreover, they present the ISIS/DAESH as borderless that will extend from the Levant region towards the whole world. This is in conformity with the ISIS/DAESH Military Strategy Remaining and Expanding (*Baqia wa tatamadad*). ISIS/DAESH believes that their state will maintain due to the fact that it has been established through the martyr blood; that is blessed and will help sustain the state.

The discourse also justifies and glorifies the violence and extremism used by the ISIS/DAESH. In their messages they claim that fight (*Jihad*) is a message declared by God; hence, the leaders have the authority and power for law enforcement. They justify violence because the reason is sacred. They believe it is a war between faith (*Iman*) and Disbelief *Kufr*, since ISIS/DAESH people are the believers and the rest are disbelievers. They also deem death and martyrism the way to God and the eternal life. Therefore, they conceive so called *Jihad*, killing of disbelievers, conduct martyr operations to achieve their strategy and to disseminate the word of God, *Allah*<sup>15</sup>. They also justify violence because the result is a sustained organized state. This policy leads to decrease in crime in the locations where the ISIS/DAESH has taken control over. The Islamic courts help resolve all disputes and judge upon all crimes in accordance to the Islamic Sharia and in the least possible time.

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<sup>15</sup> Allah is the Arabic word of God and despite the fact that Muslims believes God is the same for Judaism, Christianity and Islam; however, they refuse to use the name God in English scripts.

### The ISIS/DAESH Blogs

- The State of the Islamic Caliphate<sup>16</sup>:

The posts on this blog were last updated on 07 January 2015, and are hosted on the Wordpress.com. The blog has no information or reference as to whom is administrating the site, or whom does it represent. Number of visitors reach 196,781. The structure of the page is advanced with significant routine updates provided. It includes an introductory page that presents the latest updates on the site including breaking news and videos. The news in this section ranges from incidents in the battlefields to announcements from the leaders. Another subtitle is the ‘News of the Islamic World’ which is categorized by the provinces: Jerusalem, Islamic Maghreb, international religion supporters, Somalia, Caucasus, Iraq, Pakistan, East Turkistan, Khorasan, and other regions. Another page allows members to interact directly and express their opinions and discuss relevant aspects is the ‘Monotheism and Jihad Forum’.

A richly endowed library of diverse publication tools and diverse fields is also a subpage available in the website. This includes books, messages, articles, and encyclopedias. Several books are available for downloading; examples of these books are: Raise Motivation to face the Nations, A message to the *Tawhid* and Jihad *Ummah*, and others. This section also includes the weekly Journal ‘*Hasad Al-Jihad* Accomplishments of the Jihad’. Moreover, the page includes the ‘*Jihad Encyclopedia*’, this is a security encyclopedia that is comprised of subjects related to basics of security, national security and how to combat national security, inspection and how to face inspectors, and intelligence and security.

The website includes several other sources aiming for recruitment and promotion of the ISIS/DAESH ideology. The site also provides the opportunity to follow the administrators on Twitter with the account @dawlatalislam. However, it is not clear who are the administrators of the blog.

- The Islamic State Blog<sup>17</sup>:

This blog is administered by the ISIS/DAESH supporters hence it reflects the perception of the administrators. This is not an up-to-date blog, nor is it actively used; posting started in August 2013, and latest blogs were added in June 2014. Number of visitors is not shown, but number of comments ranges from zero to two comments on each post.

The blog structure is comprehensive including all necessary components to comply with the ISIS/DAESH strategy. It is specifically apparent in the two pages: ‘Islamic state warriors’ that presents some stories of martyrs and ‘Militant acts’ that discusses five militant operations. This blog re-emphasizes the nation branding of power through violence and religion. The blog also presents a ‘Go To’ Link that has several sub-links presenting internal communication strategy and external strategy that they call enemy’s media.

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<sup>16</sup> Blog of the ISIS/DAESH with no information about the administrators available at <https://akhbardawlatalislam.wordpress.com> (accessed 10 June 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Islamic State blog- administered by ISIS/DAESH supporters available at <http://the-islamic-state.blogspot.hu> (accessed 10 June 2015).

In general all websites and blogs reflect the same communication strategy sending clear consistent messages. They all promote the same Nation branding; power and religion. All tools focus on the brutal picture of the ISIS/DAESH people, which is justified by the second factor that is religion. Consequently, the ISIS/DAESH conducting psychological war, bringing disparity and horror before starting any battle; that is ending the battle and winning before it actually starts. The strategy targets all nations, speaking in different languages and addressing different targets regionally and internationally. This strategy is based on the ISIS/DAESH military strategy remaining and expanding *Baqiya wa tatamadad*.

The ISIS/DAESH has been successful in utilizing those websites and blogs effectively and successfully. The main purpose of using those websites is to recruit fighters, either directly through direct messages from the ISIS/DAESH people, or indirectly through encouraging messages of allegiance. This recruitment is based on propagandizing the Islam encouragement of joining the ISIS/DAESH, and the benefits gained including adventurous combats for youth. Moreover, they are successful in disseminating their views to a wider audience through the different languages adopted. Additionally, through the different training manuals provided the ISIS/DAESH is capable of using the websites in the planning and operations and for implementing their brutal missions.

Apparently, the websites and blogs utilize the most recent and updated technologies and strategies. The ISIS/DAESH has the ability to manage rapid changes of internet addresses while having mirror websites. They also use platforms and forums for discussion working as portals, which give a chance for interactive use of the technology. This also helps in securing users and securing messages sent.

### **The ISIS/DAESH Use of social media**

As an alternate, and due to the increase blocking of the ISIS/DAESH Facebook accounts, the ISIS/DAESH has turned to the use of the open source diaspora, which gives the user full control of their details and content they share.

The ISIS/DAESH supporters are suspended regularly from the use of social media; hence, it is not easy to allocate or analyze these supporters. However, those supporters are developing their own ways to maintain their presence and to build backup and mirror accounts.

Despite all of the countermeasures, the ISIS/DAESH is able to maintain and disseminate their word through social media. Tadjdeh mentioned that the ISIS/DAESH use a popular trending hashtag as a means of “infiltrating conversations by adding that hashtags onto one of their unrelated tweets”<sup>18</sup>. They can also mass tweet using their own designated hashtags, which gets them to trend”. This section provides an analysis of the use of social media including Facebook, twitter, and YouTube.

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<sup>18</sup> Yasmin Tadjdeh, “Government, Industry Countering Islamic State’s Social Media Campaign (updated)”, National Defense (2014a), available at <http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/archive/2014/December/Pages/GovernmentIndustryCounteringIslamicStatesSocialMediaCampaign.aspx> (accessed 28 June 2015).

- **Use of Facebook**

The authors have used the Facebook search tools to identify pages related to ISIS/DAESH looking for names related to ISIS/DAESH including IS, ISIS, and *Daesh*<sup>19</sup>, and words related to the *ISIS/DAESH* slogans. Two types of usage were available; these include groups and pages. Groups and pages usually differ in the privacy, the audience, and communication.

Table (1) below lists the identified groups found during the research project despite the blocking taking place.

Table (1): The ISIS/DAESH Facebook Groups Identified

| Groups  | Number of members | Group Type   |
|---|-------------------|--------------|
| 'Harakat Daesh' Daesh Movement                                    | 396 members       | Public group |
| Arab Daesh Forum  | 207 members       | Public group |
| Daesh Organization Section 4/11                                   | 54 members        | Closed group |
| The affiliates of Ameer Abu Baker Bagdadi Alqurashi               | 15 members        | Closed group |
| Media cell for the Islamic State remaining                        | 310 members       | Closed group |
| Group 'Power Islam' NETWORK                                       | 2,289 members     | Closed group |
| The Ummah Jihad to get to the top                                 | 3,256             | Closed group |
| Supporting returnees after deleted for the females (akhawat) only | 657               | Closed group |

Apparently, most of the groups are a closed group, which means that only those members whom the administrators deem appropriate and affiliated to the ISIS/DAESH are accepted. The researchers were denied to get access to the closed group despite the several attempts to join through different names. However, the number of group members is relatively low; the highest was 3,256 for the group 'The Ummah Jihad to get to the top'. It is worth to note that when a group exceeds a certain size then some features are limited. Hence, it is even better to create small groups, which is appears in Table (1) above.

Additionally, interesting pages were also identified during the research. Table (2) below lists the pages identified.

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<sup>19</sup> Daesh is the Arabic acronym of ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Levant "Sham")

Table (2): The ISIS/DAESH Facebook Pages Identified

| Page                            | Number of likes | About page   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Mujahido news                   | 19 likes        | News about mujahidon   |
| Al-shabab Mujahid               | 3 friends       | NA   |
| Harakat al shabab al mujahedeen | 2               | NA   |
| Abu-Baker Baghdadi              | 20 followers    | NA   |
| Islamic State Updates           | 2,044 likes     | Providing up to date news and discussion regarding ISIS/DAESH and other related assorted material. |
| Islamic State                   | 6 likes         | NA   |

Number of friends and number of likes are very limited in the pages identified due to the fact that these pages were only developed recently as Facebook is active in disabling accounts that might cause threat or support groups in the violent and criminal behavior. Facebook says it clearly “We remove content, disable accounts, and work with law enforcement when we believe there is a genuine risk of physical harm or direct threats to public safety”<sup>20</sup>. The ISIS/DAESH is facing regular banning and blocking on Facebook. As a result the ISIS/DAESH established a similar platform 5elafabook.com hosted on a domain located in Egypt<sup>21</sup>.

With the limited capacity to analyze the accounts it was apparent that those pages repost videos and pictures of the ISIS/DAESH operations again glorifying extremism and violence under the religion umbrella. Despite the continuous countermeasures of Facebook, the ISIS/DAESH is firmly contending and rallying their efforts to boost their strategy.

- **Use of Twitter**

In order to analyze the use of twitter, the author followed a convenient sample of 2000 twitter accounts<sup>22</sup> in order to analyze the content of each. The sample is chosen according to the following:

1. Twitter account that claims directly affiliation with and support of the ISIS/DAESH
2. An account that is followed by the ISIS/DAESH supporter
3. An account with all tweets in favor of or supports the ISIS/DAESH
4. Active accounts with at least one tweet per day

The analyzed<sup>23</sup> twitter accounts are categorized according to the following:

<sup>20</sup> Facebook page – Facebook policies available at <https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards/>

<sup>21</sup> <http://cyberwarzone.com/> (accessed 28 June 2015).

<sup>22</sup> The maximum number of twitter accounts the system allows, though 1767 accounts blocked the user after a while or has been suspended through twitter.

<sup>23</sup> All tweets were analyzed in the period 07-09 April 2015.

Table (3): Categories of Twitter Accounts

| Category                  | Percentage | Average number of followers | Maximum number of followers |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Supporters                | 59%        | 970                         | 1,792                       |
| Soldiers in the caliphate | 32%        | 1,133                       | 2,117                       |
| Leaders in the caliphate  | 8%         | 2,132                       | 5,400                       |
| Others                    | 1%         | 2,791                       | 8,834                       |

The names displayed on the twitter accounts include names of leaders, the ISIS/DAESH (including abbreviations like IS, ISIS, or other abbreviations in Arabic), associates or supporters of the ISIS/DAESH, remaining and expanding,<sup>24</sup> names of leaders, names with reference to regions, Caliphate or *Chilapha*, combinations of numbers and letters, Jihad and other relevant terms, and names of affiliated institutions.

The content of the tweets of each category was analyzed. The supporters' accounts are mainly sending support messages to the ISIS/DAESH and to other twitter accounts after being suspended. Table (4) below illustrates the messages sent by the supporters.

Table (4): Messages sent by the Supporters

| Message Category   | Percentage |
|--|------------|
| Support Statements to ISIS/DAESH and the leaders               | 24%        |
| Holy Quran quotes  | 23%        |
| Support of ISIS/DAESH twitter accounts                         | 22%        |
| Pictures and videos of ISIS/DAESH accomplishments              | 21%        |
| Readiness and willingness to participate in the ground attacks | 9%         |
| Others   | 1%         |

Soldiers in the caliphate sent messages that are mainly presenting accomplishments on the ground. Table (5) below identifies the messages categories identified.

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<sup>24</sup> The slogan of the ISIS/DAESH.

Table (5): Messages send by the Soldiers of the Caliphate

| Message Category  | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| Pictures and videos of ISIS/DAESH accomplishments                                       | 57%        |
| Support of ISIS/DAESH twitter accounts  | 24%        |
| Support Statements to the State and the leaders   | 10%        |
| Holy Quran quotes   | 7%         |
| Messages supporting the expansion of the ISIS/DAESH to the Region or to the whole world | 1%         |
| Others  | 1%         |

Leaders in the caliphate display encouraging messages to be part of the ISIS/DAESH. The categories of messages identified in the leader’s accounts are identified in Table (6) below. These leaders declare they are leaders of certain geographic locations.

Table (5): Messages send by the Soldiers of the Caliphate

| Message Category   | Percentage |
|--|------------|
| Pictures and videos of ISIS/DAESH accomplishments  | 55%        |
| Support of ISIS/DAESH twitter accounts   | 20%        |
| Support Statements to ISIS/DAESH and the one ISIS/DAESH leader (encouraging statements to participate in the ISIS/DAESH) | 12%        |
| Holy Quran quotes  | 12%        |
| Others   | 1%         |

The other important twitter accounts that were identified in Table 3 included accounts of technical support, financial support and fundraising, media accounts, media publication institutions, and educational accounts.

Four twitter accounts were identified that provides technical support. The support provided are mainly Information Technology (IT) support, which provided information on means to secure email accounts, secure twitter accounts, and support to hack other accounts and emails. Table (6) below identifies the accounts identified with the names displayed and the content in each.

Table (6): Accounts that provide technical support

| Twitter account | Name                                 | Following | Followers | Content available   |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|---|
| @SECURITY_PRO   | Islamic State Technician (in Arabic) | 208       | 2,381     | Providing answers to technical advices requested by the followers<br>Providing advices how to secure accounts<br>Providing lessons on technical issues<br>Providing training manuals (ex. 'Security in using smart phones' and 'how to create encrypted e-mail <sup>25</sup> ') |
| @IT_PRO3        | State's Technician (in Arabic)       | 54        | 2,791     | @IT_PRO3's Tweets are protected. Only confirmed followers have access to its tweets and complete profile.   |
| @T33chnical     | The Technical Expert                 | 103       | 1,778     | @T33chnical's Tweets are protected. Only confirmed followers have access to its tweets and complete profile   |
| @ica_is5        | The IS Hacker                        | 49        | 1,633     | Provides technical support on hacking accounts<br>Providing statistics, information and news about hacking international sites  |

Other types of twitter accounts included those demanding financial support to the ISIS/DAESH. Table (7) below identifies the account identified with the name displayed and the content.

Table (7): Accounts demanding financial support

| Twitter account                  | Name                | Following | Followers | Content available  |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|--|
| @AL_T_O_R (previously @altor103) | Al-Tour Institution | 5         | 2,611     | Demands for financial support providing the contacts <sup>26</sup> |

Media Accounts were active accounts of the ISIS/DAESH; eight accounts were identified. These focus mainly on news and breaking news of the ISIS/DAESH and its accomplishments. The accounts are active in posting videos and pictures along with links to news and the ISIS/DAESH relevant sites. Table (8) below identifies the accounts identified with the names displayed and the content in each.

<sup>25</sup> How to build encrypted email: providing examples including proton mail, TUTANOTA, and HUSHMAIL available at <https://dump.to/Emailencrypted> (accessed 08 April 2015).

<sup>26</sup> Website for donating to the ISIS/DAESH available at [https://twitter.com/AL\\_T\\_O\\_R/status/582632737334530048](https://twitter.com/AL_T_O_R/status/582632737334530048) (accessed 04 August 2014).

Table (8): The ISIS/DAESH Media accounts

| Twitter account | Name  | Following | Followers | Content available   |
|-----------------|---|-----------|-----------|---|
| @ra_00002       | Islamic Raqa Network  | 486       | 2,129     | News and breaking news  |
| @asetuml        | Strangers for media   | 237       | 2,901     | Breaking news<br>Videos and links<br>Other media publications <sup>27</sup>                       |
| @casaress_ase   | Battlefield<br>Media: Islamic<br>State  | 188       | 1,271     | Videos and links<br>Call to support the ISIS/<br>DAESH accounts Islamic<br>information and quotes |
| @aljabhaa1      | Media Front: the<br>formal account for 'the IS'<br>media front to support the | 41        | 909       | Videos and links<br>Alerts and<br>announcements   |
| @kskssmnzn      | News of the<br>Caliphate State  | 1,964     | 1,159     | News and breaking news<br>Videos Publications of<br>the ISIS/DAESH                                |
| @NH9FC          | Iben-altayeb: blog to<br>expose the liars who<br>distort the image of IS      | 1,624     | 1,897     | News and breaking news<br>Links to videos <sup>28</sup>   |
| @daily_taqarer  | Daily report  | 5         | 1,005     | News and reports about<br>the ISIS/DAESH  |
| @forsan_NH      | Fursan Publication<br>Workshop  | 2         | 8,834     | News and breaking news  |

Other than the media accounts media institutions that works on publishing the ISIS/DAESH videos were also identified. Five accounts declared that their main mission is publishing videos. Table (9) below identifies these accounts.

