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A note from the founder...

"The internet could be a very positive step towards education, organisation and participation in a meaningful society."

- Noam Chomsky -

Todd Price
GCTI Founder



Who said being in business was not a trial-and-error effort and even when you do rise to the occasion it is apparent you won't reach the top without some falls? Starting a business was a goal in 2016 after I retired from the military and I contemplated going back into the construction industry versus going back to school as I came to a realization at 52 years young, I was not done working. I also could not physically do construction anymore. I also determined in that industry you're working for others to build their dreams and I wanted now to work on my dreams. As a life time learner, I did what some do, and go back to school.

I did not know what I really wanted to do but I did know I wanted continue in the area I left when I retired. Not the door kicking or movement to contact but I wanted to continue my technology in computer science and in research to be able to learn not just how but why.

In criminology we look at "why people do the things they do" in science. In technology we seek to refine and innovate learning in software platforms for productivity and in data analysis to find ways to improve our daily lives or fields that create new technologies in machine learning. The online world with covid was a pathway for me to launch the business and it seems school and technology collided due to covid.

The Global Counter-Terrorism Institute LLC began in 2019 while I was deep in the middle of my MBA at Southern Oregon University and I started, like others with a mission and a vision; networking, finding mentors and building the structure of the business in strategy, policies and purpose. Recruiting talent and buy-in for what we were trying to do which was develop a curriculum in Counter-Terrorism, and Countering Violence and Extremism.

Needless to say, we made it through the first 2 years and had some ups and downs but if I remember one thing to impart, it is that we should have kept things smaller and not tried to expand too much too soon. Growing and developing a team takes time and requires careful planning. Many times we found agendas of some are hidden.



Continued from the founder...

Once we completed the development, we began to see a pattern of where the interests really were in the field based on current events. The need for education for those who could not afford the traditional pathway was a goal in the beginning.

To be able to give information to the ones who really needed it. Many use these strategies and tactics to gain power in the countries they are in and use these tactics to over throw governments using people as pawns and fodder.

Countering anything requires a whole nation approach with both public and private partnerships. We have developed many over the years and with connections throughout my career helps to overcome obstacles and barriers that we found along the way.

Not with connections, what I mean is, information of what, why and how to do or indeed over overcome obstacles. Diversity in the face of adversity comes to mind as we began the school and non-profit part of the business and expansion has happened whether we liked it or not.

Opening a school online with no debt is no different than other businesses except as long as we follow standards in education and standards set by proxies,

we would have no issue or cause any undue harm. The financial obligations we had were minimal and together with partners and stakeholders, we embarked and reached the successful place we are in now.

Drive and determination along with passion is what it takes to do what we are doing and the results are positive. Have I made mistakes along the way? Yes! Those whose toes I stepped on know who they are and those who I have genuine respect for also know who they are.

In the coming editions you will get an indebt look into some of the other GCTI personnel all of whom I call friends I have met and know we can work and build an environment of trust and dependability just like you should in a business relationship, without having any hesitations or lack of trust. Just like going into combat you must be able to trust others with your life and while this may not be a life-or-death business, trust is still key.

What knowledge you are imparting to students must be non-biased and if not will have a direct relation to the temperament and society we are currently living in. Much of what we see today is polarized, disrespectful, and divisive and none of that belongs in a learning environment.

Wishing you the best,

Todd M Price, MBA
President and Co-Founder, Global CT Institute



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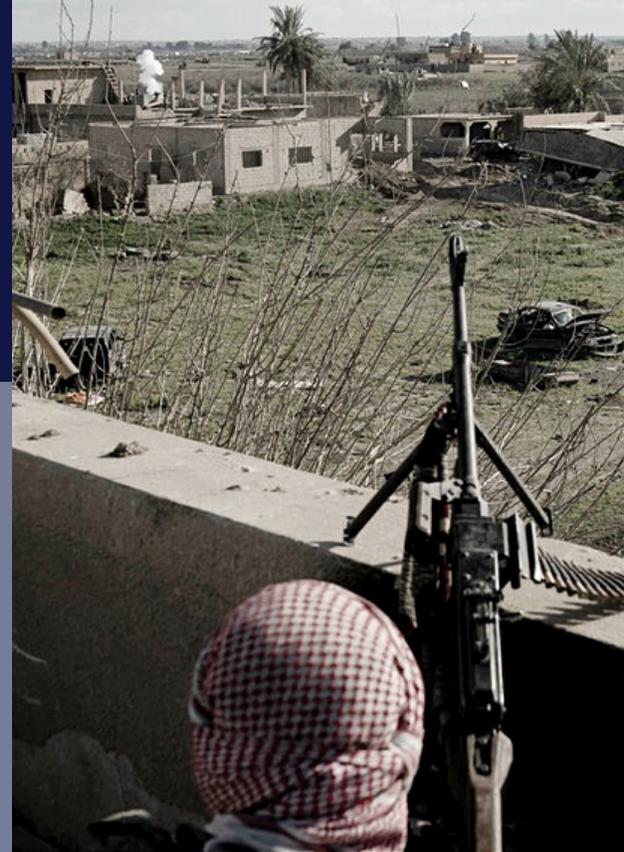
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DE-RADICALIZATION AS A COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY

