Homegrown Terrorism / Radicalization: Causes and Dimensions

COE-DAT Workshop Experts Meeting
09-11 June 2015
Ankara, Turkey

Activity Report

Preface

This workshop was conducted as a follow-on to a workshop conducted in June 2014 at the Center of Excellence – Defense against Terrorism (COE-DAT) in Ankara, Turkey

In setting up this workshop, the organizers reviewed on-going international efforts and decided to focus on the front side of home-grown terrorism – radicalization and the early prevention of it.

Therefore the following specific objectives were developed, with presenters asked to address these issues in their presentations.

"**Home-Grown Terrorists: Attacking the Problem Head-On"**

1.   How do we engage civil society in addressing the problem?

1.1   What "triggers" or signs should families, religious leaders, friends and teachers look for to take action?

1.2   What "triggers" or signs should police and antiterrorist agencies use to take action?

1.3   What "triggers" or signs should civil society use to make referrals to police and antiterrorist agencies?

1.4   What should be the confidentiality boundaries in using civil society (non police – antiterrorist units) to address possible radicalization?

2.   What actions can be taken to deradicalize?

2.1   Can civil restrictions be used?

2.2   Can passport confiscation or denaturalization processes be used?

2.3   How do we ensure due process in addressing radicalization?

3.   What should deradicalization programs include?

3.1   What means can be used to achieve deradicalization?

3.2   What measures of effectiveness can be used?

This series of workshops is designed to not just be a series of academic theories, but an attempt to glean useful information from academics and practitioners so as to provide helpful guidance to the counterterrorism world.

The hope is to use this series of workshops to develop sound guidance for counterterrorist forces to use in battling the 'home-grown terrorist.'

Disclaimer: In this workshop, the presenters and attendees were presenting their own personal views for the purposes of discussion and where not representing their countries or organizations in any official capacity.

Panel 1

Introduction of the Aim and Goals of the Workshop

After introductory remarks and presentations about COE-DAT, the workshop academic adviser outlined the goals of the workshop and an overview of the past year's workshop.

Identification and Management of the Vulnerable People, Chief Inspector Dick Meadows (Acting Detective Chief Inspector, Head of Thames Valley Police Preventing Terrorism Team).

This presentation explored the difficulty for not only service professionals but also for the wider public to recognize people who are, or could be drawn into extremism, or moving along the pathway to radicalization. It examined six persons from a crowd shot who presented an average demographic of the UK, however each one had been convicted of terrorist offences, covering all forms of extremism.

All the forms of extremism that operate within the UK, ranging from Irish-related, extreme right wing, environmentalism, animal rights groups and finally the greatest threat to the UK, terrorism claiming affiliation with Islam, were explored. Helping define the line between free speech and extremism the UK Government has set in stone the definitions of extremism and extremism claiming affiliation with Islam.

A debate then ensued on examining the risk factors that pull and push vulnerable people towards these extremist groups, examining the wider social issues as possible causes for disaffection. To counter these issues, the UK National Counterterrorism Strategy was presented, examining in detail the "Prevent" element as intelligence-led policing focusing on threat, risk and vulnerability. The UK police manage this risk through Prevent Case Management, balancing an approach between enforcement and support for identified vulnerable individuals.

Issues of the current climate, including current and future threats, and the foreign conflict in Syria and Iraq were discussed. The similarities of the pull and push factors were presented, where previous findings on the long term social dissatisfaction of young men and women featured heavily. From their viewpoint, the lure of a better life in the 'caliphate' appears to offer more opportunities than staying in the UK.

Panel 2

Radicalization and Recruitment of So-Called Jihadists - A Case Study, Dr. Daniel Heinke (Counterterrorism Coordinator of the State Ministry of the Interior, Free Hanseatic City of Bremen, Germany, and affiliated with two academic research institutions working in the field of radicalization and (counter)terrorism).