Table (9): Media Publication Institutions

| Twitter account                | Name                                      | Following | Followers | Content available  |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------|-----------|--|
| @khelafa_media77 <sup>29</sup> | Al-khelafa institute<br><br>(Media Front) | 199       | 3,534     | Videos and links of their<br><br>own publications<br>Other media publications<br>Breaking news |
| @khelafa_media88               | Al-khelafa institute<br><br>(Media Front) | 193       | 3,299     | Videos and links of their<br>own publications.<br>Other media publications.<br>Breaking news   |

<sup>27</sup> Announcements are displayed in Arabic, German, or English.

<sup>28</sup> Videos include YouTube that posts messages for different sectors (one includes a message to the deaf using sign language available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PECSeeFkCI>)

<sup>29</sup> Official website of the ISIS/DAESH - the Khelafa media website offering all publications available at <http://www.khelafamedia.com/> (accessed 09 June 2015).

|                            |                           |    |       |   |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|----|-------|---|
| @bentymeia01 <sup>30</sup> | Bentymeia for Media       | 1  | 1,165 | Posts of their publications (videos and articles) announcements                       |
| @__ghareeb__               | Stranger (Ghareeb)        | 62 | 1,309 | News Ghareeb publications   |
| @MD_Battar                 | Al-Battar Media Institute | 5  | 2,209 | Posts published in the batter blog <sup>31</sup><br>The account in English is @AENBMF |

Another important category of the ISIS/DAESH accounts is the educational accounts. The sample included two of those. The accounts provided training manuals and lessons that focus on military lessons techniques, and weapons. Additionally, the lessons focus on religious matters from the ISIS/DAESH point of view and its relevance to so called Jihad and war. The messages revealed made sure to link between the so called Jihad and the Islamic religion. Table (10) below identifies the two accounts with the names displayed and the content in each.

Table (10): Educational Accounts

| Twitter account | Name               | Following | Followers | Content available                            |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|--|
| @nshrat_jj      | Jihad Publications | 140       | 2,527     | Military lessons<br>Islamic Religion lessons |
| @HADEHY_SABELY  | This is my way     | 0         | 385       | Religious lessons                            |

Despite the counter measures the ISIS/DAESH is able to maintain their active existence on twitter. The supporters in many cases revealed the number of times their accounts were suspended. An analysis of the number of suspension of accounts as declared by the supporters reveals the insistence and capability of the users to remain. Table (11) below lists the frequency of suspensions of twitter accounts.

Table (11): The Suspension cases of the accounts

| Range of times twitter accounts were suspended | # of accounts that claimed reestablishment after suspension |
|--|---|
| 1-10   | 298   |
| 11-20  | 75  |
| 21-30  | 18  |
| 31-40  | 10  |
| 41-50  | 3   |
| 51-60  | 2   |
| 61-more  | 4   |

<sup>30</sup> The alternative account is @bentymeia.

<sup>31</sup> Battar Publication Institute, includes publications produced by the Institute available at <http://al-battar-media-foundation.blogspot.com/?m=0> (accessed 04 August 2015).

Despite the fact that the ISIS/DAESH strategy communication is decentralized with different users and agents spreading out the word, it is clear and consistent with the other means of communication and within twitter itself. The ISIS/DAESH eulogizes violence justified by religion; two factors that are apparent in the different messages. The different twitter accounts post religious quotes that encourage so called Jihad. Twitter accounts provided links of videos and articles of the ISIS/DAESH; also, it is effective in promoting new twitter accounts after being deleted.

The ISIS/DAESH uses twitter for recruiting new member from the region and the globe through addressing messages of encouragement in different languages. According to the analysis, several accounts were established for educational reasons, some educating on combat and others with religious education. Another important educational training included IT training on how to secure own account and own data and how to hack others accounts. Twitter accounts are being established repeatedly despite the countermeasures taken, some were reiteratively establishing new accounts after twitter has suspended more than 61 previous accounts. Users are now hiding their identities using encryption tools and using coded names.

Twitter states it clearly “you may not publish or post threats of violence against others or promote violence against others”<sup>32</sup>; however, twitter does not “proactively monitor content” (Reuters, 2015) as is the case in Facebook. However, the several countermeasure efforts were able to block barbarous scenes and accounts of the ISIS/DAESH. Accordingly the ISIS/DAESH threatened to physically assassinate twitter’s management and bring the war to the real world as they promised.

- **Use of YouTube**

Many videos are uploaded on YouTube through ISIS/DAESH, however, so many of those are blocked. A sample of 123 unbanned videos was analyzed for the purpose of this study. An analysis of these videos revealed different categories and themes provided by the ISIS/DAESH through YouTube; these include: training, messages by detainees, killing of detainees, organization of daily life activities, recruitment and pledging support, and propaganda films. This section provides detailed analysis of these themes.

Training of militias videos show the graduation of the militant groups and samples of the outdoors trainings they receive. The videos are uploaded through the media center in the region from which they received the training. Not only the videos show the trainings provided but also aim at presenting the capacities, capabilities and resources owned by those forces. An example of those trainings is ‘Islamic State Training Camp and the war lion’s camp’<sup>33</sup>. The songs provided on the background of the trainings include encouraging messages for so called Jihad such as the following:

- “Go to the War battles, the dignity is gained through the battles, and don’t say my family my parents or my children”-Sees in the death good omen
- Face all enemies of God wherever they are

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<sup>32</sup> Twitter website, “Twitter policies” available at <https://support.twitter.com/articles/18311-the-twitter-rules>

<sup>33</sup> Training of militias: ISIS/DAESH training camp available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0tyg1HD5mU> (accessed 12 June 2015).

- Jihad is the way for sustainability
- You will pass through but on a river of blood to get to the best world

The trainings provided include theoretical that was basically based on the religious aspects and the Holy Quran studies and practical trainings that focused on wrestling bout and fighting techniques. An illustrative sample of those trainings is the TelAfar training camp in Nineveh<sup>34</sup>. This type of training and videos reiterates the focus of the ISIS/DAESH on violence and religion.

Another type of videos is the messages by detainees, which provide speeches, directed the governments of the detainees' countries and to the international world. These messages generally try to prove that life in the ISIS/DAESH is secure for all who are affiliated and in allegiance with the ISIS/DAESH. It also tries to emphasize that the governments of the countries the detainees come from cannot be entrusted even for their own citizens. One major series of messages analyzed is the series of messages from the British Detainee John Cantlie. Table (12) below lists the different episodes posted with the messages sent from each.

Table (12): John Cantlie Series of messages uploaded on YouTube

| Episode | Source  | Message released   |
|---------|---|--|
| intro   | <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HJ_r1Bfqf3Q">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HJ_r1Bfqf3Q</a>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction of himself</li> <li>2. The fact that the Western media is manipulating the reality</li> <li>3. The strength of the ISIS/DAESH</li> <li>4. Introduction of the stories to come (upcoming episodes)</li> </ol>  |
| 1       | <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Di0bI1Prkbc&amp;bpctr=1421097417">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Di0bI1Prkbc&amp;bpctr=1421097417</a> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approach to war without learning lessons from previous war</li> <li>2. Persuasive approach to lure the public</li> <li>3. US government has no public sign that it has any awareness what its enemies are fighting war</li> <li>4. The US was not able to destroy the ISIS/DAESH in Iraq before, while now ISIS/DAESH is muc stronger.</li> <li>5. Intelligence failed to anticipate the ISIS/DAESH</li> </ol> |
| 2       | <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCsewwKravk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCsewwKravk</a>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Islamic did not kill the Christian and Yazidi women and children</li> <li>2. The ISIS/DAESH does have a vision they created an autonomous and functioning Khalifet</li> </ol>  |
| 3       | <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQVvRAob6fc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQVvRAob6fc</a>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The strength of the ISIS/DAESH with many years of experience, they are patient and self reliant</li> <li>2. Public support from the US is not possible, except when they are concerned about national security</li> <li>3. The murdering of the journalist will help ISIS/DAESH whatever the reaction is.</li> </ol>   |

<sup>34</sup> Training of militias: for youth at TelAfar training camp available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xroBASTyBd4#t=114> (accessed 12 June 2015).

|             |   |   |
|-------------|---|---|
| 4           | <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fY_iBYSg2qw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fY_iBYSg2qw</a> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meteoric rise of the ISIS/DAESH</li> <li>2. Western Media are so keen for the public to support unwinnable war</li> </ol>   |
| 5           | NA  | NA  |
| 6           | <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nidEJB_3ioo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nidEJB_3ioo</a> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Failed raid to rescue the detainees</li> <li>2. Not through negotiations with the ISIS/DAESH</li> <li>3. But through military options(the first option for the US and the UK)</li> </ol>  |
| A final one | <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RN3ktXbLzLY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RN3ktXbLzLY</a> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sophisticated live report with a change in his appearance (previously as a prisoners wearing orange with no suggestion of where the videos were taken)</li> <li>2. From Mosul</li> <li>3. Denial American bombardments of Kobani has succeeded in pushing the militants back</li> <li>4. Showing that life is in business as usual</li> </ol> |

Cantlie starts all his programs in the same manner; he talks in a very calm way, criticizing the US and the British foreign policy.

Cantlie says “I am the British citizen abandoned by my government and a longtime prisoner of the Islamic State... join me again in the next program”

Cantlie pointed out how the ISIS/DAESH had negotiated the release of other European prisoners. However, while the British and Americans refused to make any negotiations, Cantlie started his series by identifying himself as being abandoned, and there is nothing else to lose. He started with a series as a detainee but the last part as a reporter to the ISIS/DAESH in the field. His messages were in compliance with the messages revealed by all the different videos published by the ISIS/DAESH. His basic message was that violence and extremism was the way through to establish the ISIS/DAESH; however, living under their control is something different because he was enjoying security and peace despite the fact that he is not part of the people. He also pointed to the fact that although airstrikes are being used; however, they are not attacking and they are not trying to set him free.

Another important set of videos that has been reposted repeatedly throughout the mass media is the execution of detainees. There are two main categories of detainees being killed: these are local and regional people and international personnel especially journalists. The two categories were dealt with differently. Videos related to killing the locals in the region showed the full massacre and the killing process without cutting off any parts of the process.

However, for the internationals it was different as is the case in the videos of executing the international journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff. Both videos were structured similarly; they begin with a clip of President Obama talking about US foreign policy. The videos are taken in similar landscape (desert area). Both incidents showed the same positioning and same way of dressing

for both the killer and the killed. It shows the start of the beheading and then cuts off; it then shows footage of the body and separated head position on the desert floor. Both videos received much attention within the international community and the media production experts but the International community condemned the aggressive beheading.

The media production experts have their doubts about the reality of those videos. Analysts mentioned several factors that truly doubts if the killing took place, many mentions it is part of the propaganda. Doubting factors include the fact that the beheaded did not show any fear before or during the killing, which is not possible given that those people are waiting for a brutal attack. Another doubting factor is that the beheading process was cut off, though the ISIS/DAESH has shown without any humanitarian sense the full killing processes in other videos for other people. Some even doubted that the beheaded people are not the real persons.

True or not the message to fear ISIS/DAESH has been sent and made clear. One main message revealed is displaying the ISIS/DAESH strength, and that the international community should fear this state. Hence, it proclaims that the ISIS/DAESH is ready to face and confront the international community even if takes killing citizens brutally in front of the whole world. Again, these videos glorify the violence, terrorism and extremism. It shows that airstrikes are not doing any good to defeat ISIS/DAESH or to free the detainees; hence, it could be explained that they are calling for a further step. They are calling the Western World to start the ground battle as no defeat will be possible through airstrikes.

The portrait of aggressiveness and extremism is also revealed through the theme they widely present and distribute, which discusses the ‘ISIS/DAESH accomplishments’. Several types of accomplishments were identified. One type includes Islamic groups joining the ISIS/DAESH (example Ansar al-Islam joins IS / Islamic State (Eng subs) Clip from Upon the Prophetic Methodology<sup>35</sup>), another type is members joining the ISIS/DAESH (example of ‘Saddam AlJamal<sup>36</sup>’) and the battle accomplishments type (example ISIS siege on Samarra June 2014<sup>37</sup>).

Other videos promote the security and organization of the ISIS/DAESH. It provides an insight about the organization of the daily life activities in the ISIS/DAESH. It includes a promotion of how the ISIS/DAESH personnel assist in traffic regulations<sup>38</sup>, it also provides details about food security as is the case in the food market project<sup>39</sup>. It presents the educational services provided by the ISIS/DAESH and the fiscal policy as in the case of establishing the ISIS/DAESH currency<sup>40</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> ISIS/DAESH publications: Accomplishments of successful recruitments of new groups, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uvIiz1rvDt4> (accessed 13 June 2015).

<sup>36</sup> ISIS/DAESH publications: Accomplishments of successful recruitments of new members available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yozchiRZfw> (accessed 14 June 2015).

<sup>37</sup> ISIS/DAESH publications: Winning new battles available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SBwiKw-ntY> (accessed 13 June 2015).

<sup>38</sup> ISIS/DAESH Publications: Mechanisms of organizing daily life activities available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1EKVx1S1-E> (accessed 13 June 2015).

<sup>39</sup> ISIS/DAESH Publications: Mechanisms of organizing daily life activities available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KL2AAwqL0A> (accessed 13 June 2015).

<sup>40</sup> ISIS/DAESH Publications: Mechanisms of organizing financial transactions available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGCivrh8Mp0> (accessed 13 June 2015).

Distinct types of videos published by the ISIS/DAESH that summarizes and elucidates their strategy are the propaganda films named 'Flames of War'. These came in different parts. Part one<sup>41</sup> came to discuss the establishment of the ISIS/DAESH and they confronted the words of Bush and Obama when they mentioned the war was over; however, ISIS/DAESH mentions that the flames only started to intensity. This is considered a welcoming message for the Western world to send the ground troops, where they say: "The fighting has just begun... Our victory is in our survival". The other parts of the videos mainly call for recruitment and a performance show of their accomplishments showing the brutality and aggressiveness of their warriors.

The action film of the ISIS/DAESH is 'The road to Caliphate'<sup>42</sup>. This video shows the way to change the world, their way to enforce the desired change. The film shows their accomplishment, the defeat of the 'crusaders', and the unity of the *Ummah*.

Several propaganda messages were presented through the different videos uploaded. One main message is that ISIS/DAESH presents the one identity for all Muslims. The one identity includes the one religion, unified thoughts and unified region. This was apparent through abandoning their passports to identify all as one<sup>43</sup>.

Another important message revealed is the picture of the normal life in the areas controlled by the ISIS/DAESH. It revealed that all conditions of normal life are available, and all people in those areas accept the ISIS/DAESH control and are satisfied with the imposed rules, the conditions, and the Sharia. An example that illustrates this propaganda is the video in Russian with translation to Arabic and English: 'a visit to Mosul'<sup>44</sup>.

The strength of the ISIS/DAESH against the others in different languages<sup>45</sup> was another major message presented. This was revealed through aggressive videos and pictures that revealed the strength. This is the propaganda that they used to enter the different cities without much resistance in many cases. On the other hand, these messages declared that any aggression against ISIS/DAESH is an aggression against all Muslims and the belief that so called Jihad is the way to dignity an life, and that God will bring them Glory and victory.

These videos were presented in high quality; which illustrates the high capacity of the ISIS/DAESH use of IT, and strong capability. The sites provided different options to access the videos. The content included emotional hymns in the background, with extensive use of Holy Quran recitation as a proof of rightness, use of different languages and translation providing messages to the different nations globally. It is worthy to note that the use of languages was professional, even the characters speaking in English have perfect British or American accent.

<sup>41</sup> ISIS/DAESH publications: Propaganda film – Flames of War: part 1 available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GSvLcc9i5k> (accessed 14 June 2015).

<sup>42</sup> ISIS/DAESH publication: Propaganda film – The road to Caliphate available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LiTBrucjA> (accessed 14 June 2015).

<sup>43</sup> ISIS/DAESH publications: Propaganda messages discussing the identity of the IS available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8hKo9Y2XHkM> (accessed 13 June 2015).

<sup>44</sup> ISIS/DAESH Publications: Propaganda messages in Russian available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBKaPIYKQVI> (accessed 13 June 2015).

<sup>45</sup> ISIS/DAESH Publications: Propaganda messages – messages sent by the IS to the international community in different languages available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CdIrye--dDE> (accessed 13 June 2015).

In general, the ISIS/DAESH has succeeded in utilizing the different forms of social media especially in the twitter and YouTube platforms. They are continuously and effectively using up-to-date tools, new foras, and new platforms with regular advancement and development of each. They are fiercely trying to disseminate information that affects their people and the adversaries, while effectively trying to confront all countermeasures taken. They are using it to motivate their people and to bring fear amongst their enemies. They are even able to gather information about adversaries especially through twitter where they are able to locate enemies, identify them and block them. They are decisively sending propaganda messages for fundraising and recruitment, and they are decisively trying to maintain a nation brand based on extremism through beheading under the umbrella of the right Islam and the right religion.

## Conclusion

Winning the propaganda battle is vital to win the war, and this is a war that the ISIS/DAESH is heavily using and investing in. The ISIS/DAESH is in fact orchestrating their vision through social media. They are using all possible tools to tell the rest of the world they are strong and they are to be feared. They are publishing their messages through different tools and different languages. They are even focusing on western tone and western language. All attacks are live recorded and all are documented and published for the rest of the world to see. Their acts are effectively illustrated through an intensive marketing strategy to win the war with minimal confrontation.

The ISIS/DAESH has used all forms of IT to grasp all parts of the cyberspace for their communication strategy and war strategy. They even started using open-source social network Diaspora in which the content is impossible to remove proving to be the unbreakable guerillas. The ISIS/DAESH has used several platforms with a decentralized system to implement their communication strategy. However, they were sending clear and consistent messages addressing each target differently but still intact and very persuasive.

