

The Counterterrorism Conundrum: Understanding Terrorist Organizations, Ideological Warfare and Strategies for Counterintelligence-Based Counterterrorism

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ABSTRACT

This red cell analysis illustrates through case studies the capacities and capabilities of the Islamic State (IS) terror organization at its peak, and the Haqqani Network over time as individual organizations, including their origins, ideology, leadership, organizational structures, and operational capabilities, to examine global terrorism with a focus on the ideological warfare challenges of combatting radical Islamic terrorism. These organizations' connections to al Qaeda and the parts they play in the greater rising threat of global radical Islamic terrorism are established in order to frame global terrorism from a strategic historical standpoint to evaluate counterterrorism strategies for the future. The author presents strategy recommendations for the United States Intelligence Community (IC) and policy makers to effectively address the national and global security threats posed by transnational terrorism, using a combination of strategic counterintelligence and targeted ground operations, along with an original seven-principle approach to effective counterterrorism operations, as well as a broader strategy for targeting the ideological roots of radical Islamic terrorism.

Keywords: counterterrorism, strategy, ideology, terrorism, Haqqani, al Qaeda, counterintelligence, international law

El dilema del contraterrorismo: Comprensión de las organizaciones terroristas, la guerra ideológica y las estrategias para el contraterrorismo basado en la contrainteligencia

RESUMEN

Este análisis de glóbulos rojos ilustra a través de estudios de casos las capacidades y capacidades de la organización terrorista Estado Islámico (EI) en su apogeo, y la Red Haqqani a lo largo del tiempo

como organizaciones individuales, incluidos sus orígenes, ideología, liderazgo, estructuras organizativas y capacidades operativas. examinar el terrorismo global con un enfoque en los desafíos de la guerra ideológica de combatir el terrorismo islámico radical. Las conexiones de estas organizaciones con Al Qaeda y el papel que desempeñan en la creciente amenaza del terrorismo islámico radical global se establecen para enmarcar el terrorismo global desde un punto de vista histórico estratégico para evaluar las estrategias de contraterrorismo para el futuro. El autor presenta recomendaciones estratégicas para la Comunidad de Inteligencia de los Estados Unidos (CI) y los formuladores de políticas para abordar de manera efectiva las amenazas a la seguridad nacional y global planteadas por el terrorismo transnacional, utilizando una combinación de contrainteligencia estratégica y operaciones terrestres específicas, junto con un enfoque original de siete principios. a operaciones efectivas de contraterrorismo, así como a una estrategia más amplia para atacar las raíces ideológicas del terrorismo islámico radical.

Palabras clave: contraterrorismo, estrategia, ideología, terrorismo, Haqqani, al Qaeda, contrainteligencia, derecho internacional

反恐难题：解读恐怖主义组织、意识形态战和基于反情报的反恐战略

摘要

这篇假想敌分析（Red Cell analysis）通过案例研究阐述顶峰时期的伊斯兰国（IS）恐怖组织、和随时间推移作为独立组织的哈卡尼网络（Haqqani Network）的规模和能力，包括各自的起源、意识形态、领导力、组织结构、以及操作能力，以期分析全球恐怖主义，聚焦于打击极端伊斯兰恐怖主义过程中意识形态战的挑战。确定了这些组织与基地组织的联系，以及它们在全球极端伊斯兰恐怖主义这一愈演愈烈的更大威胁中发挥的作用，以期从战略历史视角建构全球恐怖主义，进而评价为未来做准备的反恐战略。作者通过结合战略反情报和精准地面操作、一项针对有效反恐操作的7原则法、以及一项锁定极端伊斯兰恐怖主义意识形态根源的、更广的战略，为美国情报界（IC）及决策者提供战略建议，以有效应对由跨国恐怖主义引起的国家及全球安全威胁。

关键词：反恐，战略，意识形态，恐怖主义，哈卡尼，基地组织，反情报，国际法

“Do not repeat the tactics which have gained you one victory, but let your methods be regulated by the infinite variety of circumstances.”

“If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles.”

—Sun Tzu

Introduction

Islamic terrorism as it has become today is the product of more than a millennium of internal conflict and discord, between the Sunni, Shi'ite, and radicalized Muslim communities around the world, coupled with interference in Muslim regions and nations by other countries. The perpetuation of this ancient war into the modern day by radical extremists, along with the continual pressure placed on Islamic regions from the United States and others, has the potential to undermine the fabric of civilization across the globe. This red cell analysis illustrates through case studies, the capacities and capabilities of the Islamic State (IS) terror organization as it rose to power, and the Haqqani Network over time as individual organizations, including their origins, ideology, leadership, organizational structures, and operational capabilities, to examine global terrorism with a focus on the ideological warfare challenges of combatting radical Islamic terrorism. These organizations' connections to al Qaeda and the parts they play in the greater rising threat of global radical Islamic terrorism are established in order to frame global terrorism from a strategic historical standpoint to evaluate counterterror-

ism strategies for the future. The author presents strategy recommendations for the United States Intelligence Community (IC) and policy makers to effectively address the national and global security threats posed by transnational terrorism, using a combination of strategic counterintelligence and targeted ground operations, along with an original seven-principle approach to effective counterterrorism operations, as well as a broader strategy for targeting the ideological roots of radical Islamic terrorism specifically.