By Mr Aishwary Singh

De-radicalization is a complex phenomenon to understand. In academia, the word de-radicalization is contested. Therefore, to understand the term it is important to be cognizant of the concept of radicalization. The definition of radicalization is also not away from the scope of contestation as the term has become politicized and often reflects the biases of the person defining it. The European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation,



for example, concluded in 2008 that "radicalization is a context-bound phenomenon par excellence" and defined violent "radicalization as "socialization to extremism which manifests itself in terrorism" (European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation, 2008). In the United States, the term "radicalization" emerged after the 11 September attacks. Prior to 2001, the same notion might have been called "indoctrination",

"inculcation", or even "brainwashing" – the word used to describe what the Symbionese Liberation Army did to kidnapped newspaper heiress Patty Hearst in 1974, for example (Cronin, 2017). Many a time the world radicalization is referred only to as violent Islamist extremism, especially so-called jihadist terrorism. This is despite the fact that the concept of radicalization embraces any extreme set of beliefs. Brian (2009) Jenkins defines radicalization as" the process of adopting a set of beliefs on oneself or inculcating on others and also their imposition on the entire society".



RADICALIZATION

Jenkins does not limit the idea of radicalization only to the religious perspective but also includes extreme political ideologies. It is also important to mention that many a tie ethnic and religious identities overlap. Groups like Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon have transitioned between political ideologies and religious ones (Cronin, 2017). By limiting the term "radicalization" to a process of "jihadist" religious indoctrination, many possible terrorist dangers are overlooked. For the purposes of this chapter, radicalization is defined as a complex, dynamic, and non-linear transformation in an individual's psyche that leads to a major shift in his or her worldview, perception of external events, and internal understanding of them over time. Due to these changes a person might eventually lead to take up violent measures for inflicting their views.



While radicalization means the process whereby an individual or group may develop a mind-set that can raise the risk of engaging in violent extremist or terrorism, de-radicalization on the other hand may be referred to the methods and techniques used to undermine and reverse the radicalization process and hence reducing the potential threat from terrorism (Clutterbuck, 2015). De-radicalization in more general terms can be defined as a process of convincing a person not to have extreme views.

De-radicalization is a process that attempts to alter the extremist beliefs that an individual holds

it doesn't matter if it happens before or after the violence as the idea remains the same during both stages.

De-radicalization is also sometimes mistaken as disengagement. However, both terms represent different concepts.

Disengagement occurs when an individual or group no longer participates in violent acts, whereas de-radicalization takes place when a person or group no longer believes in violent ideology. De-radicalization leads to the ideological change within the individual or the group, whereas **disengagement means behavioural change** i.e. no engagement in violence but no change in the violent ideology of the individual. John Horgan (2008) describes disengagement as in which the individual's role within an organization changes from violent participation to a less active role.



DEFINING SUCCESSFUL DE-RADICALIZATION PROGRAMS

Evaluating the success of de-radicalization programs can be challenging. Measuring de-radicalization programs is not easy as it leads to attitudinal and psychological changes, and assessing an individual's thoughts and values is extremely difficult, if not impossible (Braddock, 2010). Moreover, de-radicalization programs rarely have clear criteria for evaluating the performance of various initiatives. Even when they do, such criteria are frequently difficult to verify, owing to a lack of data and the program's confidentiality. Low recidivism rates are sometimes used as an indicator of perceived success, but the same problems with data availability and sufficiency make reliable recidivism measurement problematic. Perhaps more crucially, there is limited agreement on whether recidivism rates are the best way to assess the efficacy of de-radicalization programs (Rabasa, Pettyjohn, Ghez, & Boucek, 2010).



Despite these challenges, generally, three aspects are looked at while analyzing the success of de-radicalization programs



Recidivism Rate- Low recidivism rate is considered to be a good indicator of the success of the de-radicalization program. Recidivism can be understood in two ways: Firstly when an individual returns to active participation in an extremist group and secondly when an individual has a prison release revoked or has been rearrested.