The ISIS/DAESH strategy was mainly focusing on creating a nation brand, promoting their slogan, and promoting the aims and the desired end result; which were all apparent in all the tools used. The nation branding was simply based on two factors; the first factor is glorifying violence and extremism, which was raised through the beheading and brutal killing. The second factor that justifies the first is religion and the only one religion; where the religious aspect is present in all the tools used and is promoted through quotes from the Holy Quran and the words of *Jihad, Allah Akbar*, etc. The slogan *Baqyia wa tatamadad* is also very much present in all the videos and the messages sent.

The aims and end results are also apparent in their use of cyberspace. The aims includes solicitation of financial and human resources, religious and technical training, disseminating information they deem important that will educate in accordance to their perspective and bring fear amongst enemies. The end result is also identified the one identity, one state and one religion; it is the ISIS/DAESH that is extending to reach the globe with the 'right Islam' governing under their control and supervision and using their judgment.

The ISIS/DAESH has very well established media centers like Furqan Media Center that produces slick videos complete with interviews, graphics, Holy Quran recitation and jihadist hymns in the background, using both Arabic and English subtitles. They are emotional and want to accomplish the desired aims of the ISIS/DAESH.

Several messages are presented through the different IT mechanisms. Mainly, one of the most alarming messages that help in the expansion process is striking fear amongst the people in the region: this helps them control areas easily; when people hear about the massacres, they just flee away. Hence, they focus on inhuman fight showing all the beheading and the aggressive acts they can and are conducting. The messages reveal the strength of the ISIS/DAESH, but also it tells the Western World that they cannot be defeated through airstrikes.

Through the use of IT, the ISIS/DAESH is succeeding in recruiting new members regionally and globally. They use pictures and videos to illustrate the brutality of the Arab regimes that needs to come to an end with the help of both local and global potential members. Their attempts to use religious messages helps recruit people from the region along with attracting any suppressed Islamic in the Western world. Additionally, they use emotional and adventurous messages to attract youth who would want to be part of this adventurous process.

Throughout the different IT techniques, the ISIS/DAESH has focused on a unified image they want to be perceived with. They present themselves as the agent of change in the region and the world; they try to reveal that they will be the source and mean of change regionally and globally. In all their messages they claim that they speak in the name of God and Islam and that they are the exclusive source of religious education and preaching. They are the law and Sharia enforcement driver as they claim, and they are the drivers of social justice. Additionally, they provide the message that they are the champions of the battle and no competitors are able to defeat this force of knowledge wisdom and faith.

The pictures and videos published by the ISIS/DAESH and their supporters were mainly focused on beheading and brutal attacks. However, other pictures showed the impact of Islamic Sharia amongst all daily life aspect and it also revealed some activities related to social security and social justice for all. Moreover, it illustrated their efforts to provide basic services including education and health.

In their use of technology the ISIS/DAESH has achieved successful attempts despite the counterattacks on their different activities. They were able to reach not just the region but the globe as well, since some messages were targeting the local people and others were targeting the globe. They also had messages to reach out in different languages; mainly Arabic, English, and some in French, Spanish, and Kurdish. Analysis of the efforts showed fierce employment of all sorts of social media despite all the blocking and banning of their use, while building support from different regions and amongst different sectors and ethnic backgrounds. They utilized the Cyberspace for their communication strategy but they also used it for the implementation. It is a war strategy and a comprehensive one.

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## **Understanding the Principles of Terrorism Risk Modeling from Charlie Hebdo Attack in Paris**

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**Abstract:** *Learning from an example is one of the most direct ways of achieving understanding of any subject. The principles of terrorism risk modeling are explained in terms of one specific example: the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris on 7 January 2015. Through better understanding of these essential principles, practical insights can be gained in improving terrorism risk management.*

**Keywords:** *Terrorism, Risk, Modeling, Paris, Charlie Hebdo*

### **Introduction**

The principles of natural hazard modeling are based fundamentally on the laws of physics, and may be learned through academic studies or professional training courses. However, there are no academic programs or professional seminars where the principles of terrorism risk modeling may be learned. Academic discourse on terrorism is centered around humanities departments, where political risk briefings are prepared but there is no tradition for quantitative risk analysis. It is hardly surprising therefore that, with the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002, just renewed until 2020, there remains a widespread view that terrorism risk cannot be modeled. Indeed, testimony was given to the American Congress in September 2013 that terrorism risk cannot be modeled. Unless better informed, many in the insurance community assume that the best that can be done is to ask the subjective opinions of a panel of terrorism experts. For those unfamiliar with terrorism risk modeling, such as those new to managing this risk, this inevitably is the default assumption.

Excessive reliance on subjective opinion, however formally elicited using the Delphi method or any other, would never be acceptable for insurance risk modeling of meteorological or geological hazards. Robust and resilient risk modeling requires an underlying conceptual structure, and this must come not from opinion, but from principles that have a mathematical representation. For seismic risk modeling in California, these principles involve seismotectonics, power-law scaling of earthquake magnitudes, etc. However, there are few insurers who could state the relevant principles for quantitative terrorism risk modeling.

To avoid excessive abstraction, one of the best ways to learn the principles of any subject is through an exposition using illustrative real examples. Outside the classroom, the basic principles of hurricane, earthquake and flood risk analysis can be learned and comprehended from the study of any notable event. The purpose of this paper is educational: to explain and teach the basic principles of quantitative terrorism risk modeling, for the first time through one specific recent textbook terrorist event.

On Wednesday, January 7, 2015, the Paris office of the satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo was attacked by extremists claiming affiliation with Islam (*ECAI*). This was recognized by President Hollande as the most serious terrorist attack in France in more than forty years. It is also one of the most significant terrorist attacks in the Western world since 9/11. Indeed, this event has duly been referred to as ‘France’s 9/11’. President Hollande’s response has been compared with President Bush’s after 9/11 and President Clinton’s after the Oklahoma bombing of 1995.

A measure of the singular nature of this event is the global response it has triggered; not only was there an obtrusive heavily armed police security in Paris, but also a popular demonstration of millions throughout France, joined by world political leaders, expressing international solidarity against terrorism. The popular slogan, ‘Je Suis Charlie’, coined spontaneously at a French-style magazine, has echoed around the world.

This article will address this issue as a set of eight principles.

### **Principle A: Macroterror Attacks Leverage Maximum Impact**

In December 1994, the Algerian terrorist group GIA hijacked an aircraft with the aim of crashing it into the Eiffel Tower in Paris. This terrorist plot was thwarted when the plane was stormed by French commandos when it was being refueled in Marseilles.<sup>1</sup> Had this plot succeeded, a change in safety policy over the control of hijacked planes would most likely have prevented 9/11. Two decades later, one of the cartoon drawings capturing the spirit of Charlie Hebdo was of the Eiffel Tower with its slender, pointed tower replaced by a sharpened pencil. This appeared as a tribute on the front cover of the *New Yorker* magazine.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Sancton, “Anatomy of a Hijack, *Time* (June 24, 2001), available at <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,163487,00.html> (last visited 07 July 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Ana Juan, “Solidarité,” *New Yorker* (January 19, 2015), cover page, available at <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/01/19> (last visited 2 July 2015).

A central principal of RMS quantitative terrorism risk modeling is that terrorists seek to maximize damage, subject to the constraints of counterterrorism security measures. What is valuable to Western society is also valuable to terrorists to damage or destroy. There are various loss metrics: the casualty toll, destruction of property, economic loss, and damage to iconic symbols of society. A strike against the Eiffel Tower would be a strike at the heart of the French Republic. President Hollande emphatically declared that “very foundation of our society which has found itself under assault.”<sup>3</sup>

Fundamental to the quantitative modeling of terrorism risk is the distinction between occasional but spectacular ‘macroterror’ attacks for which the frequency is tightly constrained and controlled by counterterrorism action, and lesser ‘microterror’ attacks which may occur as commonly and sporadically as serious gun crimes.

The Charlie Hebdo attack counts as a macroterror attack, not because of a high casualty toll in excess of 50 or a large economic loss in excess of \$1 billion,<sup>4</sup> but because of the priceless iconic value to French democracy of freedom of the press, which the terrorists, themselves French citizens, sought to suppress. The terrorists’ objective was openly expressed in their public acclamation outside the scene of the crime that they had killed not just the editor-in-chief, but Charlie Hebdo itself.<sup>5</sup>

Out of several dozen major plots, this stands as the only successful macroterror attack in France since 9/11. This is a statistic that reflects very well on the professionalism and dedication of the counterterrorism forces and judiciary in France. Microterrorism and lone wolf attacks are much harder to control. There are numerous microterror attacks in France each year, typically linked with separatist movements in Corsica and Brittany.<sup>6</sup> There have also been some lone wolf ECAI attacks. In March 2012, an ECAI, Mohammed Merah, launched a gun attack in Toulouse targeting Jews and soldiers, which left seven dead and five injured. On May 25, 2013, just three days after the brutal killing of a British soldier on a London street by an ECAI, a French soldier was stabbed in Paris by a convert to Islam who had been radicalized.

The earlier opportunist firebombing of the Paris offices of Charlie Hebdo in November 2011 counts just as a microterror arson attack, because the property and contents damage from the Molotov cocktail were narrowly confined, there were no casualties and the publication continued with the editorial team unharmed and defiant. However, the wholesale assassination of the editorial committee of Charlie Hebdo, including some of France’s leading political cartoonists, ranks with the assassination of senior political figures or prominent public officials as a macroterror attack that has very widespread societal impact. In asymmetric warfare, where terrorists have a minuscule fraction of the military capability of nation-states, terrorists seek to leverage such assets as they have to create the biggest impact. The Charlie Hebdo attack was a prime example of terrorist leverage.

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<sup>3</sup> Francois Hollande, speaking at the 45th World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, Davos-Klosters, Switzerland from 21 to 24 January 2015. World Economic Forum New Release (23 February 2015), available at <http://www.weforum.org/news/french-president-hollande-calls-global-response-extremism-and-terrorism> (last visited 5 July 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Gordon Woo, *Handbook of Science & Technology for Homeland Security* (Wiley, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> “Vigipirate à son plus haut niveau”, *Le Monde* (7 January 2015).

<sup>6</sup> *World Terrorism*, (James Ciment, ed., Sharpe, 2011), pp. 224-227.

However the insurance loss was very low and the attack had no negative effect on the Paris Bourse. As with all the previous successful spectacular terrorist attacks against the Western alliance since 9/11, substantial property damage and economic loss were not the motivation behind the attack in Paris. Ultimately, terrorism is about coercion through fear and intimidation. One way this can be delivered is through an assassin's bullet. Hardening of targets against possible terrorist attack is expensive.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, the indirect economic impacts of a persistent terrorism campaign can be very onerous. In September 2013, the head of Al-Qaeda, Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri, urged ECAI to carry out more attacks like the April Boston bombing, which can trigger huge economic expenditures on extensive counterterrorism measures, and so 'bleed America'<sup>8</sup>.

### **Principle B: Publicity Impact is Key to Targeting**

The British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, introduced the term 'oxygen of publicity' to describe the opportunist use of hijackers and IRA terrorists to publicize their political causes.<sup>9</sup> To maximize the impact of a terrorist attack, a terrorist target should be of sufficient value to Western society so as to create a large stream of domestic and international publicity if attacked. Terrorist organizations use such publicity as advertising to inspire their followers around the world, raise funding and enlist new recruits. Impressionable young Muslims, marginalized and discriminated in their home countries, may be enticed by the perceived success of the ECAI community in promoting so-called Islamist ideals and Sharia law.

The RMS terrorism model has used international name recognition as a crucial factor in prioritizing target locations. This is in contrast with a theory espoused by some terrorism analysts, which hypothesizes that terrorists will target towns in the middle of nowhere so that everyone will be fearful of an attack.<sup>10</sup> This never happened during the IRA campaign on the British mainland, where IRA attacks were heavily concentrated in the major English cities.<sup>11</sup> There were no attacks in the countryside, so that farmers would be fearful of the IRA. Terrorists leverage their greatest impact by focusing attacks on the key centers of political and economic life.

According to this theory, the threat gradient across the US should be quite flat, i.e. the risk in Iowa is not so different from the risk in Massachusetts. From Bali to Casablanca, Mumbai to Sydney, this theory has been discredited on every continent by the catalog of actual terrorist events and plots since 9/11. In the Western alliance, Madrid, London, Boston and now Paris have been attacked. All have prominent international name recognition.

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<sup>7</sup> John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart, *Terror, Security and Money* (OUP, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> Ellie Buchdahl, "Al-Qaeda Calls for Fresh Wave of Terror Attacks Inside U.S. to 'Bleed America Economically,'" *Daily Mail* (13 September 2013), available at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2419911/Ayman-Al-Zawahiri-Al-Qaeda-leader-calls-terror-attacks-America-boycott-U-S-goods-bleed-America-economically.html#ixzz3fElhQ6aP> (last visited 7 July 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Margaret Thatcher, Address to American Bar Association, (London, 15 July 1985).

<sup>10</sup> See, e.g. Gregory Bennett, *Cross-training for First Responders* (CRC Press, 2010); see also Eric Lipton, "Come One, Come All, Join the Terror Target List," *New York Times* (12 July 2006), available at [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/12/washington/12assets.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/12/washington/12assets.html?_r=0) (last visited 7 July 2015).

<sup>11</sup> See Tim Pat Coogan, *The IRA* (Roberts Rinehart, 1994).

### **Principle C: Target Substitution Displaces Terrorist Threat**

The RMS terrorism risk model was designed to embody the key game theory principle of target substitution: terrorists will attack the softer of two similarly attractive targets. This is equivalent to a basic law of the natural world: predators will seek out weak members of a prey population. Unlike natural hazards, all terrorist targeting is relative, not absolute. The earthquake risk to one building is not dependent on the earthquake risk to a building across town. This may not be true of terrorism. A change in the security of a hotel across town can affect the threat level at other hotels. Amman, Jordan, where a number of prominent hotels have been attacked by Al-Qaeda, exemplifies this threat predicament. Accordingly, it is not possible to assess the likelihood of one risk being targeted without taking into account the other risks that might also be targeted. This can bias the unstructured elicitation of target likelihoods from security experts.

This principle of target substitution can explain much about terrorist targeting, in particular the recent pattern of terrorism in France. It can also be used to forecast future terrorism risk there. First, a broader European perspective is instructive. In countries that have not censored the publication of blasphemy, the sources of these publications have become the prime terrorist targets. For ECAI, there is zero tolerance for blasphemy. Failure to appreciate this is a perilous form of ‘mindblindness’, the inability to sense what is in the mind of others.<sup>12</sup>

In Copenhagen, the Jyllands-Posten newspaper that published cartoons of the Prophet in 2005 was targeted, as was the cartoonist, Kurt Westergaard. On an Amsterdam street in November 2004, the Dutch film-maker, Theo Van Gogh, was murdered by Mohammed Bouyeri, a Dutch-Moroccan ECAI. This attack epitomizes the principle of target substitution.

Impaled in the chest of Theo Van Gogh with a knife was a letter – not addressed to him, but to Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the apostate subject of his film ‘Submission’. She had police protection following the publication of her book ‘Infidel’. Theo Van Gogh had declined extra security, and was therefore a soft target for the ECAI assassin. Blasphemy reprisals in Amsterdam and Copenhagen stand as the most significant terrorism plots in the Netherlands and Denmark since 9/11.

France has been active in combating the international spread of ECAI militancy, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. As with the political leaders of all Western alliance nations, French President Hollande has extremely tight personal security and is a very hard terrorist target. Other French citizens would be much less attractive targets for terrorist attacks, except for those who have repeatedly and unrepentantly blasphemed the Prophet. Accordingly, the editorial committee of Charlie Hebdo was a prime terrorist target, one that had some extra security, but was soft enough to be successfully attacked by a two-man terrorist team.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has flagrantly proclaimed on video its role in directing and financing the Charlie Hebdo attack, and has threatened yet more attacks to avenge the honor of the Prophet. As a riposte, the Prophet featured again on the cover of the issue of Charlie Hebdo immediately following the terrorist attack. Business will continue as usual. However, further violence against Charlie Hebdo will be much more difficult with the placement of heightened security.

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<sup>12</sup> See Simon Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness* (MIT Press, 1997).

Target substitution might then evolve down to the French writer Michel Houellebecq, whose latest novel portrays a France in 2022 under strict Muslim control, where pork is not eaten and women cannot walk the streets uncovered. The title of this new novel, *Submission*, echoes that of the film made by the assassinated Theo Van Gogh. On the fateful morning of the terrorist attack on January 7, Charlie Hebdo's cover was a caricature of Houellebecq's predictions, tragically transformed from fiction to reality. He and his publishers, Flammarion, have been recognized by the police as potential targets. Promotion of Houellebecq's new novel was suspended on January 7, and the author prudently left Paris for the tranquility (and safety) of the country.

One of the slogans of solidarity emerging from the Charlie Hebdo killings is 'France est Charlie' (France is Charlie). Any future attack against Charlie Hebdo or Flammarion would be an attack against the core French liberty to publish. Recognizing the relative nature of terrorist targeting, these developments are significant to understand the future terrorist threat in France. Liberty itself has become an iconic target that can elevate an otherwise minor terrorist crime into a major macroterror attack. The defense of liberty is a national priority for France; a worthy cause for French citizens to die to protect, and for ECAI to die to suppress.