Red Cell Analysis

The research methods used in this article follow the problem/solution framework, drawing on a wide range of sources, including primarily peer-reviewed journals, government publications and records, institutional publications and records, personal experiences from the author and from third parties knowledgeable on the subjects and regions discussed, military doctrine, and international law, to include International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the Laws of Armed Conflict (LOAC). Historical terrorist and counterterrorism methodologies are analyzed to inform the project and to identify successful and

unsuccessful practices in counterterrorism. Ideological tendencies are also examined to provide insight into potential gaps in modern counterterrorism efforts combatting terrorist organizations that are framed around ideological belief systems. Overall, the article takes a multi-point-of-view approach to identifying and countering violent ideologies that promote terrorism, with a goal of providing strategies not just to combat terrorism, but to provide alternative future prospects to the individuals around the world most susceptible to being drawn into such ideologies.

A multiple pronged analysis is used in this article to analyze terrorist organizations from a red cell perspective, in order to frame a predictive analysis of the evolution of modern terrorism, focusing primarily on the IS historically, and the Haqqani network as a primary emerging threat. Analysis includes the possible reactions of Middle Eastern nations and local organizations sympathetic to terrorist causes, in relation to potential counterterrorism actions. An historical account of the doctrinal origins of the Khawarij ideology, the basis of which spurs the actions of many Islamic extremist organizations (Al-Tamimi, 2014), is included to differentiate between the ideologies, and to assist in their identification to facilitate appropriate counterterrorism activities targeting them. This historical analysis sheds light on the motives and objectives of like-minded Islamic terrorist organizations, allowing predictive analysis of potential future terrorist activities based on ideological motiva-

tions and their root causes. Analytical methodologies and techniques used in this article were primarily informed by *Structured Analytical Techniques for Intelligence Analysis* (Heuer and Pherson, 2012), and *A Tradecraft Primer: Structured Analytic Techniques for Improving Intelligence Analysis* (The U.S. Government, 2009).

Analysis

Origins.

2003: A small group called Jama'at al-Tawhid wa'al Jihad, after leaving the terrorist training camps in Afghanistan, moves into Iraq under the leadership of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

2004-2006: After gaining recognition through ruthless attacks on Coalition forces in Iraq, Zarqawi pledges his allegiance to Osama Bin Laden in October of 2004, changing the group's name to al Qaeda in Iraq (AQ-I). Disunity between the two organizations leads to another name change, in October of 2006, to the Islamic State in Iraq, shortly after Zarqawi's death in June of that year.

2011: Under the leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the Islamic State in Iraq shifts their focus to Syria, where the group spends two years recruiting and building their military power.

2012-2013: Al-Baghdadi establishes Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria in June of 2012, under the leadership of Abu Muhammad al Jawlani, with official al Qaeda allegiance, and in April of 2013, tries to unite to form the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) (Al-Tamimi, 2013).

This merge is rejected by al Jawlani, and by al Qaeda leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, resulting in major infighting between the al Qaeda affiliated al-Nusra Front forces and al-Baghdadi in Syria.

2013-2014: The Islamic State in Iraq renames themselves the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), while simultaneously launching assaults on Syrian military forces, and invading parts of Iraq. As ISIL power and numbers grow in Iraq and Syria, Zawahiri severs the official ties between ISIL and al Qaeda, declaring the ISIL forces to be inconsistent with the al Qaeda ideology.

2014+: Following the hostile takeover of most of Northern Iraq in the summer of 2014, ISIL re-designates themselves as the Islamic State (IS), announcing their status as the one true Islamic Caliphate, with al-Baghdadi declared Caliph over the entire Muslim world, until his death in October, 2019 (Terrill, 2014).

Decades before Zarqawi began his career in terror, a Pakistani man named Jalaluddin Haqqani fought side-by-side with American forces in Afghanistan against the invading Soviet Army while commanding Mujahideen fighters during the Soviet-Afghan War, in turn forging a lasting relationship for the fledgling Haqqani Network with Usama Bin Laden, as well as the future Taliban and al Qaeda (Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2015: 346). The Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence Agency's (ISI) participation in this process resulted in post-war Haqqani Network ISI connections, positioning the Haqqanis to become the most potent and influ-

ential organization in the region other than the Pakistani government itself. Western forces abandoning the Afghan and Pakistani people when the Soviets left in defeat in 1989 left an emotional rift in the people, leading to the Haqqani Network redirecting and fueling their anger and discontent, painting America and Western civilization as the true enemies of the region's people and cultures. Mainly through propaganda, the Haqqanis explained to the people how the noble Pashtun fighters were being used as a proxy army to fight America's enemy for them. Extreme poverty, government abuse, instability in the region and a void in the governance of Afghanistan prompted the Haqqanis to expand into regional activities to influence and manipulate the actions of the Pakistani government through the ISI. At the same time, the Haqqanis began taking advantage of connections with the Taliban and al Qaeda to target Western nations.

Sirajuddin Haqqani, son of Jalaluddin Haqqani, has exerted his extensive network's influence across much of the Middle East since taking over command of the network, through a variety of methods from terror to diplomacy. His network threatens to undermine the government of Pakistan through its connections with corrupt members of the Pakistani ISI. The organization has developed a pattern of continuously carrying out attacks against American and coalition forces in Afghanistan, directing espionage and propaganda campaigns in India, and contributing to terrorism around the world (Pant 2011; Katzman 2014; Mitton 2014). The

Haqqani network has operated in Pakistan and Afghanistan since the Soviet-Afghan war, and was officially designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) by the U.S. State Department in 2014. Targeting the Haqqani network in Pakistan has proven extremely difficult without risking backlash against the Pakistani government due to the Haqqani's fluctuating support within the population and from other Islamic sects (Senior Administration Officials, 2012). Any fluctuations within the Pakistani government raise significant concerns, as Pakistan is a leading nuclear power in the Middle East (Kerr and Nikitin, 2012). The Pakistani government is the only thing preventing the Haqqanis or other terrorists from gaining access to hundreds of Pakistani nuclear warheads, making the Pakistan-based Haqqani Network potentially the greatest threat to America, the Middle East and the world (Kerr and Nikitin, 2012).