The analyses supplied by security authorities in the Western world (including both law enforcement agencies and the intelligence community), as well as research conducted by dedicated academic institutions over the last decade, have time and again strengthened the assessment that there is no viable "profile of the homegrown so-called jihadist." The radicalization process of violence promoting extremists claiming affiliation with Islam (ECAIs) – however, appears to follow a simplified three-step model with a stage of grievance as the starting point, a phase of molding into the movement through ideologization and lastly the

mobilization to actively support violence-promoting activities. With regard to the various different means of exposure to a so-called jihadist ideology (including, among others, self-radicalization via the Internet, contact with individual peers, and active recruitment by Islamist organizations), still one of the most influential situations is the discussion and the common experience within a distinct group of people bonded by a common persuasion. This is the reason why organizations and/or places where such a common persuasion is acted out and which are easily accessible to new visitors can rapidly develop into a radicalization hub – a (possibly fairly small) surrounding inducing more and more persons to adapt a so-called jihadist ideology and consequently join the violence-promoting efforts of an movement claiming affiliation with Islam. Dr. Heinke introduced a case study from Bremen where a comparatively small club, with around 50-60 followers from the mosque it operated, developed into the single radicalization node being responsible for literally all departures of suspected foreign fighters and other supporters of the terrorist organization "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/DAESH)" in the Bremen metropolitan area. The closure of this mosque and the administrative ban of the club very quickly significantly reduced the number of departures of potential foreign fighters and effectively stopped the affiliation of new followers into this group.

The state counterterrorism coordinator stressed the importance to search for such possible radicalization hubs in addition to more person-oriented approaches, and to assess the possible results for administrative courses of action directed against theses nodes as an effective supplement to classic prevention and criminal investigation efforts.

France's Approach to Detecting and Preventing Radicalization, Mr. Romain Quinvooij (Associate Research Fellow, Radicalization Studies Program, Center for Excellence for National Security (CENS), Singapore).

Radicalism has been defined in an internal training manual provided by the French Home Office as "any discourse that uses religious precepts presented as Muslim to lead a young person to self-exclusion and the exclusion of those who are not like him." To address the security challenges associated with this phenomenon, a comprehensive organization has been implemented by the French authorities. Major entities and officials involved in detection and prevention include the National Centre for Support and Prevention of Radicalization (NCSPR); prefects; judges and mayors. However, identification and profiling attempts are made difficult by the variety of individuals going through processes of violent radicalization. Some 'early signs' of so-called 'jihadist radicalization' listed by the French Home Office focus on visible behavioral changes. These harbingers provide valuable indicators, but the interpretation of weak signals is a challenging task, especially when radicalization leading to violent extremism happens in a very short period of time. Despite the identification of common points by the French Home Office ("a situation of failure, a search for meaning or a search for identity") there is no single socio-economic, religious, cultural or family profile between French violent radicals. On the prevention side, counternarrative tools have been used, in addition to individualized support sessions. The latter raises the sensitive question of the religious dimension, a key element of the debate in a country where secularism is a fundamental value.

Panel 3

Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism in South East Europe, Colonel Dr. Methodi Hadji-Janev (Associate Professor of International Law, Military Academy General Mihailo Apostolski, Skopje, Former Yugolavian Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)).

Unlike Western Europe, the region of South East Europe (SEE) has a long tradition of multicultural and multireligious societies. Islam has a long tradition in everyday lives in SEE. Muslim and Christians communities have established warm relations and traditions of mutual understanding, tolerance and respect. However, religious radicalism and extremism in the SEE has always been politically stimulated. According to some Western authors, early evidence shows that the region of SEE was just used as a breeding ground with the least interest to hamper local countries or act locally. Although these observations are true for a specific period of time, today there is both anecdotal and empirical evidence about the threat from radical religious extremists ready to commit terrorist activities.

In the Jasarveic attack on the US Embassy in Sarajevo in 2011 (Bosnia), the Smilkovci terrorist attack on 5 Christian civilians in 2012 (Macedonia), or the Burgas suicide attack in 2012 (Bulgaria) are clear examples that confirm why the threat is real and present.

Furthermore, the number of the so-called foreign fighters who have left the region to fight and perhaps die in Syria or Iraq is constantly growing. Therefore, the region needs to focus on a prevention and effective strategy that will provide platform for de-radicalization. None the less, before one creates a strategy for prevention and deradicalization, one needs to understand the drivers that produce such behavior among the SEE's Muslim communities.