But, like fear, loss of liberty is not covered by terrorism insurance. A shift of the ECAI threat towards suppressing French liberty to blasphemy will shift the attack spectrum towards events with comparatively minor property and casualty loss. The more that people robustly take up the mantle of freedom of the press, as further encouraged by Charlie Hebdo, the more pronounced this shift will be. Governments of the Western alliance have to be concerned about all manifestations of terrorism. Insurers have a much narrower focus on the subset of terrorist attacks that cause insured loss.

A French gift, the Statue of Liberty, is an embodiment of the freedom which has defined the US for generations of immigrants. It is recognized as a highly iconic terrorist target, and is protected accordingly. The principle of target substitution raises deep philosophical issues about the ethics of the allocation of finite resources for protection. At Scotland Yard, before the 7/7/2005 London transport bombings, a counterterrorism detective expressed a view that he would rather that Big Ben be struck instead of many Londoners being killed on the subway.<sup>13</sup>

### **Principle D: Terrorists Follow the Path of Least Resistance in Choice of Weaponry**

Ever since 9/11, terrorism insurers have been apprehensive about innovation in the terrorist arsenal of attack weapons. All manner of sci-fi, high-tech ideas have been hypothesized as possible terrorist weaponry.<sup>14</sup> But none of these 'unknown unknown' weapons has been even close to becoming operational. There has not been a chemical attack since Aum Shinrikyo dispersed Sarin gas in the Tokyo subway in 1995, a couple months after the Kobe earthquake, which this millenarian sect had interpreted as an augury for the coming end of the world. A few years earlier, Aum Shinrikyo had despatched a medical team to the Congo to investigate the weaponization of Ebola,

<sup>13</sup> Personal Remark made to the Author.

<sup>14</sup> Carl Boggs and Tom Pollard, "Hollywood and the Spectacle of Terrorism," *New Political Science* 28(3) (2006), pp. 335-351, available at <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07393140600856151#.VZk-nVKdcwA> (last visited 05 July 2015).

but this effort failed. The development of innovative weapons presents daunting technical challenges, and has an extremely high logistical burden under sustained pressure of counterterrorism surveillance and disruption.

The practical choice of terrorist weaponry is explained by a cardinal principle of terrorism *modus operandi*: terrorists follow the path of least resistance in their actions. This military strategy originates from Sun Tzu's master work, *The Art of War*. This means avoiding targets which have very high levels of security, instead seeking out softer targets, and attacking them with tested weapons known to be reliable. The optimal choice of terrorist weapon is one which uses technology already having a successful track record of being deployed by terrorist organizations. The RMS terrorism risk model includes all such weaponry. The most archetypal of these is the vehicle bomb, which has been called the terrorists' air force.<sup>15</sup> Smaller improvised explosive devices, such as backpack bombs, are also commonly deployed in crowded places.

Another common type of conventional weapon attack involves the use of light military arms: assault rifles, automatic pistols, rocket-propelled grenades, mortars, etc. Such attacks can be targeted at large hotels and crowded shopping malls, as in Mumbai in November 2008 and Nairobi in September 2013, or they can be used for targeted assassinations as at the Charlie Hebdo offices. The scale of these military-style attacks is logistically limited by the time and effort taken to accumulate stocks of the weaponry under the constant risk of plot discovery and arrest. Complex plots run the chance of premature disclosure, if a cache of weapons is stumbled upon by others. This actually happened with the Charlie Hebdo plot, but secrecy was maintained by physical threats against the suspicious neighbor who broke in.

Porous European borders allow light military weapons to be shipped across the continent by road, and many ECAI returning from the Middle East have professional training and combat experience in their use. Already a number of recent interdicted ECAI plots in the UK and France have involved the use of such weapons. In contrast with improvised explosive device (IED) attacks, the terrorist objective of an attack using light military weapons is not to exact a massive toll in property damage or casualties. Accordingly, RMS does not associate light military weapon attacks with property insurance losses. The same holds true for casualty insurance losses: the number of fatalities is unlikely to exceed fifty, which is the lower threshold for macroterrorism for a general mass casualty attack that is indiscriminate in its choice of victims.

Spectacular macroterror attacks require diligent planning, reconnaissance and attack preparation, as well as a number of trained operatives - the more ambitious and extensive a terrorist plot is the more operatives that are needed. No person lives in complete isolation; every human being has his or her own social network. Social networks are amenable to a substantial degree of analytical characterization, providing a sufficient window on terrorist cell contacts for most plots to be interdicted. The various links between members of a social network provide key insight into the involvement of an individual in a terrorist plot. The singular achievement of the Western security services in interdicting more than 80% of significant plots since 9/11 is evidence of their command of terrorist communications networks.

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<sup>15</sup> Mike Davis, *Buda's Wagon* (Verso 2008).

Terrorist social network analysis by RMS in 2010<sup>16</sup> has shown that the likelihood of a plot being interdicted increases with the number of operatives as indicated in the table below:

| Cell Size                | 1    | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    | 7    | 8    | 9    | 10   |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Interdiction Probability | 0.26 | 0.46 | 0.60 | 0.70 | 0.78 | 0.84 | 0.88 | 0.91 | 0.93 | 0.95 |

Highly elaborate ambitious plots capable of inflicting catastrophic insurance losses would typically involve so many operatives as to have a very high likelihood of interdiction. This would be wasteful of terrorist resources. Discouragement of ECAI plots involving double-digit operative numbers has come from Osama bin Laden himself in a message from his Abbottabad hideout: “For a large operation against the US, pick a number of brothers not to exceed ten.”<sup>17</sup> The more operatives there are, the greater the chance that one of them will compromise the terrorist venture: too many terrorists spoil the plot.

The need to minimize the number of operatives, subject to maintaining attack capability and effectiveness, was central to the planning of the Paris coordinated attacks. The main assault on the Charlie Hebdo offices required a minimum of two armed terrorists: one to attack, and the other to provide covering fire. These roles were taken by Chérif and Sa’d Kouachi. Another operative or two might have been useful for auxiliary support, or for an unforeseen operational contingency. But secrecy was paramount: even Chérif Kouachi’s wife knew nothing about the plot.<sup>18</sup>

Synchronous terrorist attacks are a hallmark of carefully planned major ECAI operations, a way of compounding public fear and anxiety to leverage impact of the attack. Provision of a second front to the Paris attack was the role of Amedy Coulibaly. All three operatives were members of the Buttes-Chaumont gang of ECAI, radicalized at the time of the second Iraq War. Hayat Boumeddiene, the partner of Coulibaly, may have been involved in some aspects of the planning. She is known to have made numerous phone calls to Chérif Kouachi’s wife,<sup>19</sup> and may have passed on secret messages this way. She left for Syria shortly before the attack.

A plot with three or four operatives ordinarily has a 60-70% chance of being interdicted, but this can be reduced if the operatives are interconnected in such a way as to diminish the electronic communication signature between them – keeping a plot within a family helps to maintain a lower plot profile. As with the Boston bombing of April 2013, plot integrity was maintained by the fraternal relationship of the two leading terrorists. The marital relationship of two others would also have reduced the plot profile for detection.

<sup>16</sup> Gordon Woo, “Terrorism Social Network Analysis” (RMS, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> Peter Bergen, *Manhunt* (Broadway Books, 2013).

<sup>18</sup> Kim Willsher, “Charlie Hebdo Gunman’s Wife Had No Idea He Was Extremist, Lawyer Says,” *The Guardian* (13 January 2015), available at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/13/charlie-hebdo-gunman-said-kouachi-wife-extremist> (last visited 5 July 2015).

<sup>19</sup> Greg Botelho, “Untangling a Deadly Web: The Paris Attacks, the Suspects, the Links,” *CNN* (14 January 2015), available at <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/11/europe/france-terror-suspects-connection/> (last visited 7 July 2015).

Even though the plot was sufficiently compact to have had a reasonable chance of escaping the attention of the French security services, what should have helped in developing an intelligence assessment of a potential threat was that the three key operatives were no strangers to them. The older Sa'd Kouachi undertook military training in Yemen in 2011, where he met Anwar al-Awlaki, ideologue of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).<sup>20</sup> The younger Kouachi, Chérif, had been jailed for seeking to join Iraqi ECAI nearly a decade ago. In French prison, he was mentored by the Al-Qaeda-linked Djamel Beghal, who had been jailed for his role in a plot in 2001 to attack the US embassy in Paris.<sup>21</sup> Amedy Coulibaly was also radicalized by Djamel Beghal while in detention.<sup>22</sup>

Social network tracking by the Western intelligence community has the capability to extend to several degrees of separation between an individual and a known or suspected terrorist. In this case, the three operatives were known to have a terrorist record. But with the focus on new ECAI returning from Syria, they were not thought to pose enough of a danger to be kept under surveillance.

An important lesson to be gained from an analysis of the dozens of ambitious terrorist plots against the Western alliance since 9/11 is the game theory observation that terrorism is as much about counterterrorism response as about terrorist actions. A corollary is that terrorism insurance in the Western alliance is effectively insurance against the failure of counterterrorism; a rare failure occurred in Paris.

### **Principle F: Event Frequency is Calculable through Interdiction Analysis**

Since 9/11, the vast majority of major terrorist plots in North America, Western Europe and Australia have been interdicted. Of those that are not interdicted, a certain proportion fail for technical reasons. Both the aviation passenger shoe-bomb and underwear bomb failed technically, as did the 2010 Times Square SUV bomb.<sup>23</sup> In fact, there is a very short list of successful significant attacks before Paris in January 2015: the transport bombings in Madrid in March 2004 and in London in July 2005, and the Boston marathon bombing of April 2013.

Whatever the behavior of terrorists, it is the responsibility of a counterterrorism organization to maintain vigilance to detect plots as they form, and to break up plots before terrorists move towards their targets in readiness to strike. Intelligence officers cannot read human minds, but they can track communications and online activities, albeit at the societal cost of infringement of civil liberties. The astonishing mass surveillance revelations of the ex-CIA whistle-blower Edward Snowden have come as no surprise to those who have analyzed the network process by which the security services of the Western alliance have managed very capably to counter terrorism since 9/11. The global geographical extent of the surveillance is made possible through the international collaboration of intelligence communication agencies, notably between the NSA in the US and GCHQ in the UK.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Cedric Mathiot, "Amedy Coulibaly et son mentor Djamel Beghal auraient été voisins de cellule en 2005" ("Amedy Coulibaly and His Mentor Djamel Beghal Were Cell Neighbors in 2005") *Libération* (16 January 2015), available at [http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2015/01/16/amedy-coulibaly-et-son-mentor-djamel-beghal-auraient-ete-voisins-de-cellule-en-2005\\_1181425](http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2015/01/16/amedy-coulibaly-et-son-mentor-djamel-beghal-auraient-ete-voisins-de-cellule-en-2005_1181425) (last visited 05 July 2015).

<sup>23</sup> "Times Square Suspect Had Explosives Training, Documents Say," *CNN* (10 May 2010), available at <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/CRIME/05/04/new.york.car.bomb/> (last visited 7 July 2015).

Andrew Parker, the director-general of MI5, the British security service, emphasized again after the Paris attack the vital need for intelligence to continue to be gathered through mass surveillance to deny terrorists the freedom to attack at will. If ever they had this freedom in the UK or elsewhere in the Western alliance, then the risk of terrorism would no longer be controlled, and loss outcomes would therefore be on terrorist terms. The notion that terrorist risk is unduly sensitive to the whims of human behavior stems from a misconception that terrorists can attack at will.

At the outset of risk modeling for terrorism insurance in 2002, RMS pioneered a quantitative objective model of event frequency based on the counterterrorism interdiction of plots. These are near-misses, to use the terminology of industrial safety analysts. The RMS model recognizes that, while most plots would be interdicted, a small proportion of major terrorist plots will evade the counterterrorism net.<sup>24</sup> The Paris attack was one of these few. Even countries like France, with an exemplary record of counterterrorism action and informants infiltrated deep inside terrorist networks, can slip up.

The number of plots may be assessed in an objective evidence-based manner from the tally of courtroom convictions for terrorist offences. A plot is not recognized as such if there is insufficient evidence to indict a suspect or gain a conviction.<sup>25</sup> Abiding by democratic values, those acquitted of terrorist offences cannot be called terrorists, and their reconnaissance and training activities cannot be called plots. Allowing for the uncertainty in parameter estimation, the annual frequency of successful attacks may then be calculated as the convolution of three probability distributions: the annual number of plots, the rate of plot non-interdiction, and the chance that a plot that is not interdicted is also technically functional.

### **Principle G: Post-Attack Response is a Control Feedback**

The occurrence of macroterror attacks in the countries of the Western alliance does not follow the Poisson process where events occur randomly in time. This is commonly used in natural hazard modeling, but terrorism is subject to external control in the way that natural hazards are not. After a macroterror attack, new counterterrorism actions are taken to suppress the chance of another successful macroterror attack. Post-attack response exerts a control feedback on terrorist action. The rapid passage of the USA PATRIOT Act soon after 9/11 is a classic paradigm. RMS incorporated this non-Poissonian time dependence at the start of terrorism risk modeling in 2002.

Affirmation of the principle of control feedback came a few years later in the UK. In the immediate aftermath of the London transport bombings of 7/7/2005, Prime Minister Blair declared that “this changes everything” and introduced a raft of tough counterterrorism legislation to mitigate the risk of terrorism to the UK.<sup>26</sup> This has been effective, especially by making incitement to violence a criminal offence. Almost a decade later, there has not been another successful UK macroterror event since.

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<sup>24</sup> Woo, *Handbook of Science & Technology for Homeland Security*.

<sup>25</sup> “The Counter-Terrorism of the Crown Prosecution Service,” CPS, at <https://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/prosecution/ctd.html> (last visited 7 July 2015).

<sup>26</sup> Terrorism Act 2006, available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/11/contents> (last visited 7 July 2015).

The post-attack response feedback control feature is validated further by the response to the 1/7/15 attack in Paris. It has long been known, yet tolerated, that prisons are radicalization centers and schools for extremists.<sup>27</sup> Ordinary criminals have been converted to Islam and become the fighter of so-called jihad. In France, prisoners with ECAI links will henceforth be segregated, thus reducing the risk of prison radicalization. At the national level, the French National Assembly passed a bill giving the intelligence services more powers to collect information.

On an international level, the president of the European commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, has promised a new program of European counterterrorism legislation. This will include better cooperation between European states, reinforcement of state links with Europol, and a requirement for airlines to divulge passenger name record (PNR) data to the police, so that so-called jihadi movements to Syria and Iraq can be more easily tracked. The latter counterterrorism change has long been resisted in the European Parliament for civil liberty reasons but it now has the very strong support of the French President.

The reality of the risk of French ECAI returning from fighting with ISIS/DAESH in Syria is exemplified by Mehdi Nemmouche, a 29 year-old French national of Algerian origin. Having spent a year in Syria with radical ECAI, he returned to Europe. On May 24, 2014, he attacked the Brussels Jewish Museum, killing four. A few days later, he was arrested in Marseilles. Although he was a lone wolf, he was ambitious: a potential terrorist plot he had in mind included an attack on the Champs Elysees on Bastille Day, July 14.

### **Principle H: The ECAI Threat is Long-Term**

The RMS model of terrorism risk has been parameterized under the presumption that the threat from Al-Qaeda and other ECAI is long-term and multigenerational, and cannot be eradicated by any number of UAV strikes or other offensive military measures taken by Western counterterrorism forces. The validity of this modeling assumption would be demonstrated by firm evidence of a direct link between one generation of extremists and the next, i.e. that an older generation of terrorists is influential in perpetuating violence.

Such a link was crucial to the Paris attack, and existed in the form of the French-Algerian Djamel Beghal, an ECAI who spent time in Afghanistan before 9/11, between November 2000 and July 2001, and had a reputation as a fine theologian. Djamel Beghal himself was part of the European inner circle of radicals. He spent time at the notorious Finsbury Park mosque in north London, an ECAI refugee hub, where he was an associate of the influential radical preacher, Abu Hamza, extradited from the UK and now jailed in the US.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Peter R. Neumann, "Prison and Terrorism: Radicalization and DE-radicalization in 15 Countries" (ICSR, 2010), available at <http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/Prisons-and-terrorism-15-countries.pdf> (last visited 2 July 2015).

<sup>28</sup> Josh Halliday, Duncan Gardham and Julian Borger, "Mentor of Charlie Hebdo Gunmen Has Been UK-based," *The Guardian* (11 January 2015), available at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/11/mentor-charlie-hebdo-gunmen-uk-based-djamel-beghal> (last visited 5 July 2015).

Chérif Kouachi and Coulibaly both became radicalized disciples of Djamel Beghal. Few have had a better understanding of the radicalization process in France than the indomitable terrorism magistrate, Jean-Louis Bruguière. He observed that in the suburbs, many have no hope for the future. A typical scenario is that they meet someone charismatic with some knowledge of Islam, who gives them hope through the so-called idea of jihad.<sup>29</sup> Coulibaly was one of these drifters. In 2013, he was jailed for conspiring with Beghal to release the GIA bomber of a Paris RER station in 1995 – the most notable French terrorist attack before January 2015. Coulibaly was let out of prison as recently as March 2014, under the mistaken presumption that he did not pose a continuing terrorist threat.

Beghal's wife continues to live in England, and is under security watch. In both the UK and France, the treatment of the families of ECAI prisoners, and of ex-prisoners, presents a major security challenge. The wife of one of the London bombers of July 7, 2005, achieved notoriety in her own right as the 'white widow terrorist'<sup>30</sup>. Most ECAI prisoners on their release settle into society and do not engage further with terrorism, but a few will be motivated to continue on the path of violence, either by direct involvement in plots, or encouraging other extremists. Tracking of recidivism will now be a priority of Western intelligence services. What happened in Paris could happen in London, or any other major city in the western alliance.