Ideology. Despite members of the IS being widely categorized as “exclusively radical Sunni Muslims,” the core beliefs of the movement are modeled after the Khawarij ideology of the “first Muslim extremist group,” the Kharijites (Terrill, 2014: 19; Bin Ali, 2016: 3). The embodiment of the organizational ideology that dictates the IS goals and objectives is also intimately tied to the ideological belief system of its Kharijite-esque membership (Terrill, 2014). The Khawarij ideology has existed since the seventh century, consisting of a third faction of Islamic faith and practice operating alongside Sunni and Shi'ite belief systems, though less well known,

that disagreed with both of the others. Kharijites split off, forging a path based on Islamic extremism, Jihad against all infidels, and *takfir* against all other Muslims, which is essentially the practice of Jihad against Muslims (Bin Ali 2016). The ultimate goal of the IS, with a premise resembling the original Khawarij belief system, is to effect the complete “religious and cultural destruction of Shi'ite Muslims,” and to establish a permanent and exclusively radical Islamic caliphate in the Middle East, and eventually the world (Terrill, 2014: 19). This amounts to nothing less than the complete annihilation of every person to include non-radical-Muslims on the planet, including all Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims that do not follow the radical beliefs of the IS. The intentions of all Muslims indoctrinated into this Kharijite-esque belief system, inherently include destroying America, murdering all Christians, and brutal global religious, ethnic, and racial persecution.

The inevitable regional and global destruction inherent in this ideology galvanized the world into action against the IS and against the broad spectrum of global terrorism, shifting the dynamics of international alliances due to economic, ideological or financial interests around the world. Ideologically stemming from Darul Uloom Haqqania, dubbed the University of Jihad by outsiders around the world, the Pakistan-based Haqqani Network is also a major facilitator in exporting today's Islamic jihadist mindset. The Khawarij ideology of the past declared not only that their ideological version of Islam was the only true way of life

on Earth, but that the requirement of every believer was to force this way of life on humanity, and to kill all who resist (Haqqani, 2002). Many of the Darul Uloom / Deobandi Universities around the world are ground zero for the explosive radical Islamic terrorist ideologies that have spread around the world and continue to be advanced by organizations like the IS, the Haqqani Network, al Qaeda and the Taliban. The ultimate goal of the IS and the Haqqani Network is the same ultimate goal that al Qaeda has declared, and that Darul Uloom Universities embed into their students' minds throughout their studies—Global conquest and the subjugation of all nonbelievers (Haqqani, 2002).

Leadership and Organizational Structures. The leader of al Qaeda, Ayman al Zawahiri, promoted unity between splinter jihadist factions, supporting the doctrinal work, *Call to Global Islamic Resistance* (2004), written by Abu Mus'Ab Al-Suri. This terrorist guidebook advocates for a non-hierarchical and decentralized system for global actions by radical Islamic jihadists, as opposed to command-oriented, and easier to target, operational coordination (Sharp and Blanchard, 2013; Zackie, 2013). Zawahiri repeatedly advocated for tolerance between factions during the IS' multiple declarations of partnerships with al Qaeda affiliated organizations, who in turn refuted the claims, until the final breaking between Zawahiri and al-Baghdadi in February of 2014 (Sharp and Blanchard, 2013). Final control over the IS rested with Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who challenged

the authority of al Qaeda over the global jihad movement. With this shift, al-Baghdadi gained allegiance, operational control over, or pledged support from, organizations in at least eleven countries, many with broader regional or global operational capacities.

Several of these organizations are allies or affiliates of al Qaeda, and the list includes many notorious factions, such as the Pakistani Taliban; al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), operating in Yemen; Ansar al Sharia, who were linked to the 2012 American embassy attack in Benghazi; Abu Sayyaf Group, located in the Philippines, which has been involved with planning attacks in the U.S.; al Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), headquartered in Algeria; and Boko Haram in Nigeria (The Centre, 2019). After the thralls of war and many titles, the IS quickly expanded from about 5,000 to 6,000 fighters during the takeover of northern Iraq in the summer of 2014, to more than 30,000 fighters at the end of 2014. The IS systematically replaced al Qaeda in terms of power and influence across the world and presented a clear and present threat to its American-based ideological antitheses of freedom, liberty, and democracy.

The Haqqani Network has also presented as a unique threat, mainly due to their fluctuating public support within Pakistan and influence within the Pakistani government. Public support has provided the Haqqani Network with significant protection, mainly provided by locals who believe that they are standing as a force against corruption

to protect the people of Pakistan. Drone warfare attacks perpetrated by the United States, and sanctioned by Pakistan, resulting in collateral innocent casualties on a regular basis, have provided fuel for the Network to propagandize Pakistani citizens into believing they are fighting for the people. Additionally, taking up the global Jihad call to arms against the West has also increased their momentum and support across the region, further strengthening the Network's ties with several prominent Islamic jihadist organizations. Haqqani Network support also extends into the Pakistani government itself, and into the ISI in particular (Pant, 2011). The Haqqani's international reach is impressive, that when combined with their diplomatic and espionage capabilities make them an invaluable asset to the Pakistani government and the ISI in their efforts to control and manipulate the political atmospheres in Afghanistan and India.