General decreases in violence across society- Reduction in violence related to the concerned radical ideology is also considered a good indicator of the success of the program.



Impact on the group or the ideology- Less inclination towards the radical ideology or the decline in the membership of the concerned group is often seen as a positive indication of the program's success



DE-RADICALIZATION PROGRAM

Saudi Arabia's De-Radicalization Program

Riyadh's de-radicalization approach is based on a strategy called "Prevention Rehabilitation and Aftercare" (PRAC) (Boucek, 2008). The strategy identifies ways to combat the propagation and attraction of extremist beliefs, as well as the challenges for Saudi authorities. **The strategy consists of three distinct but interconnected programs** aimed at preventing people from becoming involved in extremism, promoting the rehabilitation of extremists and those who become involved with them, and providing aftercare programs to help people reintegrate into society after they are released from custody.



Prison is the focal point of this strategy as they are the primary breeding grounds for radicalization and intellectual indoctrination. It employs religious figures to provide counselling to counter radicalized thinking.

PREVENTION

The Prevention section of Saudi's strategy aims to discourage public sympathy for extremists and persuade them to abandon violence and extremist thinking (Boucek, 2008). The primary audience is not extremists themselves, but the larger population that may sympathize with extremists and those who do not condemn the beliefs that lead to extremism (Boucek, 2008).

The program begins at the school level and uses books and other pieces of literature to teach the true sense of Islam to the students. The Ministry of Education holds lectures and programs in all of the kingdom's schools to educate and warn students about the dangers of extremism, terrorism, and violence from a very early age. Public communication is also aggressively utilized to develop narratives of moderation and counter-narratives that counteract radical beliefs and propaganda.



Experts are loaned out to lecture on the dangers of extremism in schools and mosques. Similarly, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs organizes lectures and classes at mosques across the country, with presenters and materials approved by extremist specialists. In addition, a weeklong evening discussion and lecture series has been established on various issues, with different sheiks participating each week (Boucek, 2008).

REHABILITATION

The centrepiece of Saudi Arabia's rehabilitation strategy is the counselling program (Boucek, 2008). It is a comprehensive effort to rehabilitate and re-educate violent extremists and extremist supporters through extensive religious debates and psychological treatment. The program's goal is to de-radicalize and demobilize individuals while also encouraging radicals to reject "terrorist beliefs," particularly the takfir doctrine.

Detained security offenders are invited to engage in the rehabilitation process, regardless of their specific misdeeds. After the completion of the process, those who are found to have renounced their previous views are eligible to be released from custody. The counselling program is administered by a group called the Advisory Committee which consists of four subcommittees (Boucek, 2008)-



The Religious Subcommittee- It is made up of about 150 clerics, academics, and university professors who participate directly in prisoner talks as well as religious debates and instruction that are part of the counselling process.

The Psychological and Social Subcommittee- Nearly 50 psychologists, psychiatrists, social scientists, and researchers make up the group. They are in charge of assessing a prisoner's social status, identifying any psychological issues, and reviewing his or her behaviour and compliance throughout the program.

The Security Subcommittee- The subcommittee is responsible for the assessment of security risks of prisoners and with the inputs of the religious subcommittee and the psychological and social subcommittee, makes release recommendations. It also advises prisoners on how to behave once released and how to avoid future run-ins with the authorities.

The Media Subcommittee- This subcommittee focuses on education and outreach and also produces materials for the program and other educational materials for use in schools and mosques.



AFTER CARE

The aftercare component aims to ease inmates' reintegration into society, as well as to ensure that they do not return to the life and philosophy of extremism and terrorism. To that aim, the program makes use of social support, ongoing counselling, and access to care rehabilitation centers, which provide everything from sports facilities to art therapy and round-the-clock access to religious scholars. Prisoners who have finished the rehabilitation process are moved to the Care Rehabilitation Centre, a specialized external rehabilitation center.

Detainees live in dormitory-style quarters, cook communal meals, and enjoy free access to grassy courtyards and open sky, which is a welcome change from prison life. Detainees also have access to a variety of recreational and leisure activities because such activities are considered vital in the de-radicalization process because they inspire acceptance and develop ideals of inclusion while also building collaboration (Boucek, 2008).