Each year sees the release from prison of hardened ECAI who have served long sentences for serious terrorism offences. Their freedom to radicalize and incite the next generation of ECAI is part of the dynamic cyclical process which makes the threat from Al-Qaeda and other extremist groups a long-term persistent feature of the landscape of terrorism risk in the Western alliance.

## LESSONS FOR TERRORISM INSURANCE RISK IN THE US

Both the Kouachi brothers were on US no-fly lists, so they would have been unable to enter the US to perpetrate any terrorist attacks across the Atlantic, had they been so inclined. More generally, the US-VISIT program, costly as it is, has been very effective.<sup>31</sup> Its value is gauged not by the number of terrorists stopped at the US border, but the number of foreign ECAI deterred from attacking the US. An enhanced biometric exit program, whereby those leaving the US are fingerprinted, might have deterred Tamerlan Tsarnaev from attacking Boston in April 2013.

Target substitution operates at all geographical levels, from street to city to country. The Anglo-Pakistani ringleader of the London transport bombings of July 7, 2005, Mohammed Siddique Khan, declared in his martyrdom video that he was motivated by the many Muslim casualties of the US invasion of Iraq.<sup>32</sup> Had it been easier for him to travel to the US, Washington DC might have been targeted rather than London.

<sup>29</sup> Tom Whitehead, "Three British Sisters Feared to Have Gone to Syria to Join Brother," *The Telegraph* (15 Jun 2015), available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/11676378/Family-of-12-missing-after-pilgrimage-to-Saudi-Arabia.html> (last visited 7 July 2015).

<sup>30</sup> Rachel Shabi, "The White Widow and Other Arch-villains," *Al Jazeera* (20 May 2015), available at <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/05/white-widow-jihad-terror-150520074623342.html> (last visited 2 July 2015).

<sup>31</sup> Woo, *Handbook of Science & Technology for Homeland Security*.

<sup>32</sup> "London Bomber Video Aired on TV," BBC (1 September 2005), available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk/4206708.stm> (last visited 2 July 2015).

Of all European countries, the largest contingent of extremists fighting for ISIS/DAESH in Syria has come from France, which has a 10% Muslim population. The second largest European contingent has come from the UK, which also has a large minority Muslim population. Returning fighters pose a serious terrorist threat to both France and the UK. By comparison, relatively few have traveled from the US to Syria to fight. Geography is a greater logistical barrier for them. French and British citizens can take a short flight to Istanbul, then travel by road to cross the Turkish border with Syria. Travelers returning to France or the UK from Istanbul face intensive security checks and interrogation, as well as possible arrest if evidence is found that they have been involved in support for ISIS/DAESH.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Charlie Hebdo attack marked a turning point in the episodic historical confrontation of the Western alliance with ECAI. Blasphemy is an affront to the faithful of any religion, but for many devout Muslims around the world, outrage and anger at the cartoon depiction of the Prophet was enough for them to side with those who say 'Je suis Kouachi'. For a few, in the extreme tail of the distribution of deeply offended Muslims, the personal insult to their faith may be felt so gravely as to be worth avenging with their lives.

As during the medieval Crusades, France finds itself at the center of the clash between Muslim East and the Christian West. Not only is France a prime terrorist target for French ECAI, but foreign extremists, including those radicalized in the US, may travel to France inspired, and even funded, by al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) to uphold the honor of the Prophet. Just as Danish consulates were attacked because of the Danish publication of defamatory cartoons, the same prospect holds for France. Within the US, French consulates will need the heightened security that Israeli consulates have always had. With Coulibaly's four Jewish victims laid to rest in Jerusalem, Israeli and French perspectives on future counterterrorism security will become more closely aligned.

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## **Boko Haram in Context: The Terrorist Organizations's Roots in Nigeria's Social History**

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**Abstract:** *Since May 2013, the federal government of Nigeria has been trying to address the threat of Boko Haram by military means. These operations are ongoing and its details are shrouded in secrecy, but judging by the results, they have so far failed to root out the immediate and ever present threat of terrorist activity in the region, where BH has the apparent ability to strike at will. Our paper proposes a radical solution to the threat of terrorism in Northern Nigeria where the local 'law of the land' prevails as a source of legal jurisdiction and where feudal elements have managed to retain their social and political primacy. Our solution proposes that the tacit Western backing for the traditional Fulani ruling elements, habitual since colonial times, should now be abandoned. The policy of helping traditional emirs might have been well suited for the early-to mid-20th century, but it is now part of the problem instead of a solution. Identifying alternatives to the Fulani aristocracy is a job for intelligence services, building on forces that offer alternatives to the current status quo.*

**Keywords:** *Boko Haram, Africa, Nigeria, Terrorism in Nigeria, Northern Nigeria, Fulani aristocracy, Joint Task Force*

## Introduction

Since May 2013, Nigeria's federal government has kept its special units, the Joint Task Force, in the turbulent North-Eastern States of the country: Yobe, Borno and Adamawa. They made copious use of curfews, and even shut down mobile phone operations in a desperate attempt to gain advantage over extremists claiming affiliation with Islam (*ECAI*) that had previously established those three states as their home base. Government forces bombarded their training camps, and have been trying to hunt down their forces ever since. Although news coming out of the area are unreliable, it seems clear that the region is far from being pacified. Indeed, the insurgency seems to go on and Boko Haram still strikes essentially at will in these three states. Continued military action is obviously a necessity under these circumstances. However, the authors of this article feel that military action has not been properly complemented by the intelligence services of neither Nigeria, nor of friendly nations within the broader international community. We feel that the traditional Western reliance on the local Fulani feudal aristocracy as arbiters of peace and guardians of local custom, a source of law in the form of 'the law of the land' beyond Sharia itself in Nigeria, is outdated and is now a liability for the international community and from the point of view of moderate nations who want to work for the elimination of dangerous radicalism.

## Boko Haram

The *ECAI* insurgency and the bloody conflict that finally resulted in May 2013, Nigerian governmental action, Joint Task Force operations and aerial bombardments, had started about a decade earlier, in 2002, when Imam Mohammed Yusuf launched his extremist group the Yusufiyya, complete with mosque and madrasa in Maiduguri (the capital of Borno state – it had been called Yerwa before, in a desert area bordering Chad). The organizations's official name, *Jamaatu ahlis sunna lidda'awaati wal-jihad* (People Committed to the Prophet's Teachings and to Propagating Jihad). They are rather known as just *Boko Haram*, a group that claims that Western education is *haram*, sin. Their world view is medieval and arcane, their leader once claiming on a Youtube broadcast that the earth was flat.<sup>1</sup> They ban Western clothes such as trousers and shirts. They abhor the representatives of the Nigerian federal state that they consider ungodly and evil. They attack, kidnap and kill Westerners, representatives of the federal Nigerian state such as policemen, and they murder Muslims that support them, including ones that frequent beauty parlours and bars.

In this essay, we propose an entirely new way of looking at the Boko Haram threat and what the international community should do to address the problems associated with it. We claim that Boko Haram is a perverted version of a social movement that draws its militants from the wells of Northern Nigerian poverty and desperation. Western toleration/collusion with the traditional Northern Nigerian elite has worked for about 110 years. However, the very socio-political system that maintained the status quo and that had brought long lasting peace to Northern Nigeria, has now created its very antithesis, Boko Haram in its womb. We feel that it is time to readdress Western attitudes towards the Northern Nigerian elite and its vested interests.

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<sup>1</sup> This video was removed from YouTube at some point between March-May 2013.

Boko Haram (BH) is not an isolated phenomenon and it did not appear out of the blue. Its predecessor was the well known *Maitatsine* grouping and their bloody uprising in 1982-1985.<sup>2</sup> The *Maitatsine* riots, and Boko Haram, both sprang up on Northern Nigeria's arid soil, and any foreign involvement (Libyan, Saudi, Malian, or any other) came only later. Northern Nigeria has a very special socio-economic system that maintains its feudal characteristics more than most. As opposed to countries like India (where the princely system was abolished with the president's quasi constitutional *coup de grace* in 1970), in Northern Nigeria, despite reform in 1976, feudalism is a near intact phenomenon. There is a problem of conflict between modern public administration and the traditional way of governing.<sup>3</sup> The authors of this article are aware that the very term 'feudalism' may very easily be associated with ideological verbiage, especially the obsolete Soviet-sponsored variety, in the developing world. At the same time, there are some specific loci in this world where the term retains its meaning and validity,<sup>4</sup> and the authors of this article opine that we ignore this at our peril.

Before embarking on a discussion on why we think BH is the child of Northern Nigeria's specific socio-economic system, we have to ask the question: is there any alternative in Northern Nigeria? Is there anyone else there capable of presenting the West with options, other than the Fulani feudalists and their respective politicians. Our answer to this is 'yes'. There have always been alternatives. In the 1960s and 1970s, those were Mallam Aminu Kano<sup>5</sup> and the People's Redemption Party, with Balarabe Musa, Yusufu Bala Usman and others. As it happened, they were pushed into the arms of the USSR and its representatives, by the mere fact that they dared challenge Northern Nigeria's medieval socio-political system. This might have been a wise or unwise policy back then, when peace still reigned in Northern Nigeria. Today, however, we see no escaping from a reassessment. Naturally, finding alternatives on the ground is a task for diplomats and intelligence services. However, it is safe to claim even in an academic work such as this that there are nuclei of modernization even among the ethnic Fulani in Northern Nigeria. People who have built Western educational institutions in the North, businesspeople in the modern sectors, and yes, sometimes, perhaps, even opposition figures and trade union representatives. 'Sitting on bayonets' is famously impossible, and irrespective of what President Goodluck Jonathan's current army and air force manouvers bring to Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa, a workable system has to emerge in Northern Nigeria, one that is committed to modernization and to – for lack of a better word – what we call enlighthenment.

The authors of this article bring not only academic knowledge of Nigeria but hands on local expertise on African and Northern Nigerian matters. Indeed, Lieutenant Colonel Janos Besenyó has served in various capacities in Western Sahara, the Sudan and Afghanistan and wrote books and innumerable articles on peacebuilding in Africa, whilst Adam Mayer has taught for three years at an American University in Northern Nigeria. The latter is currently a site of the ongoing Boko Haram campaign.

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<sup>2</sup> Yusufu Bala Usman, *The Manipulation of Politics in Nigeria*, Vanguard, 1987.

<sup>3</sup> Maria Bordas, "Tradition and Modernization in the Public Administration", *Journal of US-China Public Administration*, USA, 2012. pp.10-11.

<sup>4</sup> Dan Isaacs, "Nigeria's emirs: Power behind the throne", BBC News Africa, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-11418542> (accessed 19 September 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Alan Feinstein, *African Revolutionary – Aminu Kano*, Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc, 1987.

In our introduction, we claimed that Boko Haram is the illegitimate child of Northern feudalism. Let us, before any detailed discussion, furnish the reader with a relevant fact. BH bans trousers and shirts. The Northern Nigerian elite on its part, has lobbied for the abolition of Western style court regalia for justices in federal Nigeria, as something that in their view, ‘denigrated their culture’ for many years now.<sup>6</sup> No wonder then that members of the Northern elite were the very people that introduced Sharia in Nigerian states (first in Zamfara back in 1999, then in every other Northern state except Adamawa). It is time the international community made a choice against the status quo, before the status quo brings untold misery in the form of a strengthened ECAI insurgency.

### Historical Facts

Christianity and Islam both have a long history in Nigeria. Islam arrived in the 14th century from Chad (the first Muslims were the court and courtiers of Idris Aloma *mai* (1571-1603), king of Kanem-Borno. Christianity appeared with the Portuguese in the late 15th century (in its Roman Catholic form), followed by Anglicanism spread by the British (the Episcopal Church in US parlance). From about 160 million Nigerians (estimates range from 130 million to 180 million, due to the complete unreliability of censuses since 1963), half are supposed to be Christian, half Muslim. This is as heavily contested as such figures were in the Lebanon of 1975. From the Christian populace, about 20 million are Catholics, 17 million are Anglicans, six million are Baptists, and the rest belong to various new protestant charismatic churches that are spreading very fast in Nigeria. Most of the Muslims are Sunni. Some claim adherence to Shia Islam, but that phenomenon appeared more as a result of Khomeini’s successes in the late 1970s than any organic development.<sup>7</sup> Sufi *tarikas* (brotherhoods), were historically strongest in Northern Nigeria, especially at the courts. In 1804, then came Usman don Fodio’s Fulani so called *jihad* against the Hausa kingdoms with their syncretistic beliefs and ‘infidel’ customs.<sup>8</sup> Don Fodio established the Sokoto Caliphate, an umbrella empire over the Hausa and Middle Belt emirates, in the region. While not an enlightened ruler, one must make mention of the fact that don Fodio belonged to the Qadiriyya *tarika*.<sup>9</sup> His version of Islam was still very far from the purism of the Wahabiyya, the Saudi sect that kick-started international political Islamism in its well known current, fundamentalist form. That came to Nigeria only in the 1960s with Abubakar Gummi, Grand Kadi of Northern Nigeria, friend and ally of Saudi Arabia (received the King Faisal Prize for his proselytising activity),<sup>10</sup> aided by the famous Northern Nigerian politician, the sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello (died 1966).

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<sup>6</sup> Ádám Mayer, “A Boko Haram mint biztonságpolitikai veszélyforrás és mint társadalmi jelenség”, *Sereg Szemle*, Oct-Dec 2012, p.138.

<sup>7</sup> O.P. Joseph Kenny, “Sharia and Christianity in Nigeria: Islam and a “Secular’ State”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, XXVI, 4, p.344.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 340.

<sup>9</sup> John Hunwick, “An African Case Study of Political Islam: Nigeria”, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 524, Nov 1992, p.153.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p.151.

We have to understand that both Christianity and Islam are heavily missionary, proselytising religions in the Nigerian context today. Nigerians take religion very seriously – especially when it comes to protection from *juju*, ostentatious ritual, and as a marker of identity. Religions also serve as emotional aids in the drab reality of contemporary Nigerian life.

Some further factors that strengthen them are that there are almost no formal employment opportunities, no good schools, no private enterprises, no productive economic activity, and not even much subsistence agriculture any more. The North is a place where polio is endemic because Northern women are afraid that polio vaccinations are a Western plot to make Muslims infertile. The North lives with a daunting lack of skills for the 21st century, and a world view that is positively medieval, reinforced by a feudalist elite that takes disproportionately, from the regional cake as Nigeria is a petro state where petro incomes are channeled according to population figures to constituent states of the federation.<sup>11</sup>

Northern Nigeria underwent waves of Islamization under the Sokoto caliphate, but more surprisingly, under British indirect rule too, when Christian missionary activity was banned, then later allowed but heavily curtailed. The core of Islamization was always the Fulani ethnic group with its herdsmen and its courts and ulama, who constituted a small minority in the sea of local Hausa and Kanuri groups. The Hausas and the Kanuris had their own traditional animistic religions up until the mid-20th century. The South-Western Yorubas, who also have a Muslim element in their midst, still openly retain their old Yoruba religion in some cases. Others however, although they obviously incorporate old customs and beliefs into their actual religious practice, do not confess openly, their adherence to old animistic religions on the whole. Indeed, association with old animistic religions is frowned upon in Nigeria. It is considered not only a sign of backwardness but a sign of moral disrepute. A curious sign of this is the Nigerian attitude to African art: with the partial exception of Calabar and Lagos, African art is considered junk at best, inspired by the devil at worst, by Nigerians themselves. This shows to us very forcefully, how disconnected the Nigerians of today usually are, from their traditional belief systems and their traditional world view.

An interesting addition to the spreading of salafi/wahabi versions of Islam, is the equally striking gains that charismatic Christian churches have made in Nigeria. The single biggest group of Christian denominations in Nigeria today may loosely be defined as Charismatic Protestant. American televangelists often visit the country, and the likes of the Reverend Pat Robertson carry a lot of intellectual weight in the Nigerian South. Indeed, we are compelled to say that significant segments of Nigerian South are under the influence of what is sometimes called 'Christian Zionism,' for lack of a better expression. What is especially striking is how political and extremist Islamism and Christian Zionism coexist in the same country. This may well colour the conflict that we are addressing in this article.

Let us now turn our attention to economic and political matters. Nigeria ever since 1960, developed a *prebendal* political economy. This is political science parlance for the understanding that there is no proper distinction between public and private funds as such in Nigeria, and that governmental income gets channelled into the financial pools of clientelistic networks of patronage. During the

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<sup>11</sup> Ádám Mayer, "A keresztény-muszlim konfliktus Nigériában", *Sereg Szemle*, January-March 2013, p.140.

democratic periods of modern Nigeria (1960-1966, 1979-1983, 1999-) there have been democratic elections – democratic in form, tribal and prebendal in content. In periods of military dictatorship (1966-1979, 1983-1985, 1985-1993, 1993-1999) contest for elite positions was more limited. One has to make mention of the fact however that in both cases, the Northern elite fared fairly well. Democracy and dictatorship are so indistinguishable in Nigeria that one of its military dictators (Olusegun Obasanjo, late 1970s) reemerged as a civilian president more than two decades later, just to stay on for two terms, and be impeached to prevent a third.