Sirajuddin Haqqani has taken over leadership of the Haqqani Network from his father. His remaining known living brothers, Abdul Aziz Haqqani and Anas Haqqani were prominent members within the command hierarchy until Anas' capture in 2014. Anas' capture leaves only Aziz and Sirajuddin in command of the Network, both of whom have been known to use extreme tactics and inhumane combat techniques (Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2015: 346; Office of the Spokesperson, 2015). While the actual organization was relatively small, as of 2014 the Network had access to approximately "10,000 fighters," according to

the last U.S. State Department report on the subject, due mainly to alliances with the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, as well as al Qaeda (Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2015: 346). Sirajuddin was also indoctrinated into the hierarchy of the Taliban by Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour as the Taliban leader's Deputy, and now leads the military arm of the Taliban under Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada. This appointment enhanced this partnership, casting aside any veil of doubt protecting the Haqqani Network from being linked directly to international terrorism, and indirectly to the IS through its alliances (House Foreign Affairs, 2015).

Formed primarily by family and tribal relationships, the Haqqani Network is nearly impossible to infiltrate without targeting existing members for recruitment. The lack of cooperation from Pakistani intelligence also severely degrades the U.S. IC's ability to document and profile the Network itself (Pant, 2011). Fluctuating public support for the Haqqanis throughout the region further hinders this process and makes identification of members difficult, since many citizens support and assist the Network without actually participating in their actions. Despite this public support, there is also a public resentment throughout another contingent of the population. Those who do not believe that the Haqqanis are defending them from drone attacks believe the opposite—that the drone strikes are continuing primarily because of the Haqqani Network, and that their elimination will end the strikes. Lastly, the Haqqani Network does not have

a centralized Nation-State style command infrastructure, such as technology-based command centers or communications centers, but are instead spread out within the civilian population, making targeting their leadership a persistent problem.

Operational Capabilities. The IS successfully destabilized the Middle East in 2014 by way of an invasive conquering of much of northern and western Iraq, and northern Syria. The Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) provided “financial, material, [and] technological,” support to the IS, while designated AQ-I, and much of the IS’ operational capacity was inadvertently enhanced through other sources as well, including the United States government, indirectly (Library of Congress, 2012). Their advances in Iraq resulted in “thousands of extremists” being released from prisons, “hundreds of millions of dollars” confiscated from banks in Mosul, and “tons of military equipment,” including U.S. equipment provided to the Iraqi Security Forces made readily available by “Iraqi forces abandoning their positions” at the sight of the IS invaders (Statement by Senators, 2014; Iraq Politics, 2014). After the IS gaining control and challenging al Qaeda authority over the global jihad movement, jihadi elements in India, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria, Algeria, the Philippines, Indonesia, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Yemen, all swore support, and many allegiance, to the IS, and to al-Baghdadi (The Centre, 2019).

An unconfirmed number of “artillery, tanks, and a variety of other mil-

itary vehicles” were left by the four Iraqi Infantry Divisions that fled from the IS forces in June, 2014, along with “almost all of their weapons, equipment, and supplies” (Terrill, 2014: 18). The weapons capacity of the IS was further enhanced by military gains in Syria as well, including Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS), Russian T-55 tanks, and even “several squadrons of combat aircraft,” captured with the Tabqa airfield in northern Syria in August of 2014 (Terrill, 2014: 18). Additionally, according to the U.S. State Department, “several thousand [American] MANPADS” were “outside state control” in 2014, and terrorist organizations, “including ... al Qaeda,” were in possession of many of them (Sen. Schumer, 2014). Syria’s bio-pharmaceutical labs were also looted in conjunction with IS engagements in Syria, alluding to the possibility of biological agents and/or delivery systems falling into the hands of the IS or other terrorist organizations (Bellamy, 2014). A laptop with information of a scholarly nature on the development and implementation of biological weapons of mass destruction was also recovered from an IS cache, with instructions contained inside for creating “weaponized bubonic plague,” and other types of bombs (McGarvey and Shames, 2014). Discovery of this laptop clearly indicates intent to use such weapons if possible.

With “limited American intelligence” in the Middle East due to “a decline in U.S. Spy resources,” U.S. IC operations were stifled during the rise of the IS threat, allowing further IS ideological and military proliferation,

unchecked recruitment, and increased cyber-based propaganda successes throughout the world (Gorman and Barnes, 2014). The IS waged a “slick social media campaign,” targeting the internet savvy youth of the world, and luring them with promises of bloody revolution and a noble quest for eternal salvation (Sorenson, 2014: 26). Having recruited these technologically adept generations, the IS succeeded greatly in recruiting and ideological proliferation, by “spread[ing] its ideological virus” via YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter (Gunnaratna, 2015: 11). Through these mediums, combined with explicit execution videos and globally publicized victories, the IS continued to compel radicalized individuals and organizations around the world into action, making the threat of the global jihad movement even harder to track or counter. Global communications through social media and documentation of brutal murder allowed the IS to achieve a new historic level of global terror due to widespread visualizations not possible during past crises, presenting a formidable physical, psychological, and ideological challenge to the freedoms and stabilities that exist in the world.

In a similar fashion, playing on local citizens’ distrust of governments and the West, the Haqqani Network also uses propaganda operations on a massive scale to manipulate public support for themselves and against their enemies. Public perception manipulation allows terror operations to be conducted with minimal backlash, while preventing potential espionage actions against the Network due to the public’s

unwillingness to help. The dynamics of the Pakistani government in relation to the Haqqani Network also present a major problem in targeting them, and in differentiating the actions of the Haqqani Network with the actions of the Pakistani ISI. The Network’s coercive capabilities in India and Afghanistan are significant, but are primarily directed by the ISI, while its terror attacks are the will of the Haqqanis and are fought by the ISI and the Pakistani military in many cases. The United States supports Pakistan, who supports the Haqqani Network, who conducts terrorist attacks, which are fought by the Pakistani military and the United States. This scenario has become a chicken-and-egg cycle which must be broken in order to combat this Network, and to combat the ideologies of radical Islamic terrorism around the world.