A fair view is that there are two sets of drivers that enable radicalization in SEE region. These sets of drivers are global and specific-region based.

- The first set i.e. the global drivers come from the effects of globalization, financial crises, support for the global war on terror and its repercussions and other global geopolitical trends

- The second set of drivers – region based are dynamic history with long memories; democratization and corrupt transition; ethnic tensions and ill-structured conflict management; negative images of security services inherited from former Yugoslav conflicts or authoritarian regimes; social instability in the region (mainly due to economic deprivation) and inter-Muslim conflicts.

By abusing these drivers, groups and individuals with malicious goals and agendas have established a unique process of radicalization**.**

First, there is a misinterpretation of the general social challenges (unemployment or severe social conditions); then, they bring these challenges in the context of ethnic challenges. Inconsistencies and social inequalities in the SEE societies are usually emphasized with specific graphic material acceptable to the target audience and always with religious prefix; the religion is offered as a relief and hope that the government and the 'different one' are the enemy.

Hence, if the SEE governments are to effectively prevent and stop these processes, they need to build effective preventive strategies that will prevent processes of radicalization, effectively manage the consequences of the already radicalized part of the society and create resilient societies that will be able to bounce back to the imported malicious intentions and agendas of

some groups and individuals. The best way to do this is to have the whole of the government approach.

Panel 4

Characteristics, Motivations and Modus Operandi of Dutch So-Called Jihadist Foreign Fighters, Prof. Edwin Bakker (Director of the Centre for Terrorism and Counterterrorism at Leiden University).

This presentation addressed a number of important points regarding foreign terrorist fighters, specifically with regards to the approach taken to address the problem. There must be a realization that there are a number of 'push' and 'pull' factors in this arena, that have to be addressed in the home country and in the area where they fight. Pull factors are the responsibility to protect (fellow Muslims), finding a purpose for life, getting away from problems at home, religious motivation, comradeship, adventure, action, weapons and to die in a blaze of glory. The push factors are personal and family problems (60% were members of mental health institutions with complex problems) and confrontations; religion runs skin-deep as an incentive. Broken families remain the main source of recruits, with almost 90% of recruits being of Moluccan background. Recruits expect death upon their travel as the cost of participation. The key is to stop the flow of recruits but it is important to understand who all the stakeholders are at all levels but also address the fact that someone has to be in charge.

Development, Progress, Backgrounds Municipality of The Hague, Mr. Stephen van den Bosch (Operational Specialist of The Hague Police Force and Liaison Officer between the Netherlands Police Force and the Municipality of The Hague).

This presentation addressed the specific issues of radicalization in The Hague. The numbers of travelers reflect a substantial problem and needs to be addressed. The targeted pupils and students, imams and religious key figures, youth workers and youth, and active and practicing [stable] youth are significant. Workshops were used to identity development, training on subculture of young people and social structures, specific paths for key figures, support for debate and dialogue between groups and communities, and development of a counter narrative) through social media as part of a proposal for a 'European Program for the Prevention of Radical Mentalization.' Understanding the neighborhood and applying an empathy-based approach is important. The approach of the municipality was to network/establish communication, improve knowledge and skills, improve social resilience, and create a person-oriented approach. The result was the creation of a holistic approach where there is structural and systemic consultation between mosque leaders, imams, the mayor and the police chief. Resocialization of returnees from the warzones is imperative, with the need for a central reception center with administrative custody for the returnees. Those individuals identified as a danger can be then retained for "car wash" or "decontamination" as needed.

Panel 5

The Causes of Radicalization: Ethnicity, Politics and Power, Prof. Tahir Abbas (Department of Sociology / Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Fatih University, Istanbul).