Let us look into Nigeria's political history in some detail. Between 1860 and 1960, Nigeria was a British colony (first a collection of colonies and protectorates). It is almost shocking in its frivolity that Nigeria was given its name by the then girlfriend, of the British high representative Baron Lugard (her name was Flora Shaw, and she named Nigeria thus after the river Niger). Apart from the Sokoto Caliphate in the North that was governed indirectly, through British residents and with a lot of leeway regarding domestic politics, there were the famous marionette kingdoms of the Yoruba, and the acephalous village communities of the Igbo, apart from hundreds of smaller ethno-linguistic groups. Some areas, such as the cities of Lagos and Calabar, were, and have since been, way more advanced than others. The areas that the colonialists referred to as 'the native interior' and especially its Northern Nigerian areas lagged behind those two very considerably. In Northern Nigeria, groundnuts were the most important industrial cash crop that the British collected, marketed and sold abroad. The British built railways in the country (those fell into disrepair after independence – only one line is operational now, having been reopened in early 2013). Independence was achieved by the method of peaceful conference table discussions and was managed by the British.

Independent Nigeria followed the Westminster model until 1978 when military Head of State Obasanjo changed the country's political system to presidential (closely following the U.S. political system). The first prime minister was Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. He concentrated federal power in the hands of the Northern Muslim elite. In January 1966, General Ironsi (a Southern Christian and an Igbo) threw a coup d'état against the government, but in July he himself was counter-couped by Yakubu Gowon, a Northern Christian. There were pogroms in the North against the Igbo, and other Christians.

From 1967 to 1970, the Igbo, led by General Ojukwu, fought a bloody civil war (1 to 2 million dead) for an independent country under the Biafran flag. The Nigerian federal government was propped up with Soviet and Czech armaments and defeated Ojukwu, who only returned to Nigeria decades later, to become an MP (died 2011). After winning the war, Nigeria resumed its strictly pro-American foreign policy stance.<sup>12</sup>

In 1970, In July 1975, Yakubu Gowon was followed by Murtala Muhammed, a Northern Muslim, as military Head of State. Murtala Muhammed was such a tough leader that Nigerian civil servants famously showed up at 7:30 at their desks right on the next day after his successful coup.<sup>13</sup> An honest administrator, he was quickly murdered in a counter-coup in February 1976. His second in command, Olusegun Obasanjo, a Yoruba Christian, became military Head of State at that

<sup>12</sup> Maxim Matusevich, *No Easy Row for a Russian Hoe: Ideology and Pragmatism in Nigerian-Soviet Relations*, Africa World Press, Asmara, 2003, p.105.

<sup>13</sup> Chinua Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Heinemann, London, 1983, p.9.

junction. Obasanjo was not strict, and never became strict, except for his infamously thrifty attitude to his own money. In 1978/1979, it was Obasanjo that changed the Westminster model, establishing 19 states in the new presidentially governed, federal republic. The new Nigerian political system was intended to be a copy of the US system in form – in content, sadly, it seemed closer to its caricature. Obasanjo did abandon military rule, and gave way to democratization in 1979.

Elections were won by Alhaji Shehu Shagari, a Northern Muslim, in October 1979. In 1983, Muhammadu Buhari staged a coup against Shagari, and launched his 'discipline campaigns' in the country. He also made steps towards the deregulation of the economy. His successor, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, who ousted Buhari in his own 1985 coup, followed that course, and instituted one of the first IMF-sponsored, neoliberal Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in sub-Saharan Africa. SAPs were more than a fiasco: they obliterated almost the entire middle class of Nigeria, sharply increasing social disparities.

Buhari and Babangida are both still alive and well, and are both big men, *ogas*, in Nigeria today. Babangida is a billionaire, Buhari is more of an austere Muslim and a soldier committed to simple living. So once again there is a problem of the culture of governance<sup>14</sup> and efficient state,<sup>15</sup> especially when we consider their influence.

In 1993, Babangida finally allowed for democratic elections. Those were won by Mashood Abiola, a Southern businessman, but since Abiola was disfavoured by Babangida, the latter appointed Ernest Shonekan instead as president. Defense minister Sani Abacha successfully launched a coup and toppled both, and became Nigeria's most infamous dictator. An introvert by nature, Sani Abacha had no qualms about how to run the country. Abacha made Nigeria an international pariah state with his reckless theft and philandering (according to John Campbell, his death was not exactly 'a coup from heaven'<sup>16</sup> but rather administered by his enemies). Abdulsalami Abubakar assumed power upon Abacha's death, giving way to a reactivated Obasanjo in 1999. There were, at that point, already 36 states in Nigeria. In 1999, Zamfara state instituted Sharia. Obasanjo's party, the People's Democratic Party, has entered the ranks of power and has stayed in power ever since democratization in 1999. The PDP won national elections for the second time in 2007. After Obasanjo was not allowed to run for office for the third time, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, a Muslim Northerner, became president. He died in 2010, leaving his vice president Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian from the Niger Delta, in command of the country. Jonathan won a presidential election in 2011. His success alienated the North, where it was believed that after Obasanjo's long reign, a Northern (Muslim) President was their right (there is indeed a tacit agreement within the ruling PDP to that effect).<sup>17</sup> This has created unease and irritation with the federal government in Northern circles. So much so that even after thousands of Northerners had been murdered by Boko Haram, Northern political leaders urged Jonathan to issue an amnesty to Boko Haram's fighters.

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<sup>14</sup> Mária Bordás, *Corruption Risk Analyses – Development of Integrity-Based Administrative Culture Study in the Collection of Essays Published by the Hungarian State Audit Office Budapest 2012*, pp.20-22.

<sup>15</sup> Mária Bordás, *The Economics of Public Administration – the Possibilities and Dilemmas of Economic Governance*, Textbook Unió Lap- és Könyvkiadó Kft. Budapest, 2009. pp.10-11.

<sup>16</sup> Karl Maier, *This House Has Fallen – Midnight in Nigeria*, Public Affairs, New York, 2000, p.5.

<sup>17</sup> Aljazeera ed. Nigeria sets presidential poll date, *Aljazeera* on line, 07 September 2010, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2010/09/201097165121193355.html>, (accessed 04 October 2014).

### Boko Haram in Operation

Boko Haram itself might not be as interesting as the colorful characters that inhabit Nigerian politics. BH leaders have been dour, their ideology bizarre, their savage attacks despicable. Their tactics have been so merciless and so unmindful of ‘collateral damage’ that their own splinter group, Ansaru, would in time scold them for their lack of consideration for the umma – a reference to the fact that BH has killed thousands of Muslims.

Boko Haram shows very interesting similarities with the Maitatsine uprising of 1982. The Maitatsine movement’s imam and quasi-prophet Buba Marwa, a.k.a. Maitatsine (his jihadist name) led riots that killed almost five thousand people, and stirred the entire region of Maiduguri, Kaduna, Yola, Gombe, and made tens of thousands homeless. The great Northern Nigerian historian Yusufu Bala Usman wrote a penetrating analysis on *The Manipulation of Religion in Nigeria*, focussing, among other things, on the Maitatsine uprisings. The commonalities with BH are striking, including a dark undercurrent of rumours on the involvement of political actors in financing both uprisings.

Boko Haram, since 2009, has consistently called for sharia law for the entire country including the Christian south. Subjecting approximately 80 million Southerners to Sharia is needless to say, an impossible task under modern circumstances when populations are politicised and democratic pressures do exist. Thus, we have to conclude that albeit BH ostensibly calls for sharia in the entire country, its immediate goals are different: they are indeed aims of terrorizing Northerners into ‘purifying’ their faith according to Wahhabi prescriptions, follow stricter rules of conduct, and disobey the representatives of the Nigerian state that they see as corrupt and evil. BH also pushes for ethnic cleansing in the North: they want Igbos and other Christian elements that populate the Sabon Gari (literally: foreigners’ quarter) of each Northern town, to leave and never return.

In 2010, BH set hundreds of prisoners free from a prison in Bauchi. In December they detonated bombs that killed 80 people in Jos. On New Year’s Eve 2010, they attacked targets in Abuja for the first time. From 2010 onwards, they turned Maiduguru, then Mubi into veritable battlefields. When Jonathan was reelected in May 2011, they bombed many state capitals in the North. Still in the same year, they attacked Police Headquarters in Abuja, as well as the U.N. Mission in August. In November 2011, they attacked churches, markets, Igbo owned shops, bars, beauty parlours, and Igbo conference halls in Yobe and Borno states. By January 2012, Nigerian media started to talk about a new civil war. In the spring, there were kidnappings and murders of Westerners, prison mutinies, and suicide bombings at churches. In October, 41 university students were butchered with machetes and guns in Mubi. In 2012 alone, BH killed about 1,200 people. By early May 2013, the cumulative number of people killed by BH (from 2009) had already exceeded 4,000.<sup>18</sup> Boko Haram also developed its own foreign policy stance and its own international linkages.<sup>19</sup> It killed two Nigerian soldiers destined for the French-led Mali operation.<sup>20</sup> Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

<sup>18</sup> Farouk Chotia, ‘Who are Nigeria’s Boko Haram Islamists?’, *BBC World News Africa*, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13809501> (accessed 11 January 2013).

<sup>19</sup> János Besenyő, A nemzetközi terrorizmus veszélye Észak-Afrikában, *Új Honvédségi Szemle* LXI. Évfolyam-2007/12, pp.41-50.

<sup>20</sup> Monday Atebo, Boko Haram attacks troops to Mali, *Premium Times*, <http://premiumtimesng.com/news/116058-boko-haram-attacks-nigerian-troop-to-mali-2-dead-five-injured.html> (accessed 19 January 2013).

and other organizations found their way to Boko Haram,<sup>21</sup> effectively embracing the Nigerian organization.<sup>22</sup> If at all possible, Boko Haram's modus operandi has become ever more inhuman: in July 2013, they burnt 29 students alive in a school in Yobe.

It was in May 2013 that president Goodluck Jonathan decided to act with decisive military force to pacify the region and obliterate BH – a campaign that is still ongoing and whose end results are still unclear.

Irrespective of the immediate results of the current campaign, Boko Haram, or a similar organization, will appear and create a terrible security problem for Nigeria and the international community, if the Northern Nigerian status quo is not challenged. The only sustainable way to challenge the Nigerian status quo is to allow for a general modernization drive that would effectively end feudalism in Northern Nigeria. This would entail a reorientation of Western cohabitation with Northern Nigerian feudalists and a reassessment of alliances with forces that are, ultimately, responsible for the appearance of organizations such as Boko Haram. In other words: Northern Nigerians should be given democratic options to exercise mastery over their own future, beyond the current dichotomy of Fulani feudalists or the Boko Haram. A possible way to go would be to seek avenues towards labour actors. Considered suspect during the Cold War, labour (in the form of the Nigeria Labour Congress and other umbrella organizations) could be an anchor for decent forces of moderation especially in the Northern part of the country.

### **The future**

John Campbell, former U.S. ambassador and currently the foremost expert on Nigeria at the Council on Foreign Relations in the United States, famously opined that Nigeria is destined to fall and disintegrate into at least two independent nations.<sup>23</sup> This may happen in our view also. At the same time, we would like to draw the reader's attention to a historical parallel with South Asian partition (the Indo-Pakistan partition of 1947). That partition, based on Muslim and non-Muslim religious blocks, created not only tens of millions of dislocated refugees and more than a million casualties, but planted the seeds of three major Indo-Pakistani wars and currently, a nuclear stalemate. The 'partition option' thus seems far from ideal. This is not only a humanitarian concern but a vital security concern also. Indeed, as the tenth largest producer of crude oil, and as the fifth biggest supplier for the U.S., Nigeria has a global strategic weight that is unequalled in West Africa.

At the same time, experts on Nigeria are few in number. The country is not very hospitable and presents the researcher with scores of day to day nuisances. The same problems, in aggravated form,<sup>24</sup> constitute the daily life of most Nigerians, a very underprivileged group of people indeed.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> János Besenyő, *Terrorexport a Szaharába – Al-Káida klón a sivatagban – A Földgömb*, a Magyar Földrajzi Társaság folyóirata, XIII (XXIX) évfolyam, 2011/5/257, July-August 2011, pp.38-41.

<sup>22</sup> János Besenyő, *Vallási Konfliktusok újratöltve? - Honvédelmi Minisztérium honlapja*, [http://www.regiment.hu/hirek/kulfoldi\\_hirek/vallasi\\_konfliktusok\\_ujratoltve](http://www.regiment.hu/hirek/kulfoldi_hirek/vallasi_konfliktusok_ujratoltve) (accessed 17 May 2010).

<sup>23</sup> John Campbell, *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink*, Concil on Foreign Relations, Rowman & Littlefield, 2010.

<sup>24</sup> Jean-Francois Bayart, Stephen Ellis, Béatrice Hibou, *From Kleptocracy to the Felonious State?*, In: Jean-Francois Bayart, Stephen Ellis, Béatrice Hibou: *The Criminalization of the State in Africa*, The International African Institute, in assoc. with James Currey, 1999, p.10.

<sup>25</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook, Nigeria*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html>

Independent for 53 years, Nigeria has not been able to provide electricity to its citizens. Households rely on diesel generator – rich households that is. Others make do with small Chinese generators that work an hour or two a day. Under these circumstances, production is nearly impossible because businesses do not have sufficient electricity to operate economically. It actually makes more economic sense to import everything from abroad – especially China. The substandard Chinese products that enter Nigeria are on the average barely usable even when they enter the country, but they go wrong in the course of a week with certainty. Everything is more expensive than in the EU, including basic food items. Most people are desperately poor. Educated Nigerians leave the country as a rule: there are more Nigerian doctors in the United States than in Nigeria. The terrible lack of skills that characterize Nigeria is especially striking in the North where Western learning arrived only very late and where it met a lot of opposition from the start. Not as marked as in the case of Boko Haram though – Boko Haram is a modern, 21st century phenomenon (despite its medieval ideology), similar in that sense to global political Islam itself.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps it would be time enough that the West developed a new way of looking at Northern Nigeria, and an attitude beyond following the current, especially now that the current seems to lead to nothing else but a maelstrom.

## Conclusion

Given the specific historical circumstances in which Nigeria finds itself, a change of the status quo seems inevitable. A status quo that results in uprisings such as that of Boko Haram, is obviously unsustainable in the long run. The dismantling of legal inequality perpetuated in the 'law of the land' as a source of law in Nigeria seems crucial but this is not something that foreigners or the international community can force on Nigerians. However, there is a general Western policy to 'deal with' the traditional authority in Northern Nigeria. This seemed eminently expedient to the British who had built their method of 'indirect rule' on this basis. Certainly there is a clear need for an effective government and state.<sup>27</sup> However, in the early 21st century, this seems an outdated policy. Northern Nigerian traditional emirs have not been able to modernize their rule. What their domination resulted in was nothing else but insurgency itself. Thus the authors of this article feel that it is time that the international community changes its stance on Northern Nigerian politicians and starts to deal with those who offer a glimpse of hope for modernization. Obviously, it is the role of intelligence services, military and civilian, to identify moderate forces who are capable still, of making an impact in the region. This way, the federal government's Joint Task Force would not be on its own, trying to carry out its vital mission.

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<sup>26</sup> János Besenyő, *Erősödő terrorizmus a Maghreb-régióban* - AFRIPORT.hu website, <http://www.afriport.hu/hirek/gazdasagi-hirek-magyarorszag/8998-ersoed-terrorizmus-a-maghreb-regioban-elemzes.html> (accessed 27 July 2011).

<sup>27</sup> Mária Bordás, *Corruption Risk Analyses – Development of Integrity-Based Administrative Culture*, Study in the Collection of Essays Published by the Hungarian State Audit Office Budapest 2012. pp.20-22.

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## **26/11 Terror Attack in India: Measuring the Operational Cost**

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**Abstract:** *India which is part of the global coalition to curb terrorism financing has been at the receiving end of terrorism for the past four decades. The dynamic nature of terror groups in India with diversified funding sources has enabled them conduct trans-border attacks like the one carried out by Lashkar-e-Toiba (26/11 Mumbai attack) in 2008. In a way, the Mumbai attack epitomised the struggle, India has undergone at the hands of terror groups. This has prompted scholars to investigate the planning behind this attack including the level of costs incurred for commissioning this attack, which is germane to this study. Conflicting estimates on the operational cost of the Mumbai attack creates an imperative to revisit the costing aspect. The costs incurred fall under various stages like reconnaissance, planning and execution encompassing financial overheads such as recruitment, weaponisation, logistics, training, intelligence. Strangely, the study shows that the high cost of commissioning the Mumbai attack is bucking the trend of in-expensive and decreasing operational costs of terror attacks. This higher financial outlay for Mumbai attack appears to be borne out of a deliberate intent on the part of LeT to regain lost ground to competitors, to reap benefits in terms of publicity, and to gain new patrons and funding. This study will endeavor to construct the total financial cost incurred by the terrorists for commissioning the 26/11 Mumbai attack by performing a content analysis on existing secondary data and try to come to a logical conclusion.*

**Keywords:** *26/11 Mumbai attack, Terrorism, Terrorism Financing, Operational Cost, Lashkar-e-Toiba.*

## Introduction

The finances of terror groups are appropriated under two broad categories. They are the organisational cost and the direct operational cost. Organisational cost relates to infrastructure, food, day to day expenses, subsistence, shelter, weaponisation, training etc., On the other hand, operational cost refers to expenses directly incurred to commission a terror attack. For instance, the 9/11 attack is estimated to have cost Al Qaeda somewhere from USD \$400,000– \$500,000.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, similar estimates of other terror attacks around the globe have to some extent been helpful in identifying the trends, patterns thereon. According to a 2004 UN report, the cost of conducting terror operations has been gradually waning post 9/11.<sup>2</sup> Measuring these direct operational costs provides policy planners with an understanding about the financial budgeting that goes behind the planning of these terror attacks. A closer scrutiny about the financial behaviour behind these attacks provides us with information on the sources of funds and the *modus operandi* used for movement of money.