The Haqqani Network has also cultivated strong connections within the Pakistani government, who has funded and supplied this “arm of Pakistan’s [ISI],” mainly due to their usefulness in manipulating Indo-Pak relations in favor of the Pakistani government (Kronstadt, 2012). The Pakistani government maintains its stronghold on the future of Afghanistan by supporting the Haqqani Network’s actions in Afghanistan and promoting the Haqqanis as a political element for negotiations and diplomacy in the region. With Sirajuddin’s appointment to lead the military arm of the Taliban, the relationship has become even more convoluted, and Pakistan has become a leading ally of a Network who supports global jihad through al Qaeda and the Taliban,

much like Iran. With such a unique and dangerous multifaceted partnership in the region, combined with the nuclear stockpile controlled by Pakistan, the Haqqani Network is quickly becoming the most dangerous threat to the Middle East and Western civilization (Kerr and Nikitin, 2012).

The Haqqani Network operates directly on a regional scale, and indirectly on a global scale, primarily through proxy organizations and alliances with global terrorist networks. As a regional power, the Haqqani Network is based out of Waziristan, participating in espionage and terror operations in India, Afghanistan and Pakistan, though on a much smaller scale in Pakistan to retain support from the local populace. In India, the Network's actions are sanctioned, funded, and supplied by the Pakistani ISI. The goals there are destabilization of the government of India, breeding dissent within the Indian population in order to facilitate pro-Pakistani support, and manipulating international support to facilitate the Kashmir region falling back under Pakistani control and governance (Mittton, 2014). In Afghanistan, the Network uses terror to prompt diplomatic talks designed to place the Haqqani Network into positions of power within the new government, thereby giving the Pakistani government direct input over the future of Afghanistan (Katzman, 2014). On a global scale, the Haqqani Network supports, assists, and coordinates terrorist attacks around the world, using the networks of al Qaeda, the Taliban and their allies (House Foreign Affairs, 2015).

Recommendations

Ideological Transformation. Many of the challenges of today have not been addressed before in history and must be analyzed and understood before they can be addressed. Some threats, however, are similar to threats of the past, and understanding history can help analysts learn to analyze more effectively through the study of human nature, warfare, and intelligence operations. Communism is an ideology, and the modernized Kharijite ideology that spurs the majority of radical Islamic terrorists into action is also an ideology. While there are few similarities between the ideologies themselves, the practice of combating an ideology on a global scale is not new to the United States or the IC. The Soviet Union eventually collapsed from economic and social disparity. The Communist ideology, however, lost popularity due to disillusionment within its believers, not because of the Soviet Union's collapse (Mayer, 2002). Even Communist China does not follow the original Marxist philosophies of early communism and has instead adapted to a Capitalistic type of Communism in the face of widespread disillusionment with the Communist ideology. Modern radical Islamic ideologies can be fought the same way—through intentional and widespread operations aimed at disillusioning the believers and potential believers of radical terrorism. Since cyberspace and economically challenged regions in the world are the primary recruiting grounds for radical terrorist organizations, the IC can target these same areas to eliminate

the potential for recruitment. A multi-pronged approach should be used, taking advantage of both Aggressive Strategic Offensive Counterintelligence (ASOCI) operations in cyberspace, and economic interventions to educate and elevate the populations of regions rampant with economic and social disparity, as these sociological causes are one of the primary elements that lead to radicalization around the world (Matherly, 2018). Ironically, significantly reducing social and economic disparity could collapse radical Islamic terrorist ideologies in much the same way that increasing economic and social disparity collapsed the Soviet Union.

Lack of education and the censorship of information are major factors that contribute to social disparity in the world, and therefore need to be countered with information proliferation and education. Part of this requires technological proliferation to increase the ease of access for societies to information through the internet. Another part should include government sponsorship of satellite communications and internet capabilities to Nation-States that lack the potential for such a technological infrastructure by themselves. Because this increases the risk of these technological assets being used by Non-State Actors for other purposes, increased intelligence operations, specifically in cyberspace, must accompany these information expansions. An inevitable side-effect of such a technological proliferation will be terrorist organizations becoming more connected to the digital world, making them easier to track and target over time. Finally, in

addition to longer-term strategic, economic and social methods to defeat the radical ideologies fueling the majority of Islamic terror, enhanced paramilitary operations and covert actions must form the basis of a supplemental strategy to combat physical terrorist elements around the world.

Targeted Killings as a Globalized Counterterrorism Strategy. Terrorism as it is today is a new type of threat, which requires new laws to combat, and a new legal framework centered on transnational terrorism, with targeted killing explicitly defined as a tool to combat it. Targeted killings have emerged as a distinctly defined method of combat, specifically and explicitly designed for eliminating terrorists. Rather than addressing this emerging method to combat transnational terrorism, a resistance movement has emerged that focuses on outdated laws governing State sanctioned killings and assassinations, which does not contribute to the process of addressing the problem to be solved. This focus on outdated existing law instead convolutes the process, and forces States to either conceal their counterterror activities, or violate international law in order to combat terrorism. These actions are counterproductive to the advancement of civil society. The terms terrorist and terrorism need to be explicitly redefined by the international community in modern context, specifically to identify terror organizations and their members that have emerged as the leading combined global threat that faces the world today. Once those terms are explicitly defined and agreed

upon by the international community, the Laws of Armed Conflict (LOAC) and international laws governing warfare can be readily applied to terrorism and counterterrorism as forms of combat. The final necessary step in this process will be the addition of a new section of law that addresses the rules of counterterror combat for Nations who are actively engaged in combatting terrorism around the world.