The presentation looked at the history of radicalization first, beginning with the Rushdie affair in 1989. Discussion of radicalization turned towards how it is symbiotically related to policy issues that drive dissenting voices underground in the rush to eliminate radicalization but at the same time suppressing civil liberties. This results in a focus on religion and suspicion of differing practices. Appreciating the push factors is vital and this involves discourse with the "other", but sometimes the fear of engagement with the problematic societies holds back needed efforts. A locked out and marginalized fourth generation with no hopes of future security is emerging in Birmingham and Bradford. Stories of suffering and double standard have begun to spread around mosques, where the perception of a security state and elimination of civil liberties becomes the norm. Along this line, discussion of a three-month detraining period of the outsider (boat migrants as the current example) challenges the principles of habeas corpus. The presentation closed by discussing policy options such as keeping dialogue open and not allowing confusion between Islam and Islamism.

Panel 6

Radicalization as a challenge for open societies - Global conflicts and Regional Effects, Dr. Marwan Taam (German Police Forces)

This presentation addressed the issue of radicalization in open societies. It first reviewed the Arab Spring movement and related that to the distribution of Muslims in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. The presentation then focused on Iraq and the rise of the ISIL/DAESH as a matter of geopolitics. However, to put this issue in perspective, when one considers Germany's 4 million Muslims, the Salafis only account for 8,000 - less than one percent. The presentation then characterized radicalization as a "black box" whereby youth enter, and are then subjected to social pressures, political convictions, group dynamics, religious beliefs, identity conflict, and economic problems, resulting in a radicalized output. The current situation is that it is hard to separate international security from internal security in the securitization of sociopolitical phenomena, so you have extremism promoting extremism. This also manifests itself as polarization of Islamic discourse and interethnic conflicts. Radicalism begins when the individual beings to think radically; the motivation for radicalization is different than that of a believer. Radicals see power as a prerequisite to changing things - collective action motivates them to change their action from defending themselves against discrimination to seeking social change. The main motivation for joining radical groups may be as simple as celebrating their identity (gender, ethnic), so that radicalization establishes attachment through provoking the emotional memory of potential recruits.

Countering the Radicalization Threat in Pakistan: An Analysis of the Counter Terrorism Efforts and Results, Mr. Muhammad Inkasar Khan (Senior Superintendent of the Pakistani Police Force).

According to the presentation, the process of radicalization is well-documented from its point of view - one is radicalized when the individual is convinced that society is of no use and the state has failed. Radicalization widens when societal arrangements are of no use and the state has failed to make the necessary reforms. Regional necessities need to become the approach before collective response because violence can have links to regional economic relations. One observation was that Pakistan's educational reforms could significantly alter the next phase of radical recruitment. However, there is no one particular formula that works universally. A few case studies were examined that focused on aspects unique to Pakistan, followed by a discussion of the huge cost of terrorism in Pakistan (more than $100B in 14 years). The Pakistani army has been successful against the TTP with increased powers under the Pakistan Protection Ordnance and the formation of temporary military courts after a constitutional amendment. This was part of a national action plan developed Peshawar incident.

Panel 7

Needs and Prevention of Membership in Terrorist Organizations in Turkey, Assoc. Prof. Sıddık Ekici (Police Chief Superintendent of the Turkish Police Force)

The questions of what terrorists found to be influential in their radicalization and how this is based in theory were central to this presentation, which showed how the decision to become a terrorist through radicalization can be understood in the context of modern social theory, particularly through the work of Abraham Maslow and his hierarchy of needs. Developing esteem within the ladder comes to self-esteem, which is satisfied by recognition; but in the sense of esteem it is not perpetual

By taking a case study of the terrorist groups in Turkey, he looked at them from a standpoint of better understanding these groups and the individual members as a way to develop better policy. Differences in defining terrorism alters discourse among actors of security forces. The causes of terrorism must be regarded primarily in multiple stages and creating a counternarrative in the presence of various factors is difficult to deduce.

Workshop Observations / Recommendations

As a result of the presentations and discussions at the workshop, the following observations and recommendations could be noted:[1]

1. Observation – There are notable differences with regards to the early or late involvement of the prosecutors in the process of preventing radicalization.

Recommendation – Prosecutors should be brought into the process as soon as the national laws allow so as to able to offer expert advice as to when a crime has been committed or to avoid conflicts with other activities, although their role may be extremely limited at first.