Hence, measures to combat financing of terrorism (CFT) have become an integral part of counter terrorism policy agenda around the world. This integration process of CFT regimes into counter terrorism regimes has been hastened further by two major terror attacks that took place in the early and later part of 2000s. The first one is the attack on World Trade Center in 2001(9/11 attack) which led the United States Government and international bodies like the United Nations to initiate measures to choke the finances of terror groups like Al Qaeda and the Taliban. The second one which is more relevant to India is the 2008 Mumbai attack by Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT). This attack prompted the Indian government to expedite various CFT legislations. India also initiated remediation in its CFT institutional and legal apparatus to become a member of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to curb money laundering and terrorist financing.

However, in spite of these existing CFT measures in India, commissioning a grand terror strike such as the Mumbai attack, directly questions the effectiveness of CFT mechanisms in place. The Mumbai attack which is commonly known 26/11 attack was series of twelve coordinated attacks by ten terrorists belonging to LeT in Mumbai on November 26, 2008. The targets were Taj hotel and towers, and the Oberoi Trident, Cama Hospital, Chatrapathi Shivaji Terminus, Leopold café, Nariman house (Jewish community prayer house). The targets which were chosen are places which are frequented by Westerners. These terrorists gained entry through crossing the Arabian Sea from Pakistan in a ship. This attack lasted for four days, resulting in the death of 164 persons including 28 foreign nationals and injuring 308. To conduct an attack of such enormity and magnitude requires a huge financial outlay. However, there has not been a detailed inquest in studying or esti-

<sup>1</sup> John Roth, et.al., *Monograph on Terrorist Financing*, The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, Washington D.C, 2004, p 3.

<sup>2</sup> *First report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team appointed pursuant to resolution 1526 (2004) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities*, United Nations, New York, 2004, p 12, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/469/63/PDF/N0446963.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed 20 March 2014).

Note: According to the above UN report, the cost of conducting terror operations are as follows 1998, US embassies bombing in Kenya and Tanzania cost \$50,000, October 2000 USS Cole attack cost \$10,000, 2002 Bali bombings cost less than \$50,000, 2003 Marriot bombing cost \$30,000, November 2003 attacks in Istanbul cost less than \$40,000, 2004 attacks in Madrid cost about \$10,000.

imating the cost incurred for commissioning this terror attack. Thus, this vacuum creates an imperative to study the operational cost of 26/11 Mumbai attack which may enlighten us on crucial aspects which have influenced the financing decisions behind this attack.

### Conflicting Open Source Estimates

Various open source documents estimate different costs levels for the 26/11 Mumbai attack. While one open source estimate by Journalist Vicky Nanjappa in 2008 calculates the total cost at USD \$900,000,<sup>3</sup> another open source in 2011 claims the total cost to be around USD \$200,000.<sup>4</sup> Another recent estimate in a book written by Adrian Levy & Cathy Scott-Clark, has measured the cost at a mere USD \$40,000.<sup>5</sup> This estimate however has been contested by Vicky Nanjappa who came out with another estimate of USD \$450,000 to USD \$550,000<sup>6</sup> in 2013 which was lower than his earlier estimate in 2008. All these calculations are riddled with anomaly when concerned with the individual cost constituents needed to arrive at the final figure.

For example, the 2008 Vicky Nanjappa report has calculated the one time reward for family members of the LeT cadres at Rs.2 million per member which totals to Rs.2 Crores (approximately USD \$450,000 for ten LeT members). On the other hand, the 2011 report by Kambere, *et. al.*, have calculated the total annual cost (training, family payments, monthly payments, training etc.,) at USD \$12,500 per person totaling to USD \$125,000 (for ten terrorists). Measured against other estimates, Levy and Clark estimate is way too low for such a complex attack.

While, the 2008 Rediff report quotes an Indian Intelligence Bureau (IB) assessment as its source, the 2011 Kambere, *et. al.*, assessment is based on an article by Mr.Jyoti Trehan, a former Indian Police Service officer. While calculating the annual costs, Kambere, *et. al.*, have used the annual costs incurred for terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir (as quoted by Trehan) which does not have any relevance to the 26/11 Mumbai attack. Any calculation based on this is bound to give an erroneous prognosis of 26/11 Mumbai attack costs for two reasons. Firstly, the annual payments to which Trehan refers, do not say whether it pertains to Lashkar-e-Toiba. Secondly, there is a huge time gap between the cost estimates in 2001 Trehan article and actual occurrence of the 26/11 event in 2008.

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<sup>3</sup> Vicky Nanjappa. "Mumbai Attacks Cost Lashkar Rs 4 Crore", 2008, *Rediff.com*, at <http://www.rediff.com/news/2008/dec/26mumterror-mumbai-attacks-cost-lashkar-rs-four-crore.htm> (accessed 20 March 2014).

Note: Cost of Rs.4 Crores converted @ 45 Rupees to 1 USD at the average prevailing rate in 2008

<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey Kambere, et.al., "The Finances of Lashkar-E-Taiba", *Combating Terrorism Exchange*, January 2011, Vol:1(1), 6-22, p.18.

<sup>5</sup> Bhupesh Bhandari, "26/11 Cost Just \$40,000: Adrian Levy & Cathy Scott-Clark", *The Business Standard*, 22 November, 2013. at [http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/26-11-cost-just-40-000-adrian-levy-andcathy-scott-clark-113112201065\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/26-11-cost-just-40-000-adrian-levy-andcathy-scott-clark-113112201065_1.html) (accessed 20 March 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Vicky Nanjappa, "26/11 cost lashkar Rs.2 Crores", 2013, at <http://vickynanjappa.com/2013/12/03/2611-cost-lashkar-rs-2-crore/> (accessed 20 March 2014).

Note :Cost of Rs.2 to Rs.2.5 Crores converted @ 45 Rupees to 1 USD at the average prevailing rate in 2008

On the other hand, the 2008 Vicky Nanjappa report quotes the one-time payment to the families of each of the attackers at USD \$45,000, quoting an IB source<sup>7</sup> which is in direct contrast to the claims made by Ajmal Kasab, who was the lone surviving member among the LeT attackers. Kasab's statement provides a figure of just USD \$4,000 as a one-time payment.<sup>8</sup>

These glaring gaps and conflicting claims create an imperative to construct the cost of commissioning this attack, which would indicate the broad range and the major cost components involved. This study would perform a content analysis on the information derived from open source material, in order to construct the cost of the Mumbai attack.

However, before attempting to measure the costs associated with the Mumbai 26/11 attack (hereinafter referred to as the Mumbai attack), it is imperative to know the different cost overheads under which the operational costs broadly fall into. They can be classified as reconnaissance, tactical training, weaponisation, logistics, material support, forged documentation, clandestine travel and safe house. Apart from this, reward and compensation for participant's family members can also be included as a part of the operational cost. All of these occur at different stages during commissioning a terror operation.

### Stages

There are three broad phases in commissioning a terror attack.<sup>9</sup> They are reconnaissance, planning, and execution. Each of these consists of secondary activities such as training, weaponisation, travel, documentation, etc. While the activities associated with initial surveillance would come under the reconnaissance stage, the planning stage consists of planning financial budgets, resource allocation (both human and financial), identifying and training the human resource, and weaponisation. The last step would be the execution stage, which would consist of activities related to infiltration, target acquisition, execution of mission and exfiltration. Hence, the costs for each of these activities will be incurred during the course of the operation as it progresses. However, costs for one activity belonging to one stage could be incurred or could overlap in the preceding or succeeding stage based on necessity.

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<sup>7</sup> Vicky Nanjappa, "Mumbai Attacks Cost Lashkar Rs 4 Crore", 2008. The report quotes the one-time cost of Rs.2 million converted @ 45 Rupees to 1 USD at the average prevailing rate in 2008

<sup>8</sup> For example, see Richard Esposito, "Mumbai Terrorist Wanted to 'Kill and Die' and Become Famous", *ABC News*, 2008, at <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/Story?id=6385015&page=2> (accessed 20 March 2014).

Praveen Swami, "Pakistan now holds the key to probe: investigators", *The Hindu*, December 2008, at <http://www.hindu.com/2008/12/01/stories/2008120157370100.htm> (accessed 20 March 2014).

Note: Both these open sources quote Kasab as stating that 1,50,000 or USD \$4000 was promised as a payment to his family.

<sup>9</sup> For example, see United States of America vs Zacarias Moussaoui, United States District Court, Virginia, 2006, p 144, (Zacarias Moussaoui is part of the 9/11 plot team believed to be the 20<sup>th</sup> hijacker).

<http://cryptome.org/usa-v-zm-030706-01.htm> (accessed 20 March 2014).

Interrogation report of David Coleman Headley, The National Investigation Agency of India, New Delhi, 2010, Headley was a member of the 26/11 team, who conducted reconnaissance.

Note: The trial proceedings and interrogation reports of terror plot members have indicated that the terror attack cycle is constituted by three broad phases namely reconnaissance, planning and execution.

These operations are planned and executed by different set of members. The first are the decision makers, who decide on the targets based on the reconnaissance, then comes the facilitators who would supply, followed by the executors, who would carry out the operation.<sup>10</sup>

### **Reconnaissance Stage**

The first stage is the reconnaissance stage, where the actual foundation for the terror attack is laid. This stage would give the decision makers with a choice of potential targets to be attacked. The reconnaissance is normally obtained by physical surveillance of the potential targets, through photos and videos. It can also be complemented with latest technological guidance through Global Positioning System (GPS) which would plot the routes and the exact coordinates of potential targets.

The reconnaissance for the Mumbai attack was conducted by David Coleman Headley, during his seven visits to India, starting from September, 2006. Headley reconnoitered various targets for the attacks as well as the possible ingress points into India, which have been listed below. The following are his visits, arranged chronologically:-

- First visit to India (September 14, 2006 to December 14, 2006) – He undertook photographic surveillance of BMC building, Haji ali, Gateway of India-Hotel Taj, Apollo Bunder, Head Quarters of Maharashtra State Police- DN Road, Azad Maidan, Marine drive.
- Second trip to India (February 21, 2007 to March 15, 2007)
- Third trip to India (March 20, 2007 to May 17, 2007)
- Fourth trip to India (May 20, 2007 to June 07, 2007)
- Fifth and Sixth trip to India (September, 2007) – Extensive survey of various entry and exit points of Hotel Taj. Headley conducted surveillance of National Defence Academy, Delhi and Shiv Sena Bhawan, Mumbai, Army installations in Pune. It is imperative to state that this was the stage, where the Mumbai attack culminated into a multiple target attack instead of an attack on hotel Taj alone as planned earlier. Various entry and exit routes into and from India was also contemplated at this stage. Original plans were to infiltrate through the Bangladesh or Nepal border, however, this was later changed to an entry through sea.
- Seventh visit to India (April 2008) – This visit was mainly for reconnaissance of the landing sites for the attackers. Headley undertook boat rides from Taj/Apollo Bunder area, marine drive and Cuff Parade (the site where the attackers landed on the night of the Mumbai attack). Headley was instrumental in identifying the boat which would ferry the attackers. Headley conducted reconnaissance of Bhabha Atomic Research Center (BARC) by video graphing the entire complex. He also conducted photographic surveillance of VT terminal, Mumbai railway station and a nearby bus station. This was the stage when the exit points for the attackers were also discussed. Initially, a “safe house” mode was planned but however, it was later changed to “strong hold option” once Chabad House was also identified as a target.

<sup>10</sup> “United States of America Vs Usama Bin Laden”, *United States District Court*, New York, 2001, at <http://cryptome.org/usa-v-ubl-dt.htm> (accessed 20 March 2014).

Headley was given USD \$25,000 by a Pakistani intelligence officer named Major Iqbal for conducting these reconnaissance activities.<sup>11</sup> Headley was also given USD \$640 approximately (in Pakistani Rupees 40,000) during his later trips to India.<sup>12</sup> Apart from these, USD \$4,400 was sent by Tahawwur Rana to Headley during his first visit in 2006. However, it is not clear whether the amount sent by Rana was actually spent on surveillance, yet the same has been included as Rana was also complicit in this attack and provided cover for Headley to operate in Mumbai. The total cost incurred during this stage sums up to USD \$30,040.

### **Planning Stage**

The next stage is the planning stage, which sets in once the target identification phase is in place. This normally constitutes recruitment, indoctrination, training and weaponisation. In the case of the Mumbai attack though, originally planned only against Hotel Taj, developed into a multiple target attack, half way through the reconnaissance phase. Since, the reconnaissance for identifying potential targets started in 2006, both the planning as well the reconnaissance phases ran concomitantly.

### **Recruitment**

The primary activity in this phase is recruitment, where prospective members are identified, recruited, who are then motivated and trained. Around 30 members were identified for the training. Of these, only ten were selected as the assault team. They are Ajmal Kasab, Abu Ismail, Imran Babar, Nasir, Nazir Ahmad, Shoaib, Hafiz Arshad, Javed, Abdul Rehema, and Fahad Ullah.

The details of costs incurred for recruitment are not available exhaustively in the open domain. However, Headley's interrogation report and the Ajmal Kasab's judgement report state that the ten attackers who participated in the Mumbai attack, joined *Lashkar e Toiba*, motivated by videos of purported atrocities against Muslim communities in India shown by the LeT leaders and also driven by abject poverty, and unemployment. This voluntary motivation coupled with economic reasons negates the possibility of large sums being paid to terrorists. However, it is an unwritten convention among extremists claiming affiliation with Islam (ECAI) groups to reward or pay compensation to the immediate family members of the terrorists who are martyred in the terror attacks.

According to one open source publication quoting Ajmal Kasab (the lone surviving member who was apprehended and executed later), each of the member's family were promised or paid USD \$4,000 as a posthumous reward<sup>13</sup> which would put the total approximate cost towards one-time reward payment at USD \$40,000. These ten attackers were picked from a pool of trainees who were trained in different phases on different aspects.

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<sup>11</sup> "Interrogation report of David Coleman Headley", The National Investigation Agency of India, 2010, p.44.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.66. PKR 40,000 converted @ 62.32 PKR to 1 USD rate prevailing in February 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Esposito, "Mumbai Terrorist Wanted to 'Kill and Die' and Become Famous", 2008 and Praveen Swami, "Pakistan now holds the key to probe: investigators", 2008.

Note: USD \$4,000 \*10 attackers = USD \$40,000

### **Training**

The attackers underwent a series of training programmes. The attackers who were chosen had to undergo these basic training programmes apart from the specialised marine training which came later. The details of various training programmes are listed below based on their level.

***Daura-e-Sufa*** - The duration of the training lasted three weeks which imparted practices of Islam's *Salafi* school of thought. Around thirty trainees including the actual Mumbai attackers underwent this training course in a LeT camp, Muridke, Pakistan which was held from December, 2007 to January 2008.<sup>14</sup> All the trainees were put through rigorous indoctrination and basic physical training during this phase.

***Daura-e-Aam*** - In February 2008, all the trainees were chosen for the next level in the Lashkar's training course known as the *Daura-e-Aam* in a LeT camp, Battal Village, Pakistan. This training which lasted 21 days pertained to the use of arms and ammunition, training in folding and unfolding weapons.

***Daura-e-Khaas*** - The next level in the training system is the *Daura-e-Khaas* which lasts for 60 days held in LeT training facility in Muzaffarabad, Pakistan. The attackers were trained in using arms and ammunition like AK-47, use of launchers, satellite phones, hand grenades, map reading (G.P.S.), etc. This was held somewhere between May and July, 2008.

***Daura-e-Ribat*** - After completion of the above level, 22 trainees were short listed including the ten attackers for the next training level. However, only fifteen out of the twenty two trainees were selected to undertake the final level of training known as the *Daura-e-Ribat*. This training pertained to intelligence collection, gathering knowledge of targets, maintaining surveillance on targets and exits plans in case of a counter-attack. They were also trained to misguide people by assuming false identities. This training was completed in August 2008.

***Special Training*** - Thirteen trainees were then put through specialised training programmes including marine training, technical aspects related to masking caller country details in phones etc. The marine training lasted for three days which took place in Karachi, Pakistan in September, 2008. During the marine training, they were trained to read maps, to judge the depth of sea, use of GPS and they were also trained to spread fish net in the sea (to disguise as fishermen). Six of these trainees were sent to Kashmir but were later replaced by three more members taking the total tally of attackers to ten.

While, the cost associated with conducting *Daura-e-Aam* training is USD \$330 and the cost of *Daura-e-Khaas* training is USD \$1,700 per person.<sup>15</sup> Hence, the training costs associated with

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<sup>14</sup> For details on different training courses, see "The State of Maharashtra vs Mohammed Ajmal Mohammad, Amir Kasab @Abu Mujahid", High Court of Mumbai, 2011, p 288.

Note: It has been mentioned in this judgement report that the other trainees including some of the attackers were already in this training course.

<sup>15</sup> Wilson John, "Let: terror incorporated The Caliphates's Soldiers: The Lashkar-e-Tayyaba's Long War", Amaryllis, New Delhi, 2011.

<sup>16</sup> *Daura-e-Aam* USD \$330 \* 10 persons = USD \$3,300

*Daura-e-Khaas* USD \$1,700 \* 10 persons = USD \$17,000

Cost components of other training programmes are not available.

these two phases alone comes to USD \$20,300.<sup>16</sup> This does not include the costs of other training programmes mentioned above as there is no data available. Absence of data on other training programmes may render this cost assessment exercise incomplete. However, given the lack of data, this is the best possible figure that can be projected without compromising the integrity of this research.