Over the course of human history, assassinations have been used to achieve military, economic, political, strategic and ideological victory. The evolution of the world and technology has created a modern era of globalized civilization, however, that requires assassination as a tool to be explicitly differentiated into categories of acceptability, legality, morality, and justice. Assassination is no longer clearly defined in any of these fields, and there is a lack of focus on identifying methods of asymmetrical combat that historically fall under the blanket definition of assassination. Lack of an accepted definition of assassination, and a lack of clear differentiation between assassinations and targeted killings, are severely hindering modern-day counterterrorism operations necessary for the protection and advancement of freedom and peace throughout the world. Targeted killings applied specifically as a counterterrorism technique, explicitly as a tool to combat terrorist organizations, must be separated from this definition and evolve into its own category of acceptability, legality, morality, and justice for mankind to survive global terrorism.

Targeted killings of terrorists are not, by any accepted definition, assassinations, because the generally accepted assassination requirement of treachery cannot be adequately met when killing a known terrorist (Memorandum of Law, 1989). Terrorist organizations do not have internationally recognized territorial boundaries that can be breached, nor do they have internationally recognized governments that can be politically manipulated or shaped through the deaths of particular leaders. These traits further remove targeted killings of terrorists from the realm of assassination. There is therefore a concrete difference between assassinations and targeted killings, and particularly targeted killings as they have been used since the turn of the century with regards to terrorism. The word terrorist must be defined by the international community.

The entire paradigm of warfare has changed so dramatically with the emergence of globalized terrorism and massive technological advancements, that new methods of combat absolutely require new laws and definitions to govern modern warfare. Instead of trying to interpret existing laws in order to apply them to transnational terrorism, a new legal framework should be established, specifically to address terrorism, in addition to the laws that exist. A new terror-centric framework is needed to provide the international community with explicit authority to target any person proven to be associated with terrorism, or with an identifiable terrorist organization, such as the IS, the Haqqani Network, or al Qaeda. Part of the legal framework for cooperative internation-

al counterterrorism operations already exists, according to the UN Human Rights Council Study on Targeted Killings. The study establishes that violating the territory of a sovereign Nation to conduct a targeted killing is justified and legal, as long as the Nation whose sovereignty is being violated is “unwilling or unable” to stop the terrorism or terrorists themselves (Alston, 2010).

This is a very powerful phrase when combined with new laws that explicitly label terrorists, terrorism, and the rights of Nations to eliminate them—so powerful that, when applied within a global cooperative counterterrorism program, implementation on a global scale would result indirectly in Nations who support terrorism taking one of the two following courses of action:

- 1) Complying with counterterrorism efforts, by taking part in the targeted killings of terrorists within their own territory, or
- 2) Actively taking up arms against the international community of Nations that have united to challenge the emergence of global terrorism.

Terrorists would quickly become legitimate targets for any nation to pursue in combat operations at anytime, anywhere, under the right of self-defense that every sovereign nation retains. The “international [terrorist] hunting license” that William Galston predicted would emerge from the post 9/11 Bush Global War on Terrorism doctrine could essentially be recognized as international law under a united global

counterterror coalition (Galston, 2002). The sensitive nature of potential violations of sovereignty involved in this process mandates that participants not only tread carefully, but also that they exhaust every available means to include any host nation in the targeting process before taking action without them.

Implementation of global counterterror operations faces some problems, however, one of which is the proximity that Nations have to potential retaliatory terrorist forces, suggesting that a long-distance strategy for counterterror targeted killings could be useful. Israel’s proximity to Palestinian terrorists, for example, is a direct factor in the lack of long-term effectiveness of their counterterrorism strategies as a method of terror reduction and prevention. Their proximity also makes retaliatory attacks almost inevitable after every strike. American targeted killings of terrorists in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other Nations in the Middle East and elsewhere, however, has caused retaliation against Americans to be extremely rare comparatively to those of Palestinian retaliatory attacks against Israelis. Long-distance counterterrorism strategies designed for Nations at a distance to conduct targeted counterterrorism strikes should be implemented as an international cooperative counterterrorism mechanism designed to increase the effectiveness of strikes, while reducing the potential for retaliation. Terrorist organizations would be less capable of responding at a distance to attacks conducted by Nations beyond their reach and would be forced to either strike an ally that is closer or do nothing.

Combating transnational terrorism is mankind's most clear and present calling, and there is no alternative course to achieve worldwide liberty. The biggest problem that exists is agreeing on how to do it. Outdated idealist international laws, binding restrictions on military and intelligence personnel engaged in counterterrorism, and ill-defined terms and definitions related to terrorism and counterterrorism contribute significantly to this problem and will continue to hinder global solutions to transnational terrorism until they are addressed. Several basic and important concepts can be learned from examining terrorism from a historical point of view, particularly when looking to understand and combat modern terrorist organizations and oppression in the world. Counterterrorism operations must embody the following seven principles to create lasting and effective success:

- 1) Embody humanitarianism;
- 2) Avoid becoming oppressive;
- 3) Control public perception;
- 4) Separate targeted organization(s) from their recruiting base, physically, financially, emotionally and ideologically;
- 5) Acknowledge and address the real problems underlying the creation of, and support for, targeted organization(s);
- 6) Encourage political resolutions and political engagement by the organization(s) to achieve resolutions;
- 7) Counter, retaliate against, penetrate and eliminate the militant elements of targeted organizations(s).

When a terrorist organization gains the upper hand in any of these areas, it acts as a negative force multiplier against the counterterrorism forces combating them, whereas achieving these principles against terrorists all at once has the potential to lead to total and permanent victory.