2. Observation – The prevention of radicalization is clearly a multinational process but must be led and coordinated to be effective.

Recommendation – Governments should implement all counterterrorist measures as per international convention and then have clear procedures assigning responsibility and leadership for countering radicalization.

3. Observation – Any person in society could potentially recognize certain signs of radicalization.

Recommendation - There should be a national system to make people aware of the threat without creating alarm and it easy to report possible radicalization anonymously.

4. Observation – Some studies have characterized a percentage of radicalized people as having mental health issues and under treatment.

 Recommendation – Mental health workers should be trained to recognize and report important triggers with regards to those contemplating terrorist violence for proper referral

5. Observation – Case studies show that mosques and schools can be incubators of radicalism, but private study circles and informal activities may also pose threats.

Recommendation – Prevention of radicalization can be focused on these areas without fear of being considered "profiling" but actions taken must not discourage the valid practice of religion.

6. Observation – People who are susceptible to radicalization are only one class of young people who are vulnerable.

Recommendation – Safeguarding people vulnerable to radicalization, but particularly youth in the context of other vulnerable populations, can prevent further stigmatization

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[1] However, one should not conclude that all attendees supported all these as worded. To some extent, the wording chosen represents a compromise position.

7. Observation – Islamophobia, counterdemonstrations and radicalization are linked.

Recommendation – Governments should take efforts to discourage demonstrations against Muslims to reduce radicalization but instead promote dialogue as a way to address concerns.

8. Observation – Returned fighters who attempt to counter radicalization in media are viewed as not credible whereas they still may be effective one-on-one.

Recommendation – National and international media products to discourage radicalization should focus on Muslims.

9. Observation – Pull factors such as war in Syria can be a tremendous lure that work in conjunction with push factors to radicalize people.

Recommendation – There should be adventure available other than religious war to satisfy these pull and push factors

10. Observation – Radicalization is a process that can be interdicted but there is not singular method of radicalization.

Recommendation – Intelligence-led policing should be employed to counter radicalization

11. Observation – Countries may not be using all the tools that they have under international law.

Recommendation – National legal reviews should be done regularly in an evolving situation.

12. Observation – Freedoms of speech and religion are perhaps at odds in countering radicalization

Recommendation – Governments should have a comprehensive plan to promote dialogue in order to address the tensions and lack of information

13. Observation – Child protection procedures are easier to use regarding preventing radicalized fighters from traveling to war zones with families or radicalization of underage youth.

Recommendation – Expanded use of child protection courts should be used to counter radicalization

14. Observation – Administrative control procedures such as no contact orders, protective detention, home arrest, closure of radicalization hubs or seizure of passports can be effective in preventing radicalization or acting upon that radicalization.

Recommendation – Expanded use of administrative procedures should be used when possible or advisable, being aware of possible blowback, but must always be based on sound individualized evidence.

15. Observation – Police monitoring of people may prevent radicalization if the targets are aware of the monitoring.

Recommendation – Early intervention and continued monitoring by police officers may prevent lone wolves and individual potential offenders from radicalizing

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Assessment against Workshop Objectives

As addressed in the preface, this workshop had some specifically defined objectives to address and now this report will recap the workshop discussions against

"Home-Grown Terrorists: Attacking the Problem Head-On"

1. How do we engage civil society in addressing the problem?

In addition to law enforcement, military, and other counterterrorist forces, deradicalization requires full coordination with the full range of social services and civil society. However, process should be defined by law with a designated lead agency and other taskings defined so that vulnerable individuals are not missed.

It is important to remember that radicalizing individuals or individuals susceptible to radicalization are only one category of vulnerable people and should be handled as the other categories so as to not further stigmatize these individuals.

Frequent multi-agency case reviews ensure that a person's individualized case is handled as appropriate.

1.1   What "triggers" or signs should families, religious leaders, friends and teachers look for to take action?

The triggers and signs of radicalization can vary, with no particular ones being dispositive, but can include almost any unexplained change in a person's behavior and interests. However, it is likely that greater focus on religious issues may be most apparent, with questioning of long-held beliefs or questioning the belief of others being common.