### ***Weaponisation***

The next activity in the planning stage is the weaponisation of the attackers. Each attacker was equipped with one AK-47 rifle, 9 mm pistol, eight-ten grenades, and ten IEDs. The black market rate for the above can be an ideal measure to assess the value. The rifles would cost USD \$8,000 approximately (ten rifles @ USD \$800 each), pistols USD \$5,000 approximately (ten pistols @ USD \$500 each), grenades USD \$20,000 approximately (100 grenades @ USD \$200 each), IEDs USD \$5,000 approximately (ten IEDs @ USD \$500 each).<sup>17</sup> The total weaponisation cost is around USD \$38,000 (summation of the above).

These attacks were coordinated with latest communication and navigation equipment like Satellite phones, voice over internet protocol (VOIP) and GPS. The team was equipped with 5 GPS devices (each for a buddy pair of two attackers) which could cost around USD \$ 1,500 in the open market.<sup>18</sup> They also had a satellite phone to communicate with their handlers which cost around USD \$1,000.<sup>19</sup> The fee for VOIP cost around USD \$479<sup>20</sup> and mobile phones could cost around USD \$1,000 approximately (ten phones @ USD \$100 each). The total communication cost is around USD \$4,000 (summation of the above).

### **Execution Stage**

The next and final stage is the execution stage where the actual attack transpires. In case of the Mumbai attack, since most of the activities were already completed in the earlier stages, this stage was constituted by infiltration, target acquisition.

<sup>17</sup> For weapons seized, see “Final Report of Mumbai Terror Attack cases”, Mumbai Police Department, 2009, p 8.

For black market rates, see Manimugdha S Sharma, “How the market for illegal weapons is booming in India”, *The Economic Times*, (25 November, 2012) at [http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-11-25/news/35346737\\_1\\_illegal-weapons-ak-47s-gun-laws](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-11-25/news/35346737_1_illegal-weapons-ak-47s-gun-laws) (accessed 20 March 2014).

Note: This article quotes the black market price of AK-47 to be in the range of Rs.60,000 to Rs.500,000 and price of a 9 MM pistol around Rs.40,000. If we are to calculate the USD equivalent using the conversion rate of Rs.45 to 1 USD, we arrive at a rate of USD \$1,100 for an AK-47 and USD \$ 880 for one 9 MM pistol.

The price of hand grenades is USD \$287 according to <http://www.havocscope.com/black-market-prices/ak-47/>

IEDs prices have been guided by average cost of making IEDs by Indian Mujahideen, a terror group in India supported by Pakistan. Personal discussions with police officers investigating Indian Mujahideen terror attacks have indicated that the average cost of producing an IED is around Rs.25,000 which roughly works out to USD \$500 @ Rs.45 for 1 USD.

However, factoring the year of occurrence in 2008, the rates have been discounted to much lower levels.

<sup>18</sup> The market rate of GPS devices is in the range of USD \$200 to USD \$300 at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

<sup>19</sup> A high end Thuraya Hughes satellite phone costs around USD \$1,000 at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

<sup>20</sup> “Final Report of Mumbai Terror Attack cases”, Mumbai Police Department, 2009. p 36. According to this report, two payment of USD \$250 and USD \$229 were made for the VOIP.

### ***Travel***

The Mumbai attackers chose the sea route. However, couple of earlier attempts to cross over into the Indian Territory failed before the Mumbai attack succeeded. Their first attempt to infiltrate ended in failure, when the boat in which they were traveling sank after hitting a rock. This boat cost around USD \$55,000.<sup>21</sup> Their second attempt to cross over using a rented boat also failed as the fishermen became suspicious, withdrawing from the attempt. This attempt cost USD \$11,000.<sup>22</sup> They succeeded in their third attempt by hijacking *MV Kuber*. They also used a dinghy with an outboard motor to move near the Indian coastline which would cost roughly around USD \$9,000.<sup>23</sup> Hence, the total travel cost would amount to USD \$75,000.

### ***Subsistence***

Apart from the above, each pair of attackers were given Rs.10,000 (Rs.10,800 rounded off to Rs.10,000) for their survival in Mumbai in case of a hostage taking situation or a prolonged 'strong hold' scenario.<sup>24</sup> The total cost of this subsistence allowance adds up to USD \$2,200 approximately.<sup>25</sup> The Mumbai police recovery of Rs.4,000 - Rs.6,000 from each of the attackers stands testimony to this.<sup>26</sup>

### **Data Caveats to the Assessment**

The total financial cost incurred for the Mumbai attack works out to USD \$210,000 approximately. However, there is always a possibility that some of the cost components have not been included due to various reasons.

While, some costs have been left out due to reasons that they cannot be specifically apportioned for the Mumbai attack alone, others costs such as specialised training costs and organisational costs such as infrastructure, cost associated with paying support activities and support members, are not included for lack of data. For instance, the training costs of David Coleman Headley have not been included as they were incurred way back in 2003 when this attack would not have been foreseen. Similarly, the training costs of other trainees (30 overall) have not been included as some of the members were used for other terror operations. Similarly, there have been reports that these attackers initially used a boat, *MV Alpha* provided by Dawood Ibrahim to reach high seas before actually

<sup>21</sup> "Interrogation report of David Coleman Headley", The National Investigation Agency of India, 2010, p 83.

Note: Rs.2.5 million converted @ 45 Rupees to 1 USD at the average prevailing rate in 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p 85.

Note : Rs.500,000 converted @ 45 Rupees to 1 USD at the average prevailing rate in 2008.

<sup>23</sup> The approximate cost of an outboard motor fixed rubber dinghy could be somewhere in the range of USD \$9,000. Source Srilankan government report of weapons seizures from Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam lists the price of rubber dinghy and motor as USD \$7,745 and USD \$999 respectively. "Humanitarian Operation Factual Analysis July 2006 – May 2009", Government of Srilanka, Colombo, 2011, p 183.

<sup>24</sup> "The State of Maharashtra vs Mohammed Ajmal Mohammad", High court of Mumbai, 2011,p 302.

<sup>25</sup> Rs.100,000 (Rs.10,000 \* 10 persons),converted @ 45 Rupees to 1 USD at the average prevailing rate in 2008

<sup>26</sup> "Final Report of Mumbai Terror Attack cases", Mumbai Police Department, 2009, p 8.

boarding *MV Kuber*. However, the judgement copy in Ajmab Kasab's case, refers Kasab travelling only in *MV Husseini* before boarding *MV Kuber* creating ambiguities, hence have not been included. On the other hand, certain organisational costs are also not included as they cannot be easily ascertained due to lack of data. This is the limitation of this paper. However, an indicative figure can be attempted to arrive at a broad continuum for the total costs which could incorporate the other costs that have been left out.

Similar estimation exercise of other terror attacks like the 9/11 commission report gives a broad range from USD \$400,000 to USD \$500,000 incurred for the 9/11 attack. The 9/11 commission was able to map only USD \$330,000 of the above mentioned cost estimates. The rest has been computed more on an assumptive basis incurred towards obtaining passports and visas, travel to the United States, expenses incurred by the plot leader and facilitators, and the expenses incurred by would-be hijackers who ultimately did not participate.

Adopting a similar methodology, the mapped cost of the Mumbai attack works out to USD \$210,000. This includes reward payments, logistics/travel/weaponisation, communications cum navigation, and part of the training costs. Having quantitatively mapped most the overheads either fully or partially (in case of training), the total cost derived appears almost complete. However, since it is not practically possible to fully estimate all the cost over heads to a surgical precision, it is imperative to provide a broad continuum to rule out any abnormal errors during these estimates. Logical reasoning indicates that error on the downside is ruled out, while there is possibility of costs escalating further if we are to add the training costs, organisational costs which have been not may have been excluded. Factoring in the above, the broad range could be between USD \$210,000 to USD \$310,000. Other incidental charges which have not been established by the research could push the cost upto USD \$350,000.

### **Drivers of the financial Decision**

It would be germane to counter terrorism experts to understand the process behind how terror groups decide on the quantum of money to be expended for a terror attack and the factors guiding the same. The most striking feature of this attack is the high cost of commissioning the attack which has been influenced by various factors. They are:

***Ideological conflicts*** - Ideological conflicts among terrorists and militant groups in Pakistan is one of the primary reasons for LeT to orchestrate the Mumbai attack on such scale and magnitude. Major fundamentalist groups which operate in Pakistan are LeT and *Tehreek-e-Taliban* (TTP). While, the TTP is more inclined towards conflicts in Afghanistan and Pakistan western sector, LeT has been more interested towards so-called jihad in Kashmir. These polarising views led to deep schisms among outfits which has been characterised by splits and internecine conflicts. LeT, in order to, shore up its support, had to plan a spectacular strike such as 26/11. Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has been under tremendous pressure to thwart any integration of Kashmir based outfits like LeT with Taliban based outfits. It is with these background and divergent notions, LeT set the stage for a spectacular attack which later culminated into the Mumbai attack.

***Dwindling Recruitment*** – Every organisation is sensitive to its members than to the government policy.<sup>27</sup> Likewise, terror groups like LeT are also sensitive to the behaviour of its members. Given the importance of human resource in a highly competitive environment, LeT was forced to adopt measures in order to veer them away from other groups. For instance, because of a division among terrorist constituents in Pakistan, most of the hardcore fighters shifted their focus to Afghanistan and the troubled Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). LeT, by planning a spectacular strike, aimed to control the scattering flocks together, thus mitigating the risk of further splits and desertions. Such a strike would shift the theater of violence from Pakistan to India and at the same time raise the sagging morale of its members. This in turn would increase the recruitment levels.

The above macro level issues have influenced LeT's decision to orchestrate a spectacular strike, which in turn impacted their costing decision. On the other hand, micro level factors below played a major part in deciding the cost levels once the decision was in place.

***Bridging the variance*** - The success or failure of an attack depends upon the ability of the group and the security measures that must be overcome to attack the potential target.<sup>28</sup>

Terror operations which are planned takes into account the characteristic of the target, resources of the groups (both financial and human), training and weaponisation, entry and exit strategy. Invariably, there is always a possibility of a gap between the abilities of a group and the resources needed to achieve the expected outcome from a terror attack. This gap which is the variance forces these groups to adopt deviant measures in order to adjust or close the gap. Deviant behaviour by terror groups from anticipated or established past patterns is bound to mislead the law enforcement agencies who expect the terrorists to behave in a set manner based on their experience. Likewise, LeT also planned this Mumbai attack factoring certain variances between their ability and the resources need to overcome the security measures in place to protect it.

LeT used the sea route to gain ingress into India to offset heavily patrolled and monitored land borders through Nepal and Bangladesh which is the usual route infiltrators use. Another aspect is related to the reconnaissance stage, where Headley was used for this activity instead of local operatives or Pakistani operatives. Deviant tactics like that of using naturalised American citizen like Headley for terror operations, was unexpected by the Indian intelligence agencies. Both these measures diluted the possibility of detection, as the Indian intelligence agencies were not expecting these. However, these measures also played a part in escalating the cost levels.

Marine training like navigating sea lanes, use of GPS was imparted to the attackers once the ingress through sea was decided. Similarly, Headley, a foreign national was entrusted with the reconnaissance activity instead of relying on a local source which would have been relatively cheaper. Both these components pushed the cost levels up considerably.

***Escalating the enormity*** - Originally, the Mumbai attack was conceived as a two member

<sup>27</sup> Martha Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism", David C Rapoport (ed.), *Inside Terrorist Organizations*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1988, p.13-31.

<sup>28</sup> Brian A. Jackson and David R. Frelinger, *Understanding Why Terrorist Operations Succeed or Fail*, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, 2009.

assault on a single target (Hotel Taj) alone infiltrating through land borders of Nepal or Bangladesh. However, Since Pakistan was riddled with conflicts among terror groups due to the ideological clash, LeT was forced to increase or scale up the enormity of the planned attack to make it appear spectacular. The two member assault team was replaced with a ten man team planned to attack five different targets simultaneously. The costs linked with each of the financial overheads, in turn increased proportionately pushing the associated costs up considerably.

**Deviating from previous attack history-** Prior to the Mumbai attack, LeT's usual signature style of attacks were predominantly bomb blasts. LeT, which has been active in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), has relied on ambush style or storming attacks on army pickets, convoys, camps, etc., in J&K alone. It has used bomb blasts to target crowded areas in other Indian cities. LeT, deviated from their usual attack style to plan the Mumbai attack in a spectacular and grandeur manner to attract international attention.

For instance, an armed attack by *Lashkar e Toiba* on Indian Institute of Science (IISc), in Bangalore in 2005, cost around Rs.5 million (USD \$116,279).<sup>29</sup> Another bombing attack in 2008 by a group of local ECAI aided and funded by LeT, cost Rs.290,000 (USD \$6400 approximately).<sup>30</sup>

**Failed attempts** - LeT's attempt to cross over to India via sea failed twice before the actual 26/11 happened. These failed attempts cost LeT USD \$66,000. These failures though cost Lashkar heavily, imparted necessary knowledge to succeed eventually. On the other hand, the success prompted LeT and other groups to resort to similar tactics in their future operations.

The Mumbai attack has been a unique event which has appealed to both the LeT and other terrorist constituents elsewhere. On most of the previous occasions, LeT conducted attacks in India with existing local modules infiltrated much earlier than the proposed attack date. However, in the case of the Mumbai attack, the last minute ingress into India and subsequent storming assault ensured secrecy and reduced the possibility of exposure. This set the stage for similar attacks which followed later. For instance, a three member LeT assault team stormed an army camp and other installations in Samba, Jammu & Kashmir. The attackers, dressed in army fatigues, crossed over into Indian Territory via the land border on the same day of the attack.<sup>31</sup>

A similar plan to attack London by Somali terrorist group *Al Shabaab* drew inspiration from the Mumbai attack. However, this was foiled as the mastermind behind this plot, Fazul Abdullah Mohammed was killed.<sup>32</sup> However, the Westgate mall attack in Kenya by *Al Shabaab* bears a strong resemblance to the Mumbai attack. Small assault teams, hostage taking, explosives, last minute ingress and incendiary measures all point to Mumbai style tactics.

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<sup>29</sup> Vicky Nanjappa, "Mumbai Attacks Cost Lashkar Rs 4 Crore", 2008.

Note: Rs.5 million converted at 43 Rupees to 1 USD at the average prevailing rate in 2005.

<sup>30</sup> Rajesh Ahuja, "*Terror beyond borders. Gulf Malayalis fall prey to LeT trap*", 2010, *Teheka.com*, at [http://archive.teheka.com/story\\_main47.asp?filename=Ne091010CoverstoryII.asp](http://archive.teheka.com/story_main47.asp?filename=Ne091010CoverstoryII.asp) (accessed 20 March 2014).

Note: Rs.290,000 converted @ 45 INR (average ) to 1 USD prevailing rate (average) in 2008.

<sup>31</sup> "Samba terror attack: All three terrorists killed after gun battle at Army camp", 2013, *India Today*, <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/samba-terror-attack-terrorists-killed-after-gunbattle-army-camp/1/311869.html> (accessed 20 March 2014).

<sup>32</sup> Bill Roggio, "Shabaab plot to attack London planned to be 'similar to ... Mumbai'", 2013, *long war journal*, [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/09/shabaab\\_plot\\_to\\_atta.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/09/shabaab_plot_to_atta.php) (accessed 20 March 2014).

## Conclusion

Complex and spectacular terrorist attacks demand a huge financial outlay. In case of the Mumbai attack, the operational cost is estimated to be USD \$350,000. Of this, 35% was spent towards transportation which includes the costs towards purchasing the boats for both the failed and successful attempts. Other cost contributions were - reconnaissance around 15%, recruitment around 20%, weaponisation 20%, and training costs around 10%. In terms of measuring the costs associated with different phases, the costs associated with the execution phase are much higher than those incurred during the reconnaissance and planning stages.

The high costs incurred for the Mumbai attack on par with 9/11 attack is an ample testimony to the fact that the in spite of a global proscription, LeT's financial network has still managed to survive and is intact. The high cost levels runs contrary to an emerging pattern among terror attacks which has witnessed a decrease in the operational costs. This also underscores the ability of LeT to raise large amount of funds without much difficulty. In other words, the war on financing of terrorism has not been successful as expected which is a wakeup call for the policy makers. The dynamism of LeT's financial networks evolving into a more hybrid form relying more on legitimate sources like charities and donations have rendered the counter terror finance mechanisms redundant. Policy planners need to understand that finances of terror groups does not flow or behave in a manner which can be anticipated.

Incidentally, the Mumbai attack does provide us with a comprehension that LeT has deliberately chosen a higher financial outlay considering the mileage they would gain out of it. Internally, the decision makers behind LeT's attacks would have measured the cost to benefit calculations, before attempting anything as enormous as the Mumbai attack. In terms of percentage to its total budget, the actual cost is hardly 7% of its annual military budget of USD \$5.2 million.<sup>33</sup> While, in terms of absolute value, the costs appear to be high, but in terms of percentage to its total budget, the cost looks rather ordinary. On the other hand, LeT has benefitted immensely by scoring one-upmanship over peers (competitors), drawing new members, attracting new funding sources, gaining wide international publicity from this attack. Thus, the benefits which arose out of this attack far outweighed the costs for commissioning it which is the underlying principle with which global terror groups operate today.

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<sup>33</sup> "Lashkar's annual military budget is \$5.2 million", 2010, *The Hindu*, at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/lashkars-annual-military-budget-is-52-million/article935471.ece> (accessed 20 March 2014).

Note: USD 350,000 of USD 5.2 million.

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