The embodiment of the first principle of humanitarianism is strategically important in counterterrorism in order to control the third principle of public perception. Terrorists who can effectively paint their enemies as violating this principle gain in recruitment, legal standing, and international justification for their cause. Palestinian use of hospitals and other civilian buildings when launching attacks has many times resulted in Israeli retaliations killing innocents, allowing this paint to be applied to the Israelis. Terrorist organizations that have effectively painted their enemies this way have effectively created a state of permanent warfare in many regions of the world. Every time a force wavers on the second principle, becoming oppressive to the people, or even appears to become oppressive, their cause will be set back as many times. Military forces who become oppressive, regardless of their initial mission or intentions, will inevitably be viewed as invaders and occupiers in nearly every situation, rendering operations ineffective and futile, and further strengthening the cause of hostile elements within the population. Britain exemplified this failure of

principle in 1954 during its fight with the Irish Republican Army (IRA). After the Republic of Ireland was created as its own nation, IRA members captured in a raid, who were citizens of the new Republic of Ireland, were charged with treason against the queen—the foreign queen—of England (*The Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 1954). The backlash was severe, and significantly tarnished British public perception for decades, highlighting how these principles are interlocking and need to be addressed in unison, not individually.

One major element of the success of the Haqqani Network has been built upon their manipulation of public perception, not just in Pakistan, but around the world. Controlling public perception, particularly in the context of enhancing an ideologically based struggle, has the potential to drastically enhance recruitment, motivate members, increase financial and material support, and morally degrade one's enemies. When applied in reverse, it can achieve the opposite—drastic reductions in recruitment for terrorist organizations, demotivation and demoralization of terrorists, and present cause for the withdrawal of financial and material support. Alternatively, some of the biggest advances against terrorist organizations, such as the IRA, have been achieved through the fourth principle of separating a cause from the needs and ideologies of the rest of the local populace. By enhancing the lives of the Irish aristocracy, Britain was able to gain enough public and political support to cause the people of Northern Ireland not just to avoid participation

in the IRA's fight, but to oppose them in favor of the British (McGloin, 2003). This tactic was so effective in Ireland that even today, after Northern Ireland has been granted the right to vote to unite with the Republic, they choose not to (Coakley, 2008). Efforts must be used to ensure that terrorists are viewed as terrorists by local populations in order for counterterrorism operations to succeed.

In order to truly combat the causes of economic or social disparity, including in terrorist organizations, the fifth principle of real problems underlying their existence and support systems must be acknowledged and addressed. While murderous people will always exist in the world, without a perceived justifiable cause they will likely remain alone, less dangerous, and less powerful. Part of addressing these problems should include the sixth principle of a political approach, allowing a non-violent method to give voice and face to the struggles of the people, so that they can be understood and solved. The possibility of the Taliban acting as a political force should never be undermined or degraded to the point of permanent elimination, regardless of its violent trends over time. The Taliban offers the most likely path towards a peaceful resolution of differences within Afghanistan and in the Middle East, and eliminating it completely would essentially equate to killing the possibility of lasting peace, making achieving the fifth principle all but impossible. The seventh principle of countering, retaliating against, penetrating, and eliminating the militant elements of targeted

organizations is absolutely necessary for the success of every other principle, however it is also the most visible principle, receiving the most publicity and potentially backlash from the local and international communities.

Aggressive Strategic Offensive Counterintelligence (ASOCI). The fight against radical Islamic terrorists is an ideological fight. Freedom and democracy are the terrorist's adversaries, making a globally focused strategic counterintelligence initiative, targeting not just specific groups, but the ideology in which they are based, the most logical weapon. Targeted information operations are one important counterintelligence element necessary to address the recruiting efforts of terrorist groups around the world. Primary goals for such information operations should include either intentional misrepresentation of radical ideologies, designed to drive away potential recruits, or representation and advocacy for freedom-based ideologies that run counter to the modernized version of the original Khawarij belief system. Counter-recruiting operations should also be run under the information operations premise, in order to support collection or infiltration operations, with an underlying strategy designed to empower the people of Pakistan and around the world in target recruiting areas for radical Islamic organizations. Combatting the ideology should be simultaneously advanced with combat operations, but under a new structure that will require the participation and support of many nations around the world.

Since the rise of al Qaeda and the Taliban, and the proliferation of communications technologies and the internet, this ideology has grown from many inconsequential and disconnected factions into a decentralized constellation of elements, all working towards similar goals and complementing each other's actions. With ideological power centers reaching all corners of the planet, amplified messaging stemming from each of the Darul Uloom Universities, and individualized radical terrorist organizations around the world threatening all of mankind. To combat this ideology, a strategy must be adopted that is more complex than simply fighting individual networks. The entire system must be accounted for and addressed simultaneously, including strategies to eliminate new sources of radicalism, strategies to remove the sources of power at these universities through humanitarian-based efforts, and strategies for counterterrorism operations designed to eliminate existing militant terrorist factions that already exist. To transform the ideology, education and information proliferation are imperative. Wisdom is the child of knowledge, and to combat such a widespread system, another system must be offered, antithetical to the modern version of the Khawarij belief system, to combat and contrast to the radical Islamism already rooted in the world. At the same time, a globally unified counterterror coalition utilizing targeted killings under a new terror-centric international legal framework can combat the already active terror elements. Enhancing international counterter-

rorism cooperation and knowledge on a global scale should be primary goals of all nations to combat this ideological danger to mankind.