Once changes occur in an individual, referral to the deradicalization process as soon as possible.

1.2   What "triggers" or signs should police and antiterrorist agencies use to take action?

The main trigger that should be used is the threat of violence. Once a radicalizing person threatens violence, it is now a threat to public safety and should be referred to law enforcement as soon as possible.

1.3   What "triggers" or signs should civil society use to make referrals to police and antiterrorist agencies?

In addition to the threat of violence, when it becomes clear that social services are not winning in the battle to prevent radicalization or deradicalize, the case should be referred for possible law enforcement action and domestic intelligence agencies, where applicable

1.4 What should be the confidentiality boundaries in using civil society (non police – antiterrorist units) to address possible radicalization?

Although society rightfully protects the privacy of people undergoing medical treatment, including mental health issues, procedures should be enacted whereby medical personnel are able to refer a person to antiterrorist authorities without fear of violating the law.

2. What actions can be taken to deradicalize?

Deradicalization occurs in the same methods as radicalization but is often most effective one-on-one in a controlled environment. Deradicalizing individuals do not have a single simple issue, but have a complex set of problems that must be addressed. A deradicalizing individual has to be respected as a person and must be able to develop a life – job, family, friends, and hobbies – as a way of promoting stability and importance of life.

2.1 Can civil restrictions be used?

Civil restrictions such as monitoring, home confinement, confiscation of passport, travel restrictions, etc, can be effective in the short-term as a measure to prevent an extreme act. However, they must not be overused or in a context contrary to legal procedure. There should be a defined process with the opportunity to challenge such a measure within a regular judicial process as soon as possible. Also keep in mind the juvenile courts have broad powers to protect children and juveniles as well as a (separated) parent's custody rights.

2.2 Can passport confiscation or denaturalization processes be used?

Passport confiscation can be effective but must be coupled with procedures to ensure another is not issued. For dual nationals, loss of citizenship could be possible with proper procedure and could be a very effective way to address the danger from home-grown terrorism. Loss of one's single nationality is problematic in that international law does not favor "stateless" persons.

2.3 How do we ensure due process in addressing radicalization?

There should be no special short-cut procedures to address radicalization. Existing internal procedures should be used to the maximum extent possible to ensure that measures taken are recognized internationally and withstand appeals domestically.

3. What should deradicalization programs include?

Deradicalization should address not only the philosophical aspects but also health, social and lifestyle changes. Not only should deradicalization remove beliefs incompatible with society but

should focus on developing alternate interests, such as family life, hobbies, sports, and a vocation so that the deradicalized person does not reradicalize as a survival mechanism.

From a process-oriented point-of-view, it is important to ensure coordinated measures of all actors involved both vertically (i.e. nation, state, city, and local communities) and horizontally (i.e. homeland security, justice, education, and social services)

3.1   What means can be used to achieve deradicalization?

All resources available to society should be used to deradicalize. However, there must be a defined and on-going process for this, with clearly established roles, coordination and leadership. The same plan will not work for all radicalized individuals, so there must be an individually-tailored plan that is constantly evaluated on its success or failures, and adjustments made accordingly.

3.2   What measures of effectiveness can be used?

The most appropriate measures would be deradicalization program completion rates and recidivism rates.

Conclusion

COE-DAT greatly appreciated the contributions of all attendees – speakers, participants, and staff alike – that helped make this a very successful venture. In particularly, we would like to thank the reporters – Mr. Bahadır Tolga Özgentürk and Ms. Nazlı Daşdemir for their efforts in capturing the discussions.

In addition to the information and views exchanged, a number of acquaintances were made that hopefully will result in more coordinated and focused action to reduce the threat from home-grown terrorism in the future.

From the organizers' perspective, the workshop was a great success. Not only was there a group of specialists with diverse backgrounds and specializations brought together, but the participants were able to focus on the specific objectives desired for some meaningful conclusions.

Respectfully Submitted,

Hans Stam
Major, Royal Netherlands Marechaussee
Workshop Director

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Larry D. White, J.D.
Major, United States Air Force (Ret)
Workshop Academic/Legal Advisor