In order to change a way of thought, that way of thought must be replaced and cultivated from one of hate, to one of tolerance and understanding. Destroying Darul Uloom type universities is not going to achieve this, but rather creating alternative learning environments to draw in those who would attend Darul Uloom universities, and enticing participation, can guide the masses towards a peaceful future. This will only work if the alternative system provides free education to poverty-stricken populations in the Middle East and around the world, is primarily driven by local people, and if governments and students are provided an uncensored internet infrastructure to support such learning environments. When nations and their governments allow such measures to grow, popularity will shift away from Darul Uloom universities indoctrinating young people into radical ideologies, towards the knowledge-enhancing free universities that cultivate ideologies of peace and understanding, which is the foundation of modern Islamic ideology at its core. This is a basic counterintelligence strategy that reinforces an already held belief in order to facilitate actions necessary to the completion of objectives. In order to succeed, this initiative cannot be driven by an outside force attempting to change the culture locally—the initiative must be publicly led by local populaces in each area. Eventually, it will be undeniable that

cultivating peace and understanding is more desirable than cultivating hate and war. The Darul Uloom universities will collapse from within due to lack of support, inevitably ending the radicalization of Muslims over time.

International networks commonly established by terrorist organizations often present many other prospective counterintelligence targets. Since any directed terror operations will likely require confirmation or approval from a higher-level commander, surveillance or infiltration of the intelligence elements of foreign support organizations will undoubtedly provide actionable intelligence for targeting, or for preventing future or imminent attacks. Dismantling these support organizations should be a primary goal of U.S. counterintelligence. Methods to achieve this goal should include inciting popular dissent against terrorist-affiliated organizations in the countries they reside, along with coordinated counterterrorism operations with Foreign Intelligence Security Services and local governments. Without an ASOCI effort against specific organizations and their ideology, intelligence and combat operations against them could last indefinitely. As technological proliferation continues and advanced weapon systems become more widely available, terrorist organizations have windows of opportunity to potentially gain an unacceptable situational advantage over their adversaries, including the United States. Action must be taken to prevent this, and protecting Pakistan's nuclear stockpile from the Haqqani Network and corrupt members of the Pakistani

ISI should be a top priority for the world.

Targeting the Haqqani Network essentially means targeting the Pakistani ISI, but with pressure rather than weapons. The government and ISI of Pakistan must be convinced to participate actively in combating the Haqqani Network. This course of action will likely be fought, as Pakistan will be forced to lose its influence in India and in Afghanistan that is currently facilitated through the Haqqani Network (House Foreign Affairs, 2013). The Pakistani government will likely comply, however, if the people of Pakistan are influenced with enhanced information operations and counterintelligence operations to turn them against the Haqqani Network itself, and against any support the Pakistani government provides them. This can most easily be done along the Afghan-Pakistan border, where the Haqqani Network is most active. After enough public and local pressure has built, the Pakistani government will be incentivized to lead targeted ground operations against the Haqqani Network in Pakistan, potentially as a joint operation with American forces targeting the same border region in Afghanistan.

A combat operation of this scale in the border region will force the Haqqani Network to react, and forces deployed to Afghanistan and India will likely be recalled to defend the Network's territory. Any Taliban forces in the region that respond will become targetable as well, whereas they presently are fluctuating between being regarded as a political organization or a

terrorist organization, making targeting them complicated under international law. Changing this dynamic will allow further operations to be sanctioned and conducted against the Taliban should they move away from peace, and Pakistani participation will inevitably result in the intelligence resources of Pakistan being provided to the U.S. IC. With the assistance and participation of the Pakistani ISI, the corruption within the Pakistani ISI will reveal itself, allowing the government to differentiate between internal supporters, and internal agents of the Haqqanis who have been facilitating dissent and insurrection. Operational guidelines should include an end goal of eliminating the Haqqani command structure, including Sirajuddin and any top commanders responsible for organizational, financial and regional coordination. Without the destabilization of the local Pakistani government, the United States can then withdraw from the region, leaving Pakistan stable and in control, and not have to worry about another Iraqi quagmire of indefinite war and tribal turmoil.

Conclusion

Without a strong, unified military effort by counterterrorism forces around the world to seek out and destroy the active militant elements of terrorist organizations, every other principle becomes impossible to achieve. Active militants in the Middle East have continuously hindered political efforts to achieve a political resolution, providing endless public damage, justifying thousands of

deaths, undermining the peace process, and ultimately dragging conflicts on indefinitely. Perpetual counterterrorism operations that result in casualties are also used regularly to manipulate public perception against counterterrorism operations, feeding into the narrative of oppression and inhumane practices. Lastly, as long as active militants are numerous and effective in their strategies, addressing any negative underlying issues in a local populace becomes impossible. By understanding and applying these seven principles to counterterrorism operations, global victory against terrorist organizations and ideologies around the world is not only possible, but likely, and the United States is the nation best positioned to lead such an effort. This process takes time and is a long-term strategy that must be supplemented by overt and covert ground combat operations targeting the militant factions that already exist.

The ideologies of terrorist organizations cannot be eliminated without combat operations, and they likewise cannot be eliminated with only combat operations. They can, however, ultimately be eliminated with a simultaneous combination of offensive combat operations targeting active terrorists

through targeted killings, an aggressive ASOCI strategy, and a concerted global effort of economic and social engineering operations designed to spread information, knowledge and prosperity to every corner of the planet. The international community should have the responsibility not just to follow international laws, but to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the *spirit* of those laws, including the international mandate to protect human lives from global threats. Terrorism has become a global threat, and it is the international community's responsibility to address it, and to ensure compliance of one another in addressing it appropriately, bringing up any instances of misconduct so they can be addressed and resolved. A multinational effort to pursue the end of radical terrorism using the strategies outlined in this article, while adhering to the seven principles of effective counterterrorism provided, presents a real and achievable outcome of lasting peace across the globe and should be taken advantage of before the opportunity disappears. With persistence and the guiding forces of liberty and equality, America and its international partners can bring the world forward into a more peaceful future.

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