SINGAPORE'S DE-RADICALIZATION PROGRAM

Singapore's de-radicalization program was known as Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) to provide religious counselling to the detainees. Three sub-groups make up the RRG. The first group, the Secretariat Group, was made up of six volunteers from various Islamic organizations that assisted RRG with administrative tasks and developed materials to challenge the extremist ideology of the detainees from Jemaah Islamiyah (JI).

The Resource Panel was the second group consisting of a judge, a government Islamic scholar, and three independent Islamic scholars who were tasked with evaluating the documents supplied by the Secretariat Group. The Rehabilitation Counsellors Panel, the third group, was made up of about 20 volunteer religious counsellors who gave counselling to inmates, former detainees, and detainee families (Pereire, 2006).

The majority of the detainees, according to RRG counsellors, were unaware of Islam's essential doctrines and jurisprudence. Most had come across JI members while trying to learn more about Islam and find religious gurus. As a result of their exposure to the teachings of Singapore JI leaders, they frequently became radicalized (Johnston, 2009). The convictions that jihad must be carried out to restore the Islamic Caliphate and that jihad is a mandatory obligation for all Muslims were the key Islamic notions that led to their radicalization.



SINGAPORE'S DE-RADICALIZATION PROGRAM (CONT.)

There are four stages to re-education. The counsellor identifies the detainee's views and misunderstandings of certain Islamic concepts in the first phase of the program. The counsellor then refutes any inaccurate beliefs in the second phase. Third, the counsellor corrects any misunderstandings by explaining the concept correctly. Finally, the detainee is taught the correct Islamic knowledge by the counsellor.

RRG works on five specific areas: extremism, misinterpretation of key Islamic principles, relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims, jihad and sharia notions, and inmates' anti-Western sentiments (ABUZA, 2008).

Initially, it was met with opposition by radicalized individuals who accused RRG members of being state and government operatives. Over time, however, the group was able to convert dozens of former Jemaah Islamiyah members (Johnston, 2009). Since then, the RRG's mandate has been expanded to encompass radicalized adolescents caught up in ISIS propaganda. RRG now has over 40 counsellors, and includes women counsellors as in the age of ISIS, women are for the first time being detained for radicalization (Jayakumar, 2021). The RRG website contains films, articles, and other publications aimed at countering radicalized interpretations of Islam and promoting a moderate narrative on jihad, ummah, and fatwas (Taneja, 2020).



DANISH DE-RADICALIZATION PROGRAM

The Danish de-radicalization model is popularly known as the Aarhus Model. It comprises programs for both early prevention and exit process. The prevention program aims to prevent further violent radicalization of young people who do not yet pose a threat or a security problem, but who could become dangerous if their radicalization continues to progress in a violent direction (and who could then commit terrorist acts). The exit program is aimed at persons who have already become radicalized and are planning or capable of committing politically or religiously motivated violent crimes and terrorism (Bertelsen, 2015).

The Aarhus Model collaborates closely with the de-radicalization research projects of the Department of Psychology and Behavioural Sciences and, as well as experts in politics, sociology, psychology, and religion at Aarhus University. In addition, the Aarhus Model team collaborates with social services, other ministries, and PET (the Danish Security and Intelligence Service). Furthermore, the project is founded on strong coordination with comparable initiatives in Denmark and Europe, as well as the RAN (Radicalization Awareness Network) European network (Bertelsen, 2015).



DANISH DE-RADICALIZATION PROGRAM (CONT.)

The Aarhus Model's approach is based on the notion of inclusion, which is defined as a meaningful engagement in common cultural, social, and societal life. The core premise of modern democracy is that many distinct interest groups can legally participate in a continuous search for the best possible answers to developing difficulties. As a result, the early prevention and exit programs of the Aarhus Model are aimed at transforming personal, social, cultural, and political motivations into legal modes of involvement and citizenship (Bertelsen, 2015).

Elements of the Aarhus Model

The InfoHouse: Parents, teachers, youth club employees, outreach workers, social workers, and the police are frequently the first to learn about someone who is on the verge of becoming a violent extremist. The information is given to the InfoHouse which is staffed by East Jutland Police. The police department conducts more investigation and inquiry, and then (potentially) consults with an interdisciplinary workgroup.

A determination is made based on the available facts as to whether it is a case of violent radicalization, a "false positive," i.e., a comparatively innocuous case of legal radicalization, or occasionally a "youth uprising." It could also be the result of social or psychological issues. If there is no serious threat of violent radicalization, alternative social services or counselling approaches may be proposed.

Specific de-radicalization actions, on the other hand, shall be taken in cases where risk factors for violent radicalization have been recognized. The InfoHouse will make contact with the person to inform them about the reports and assessment, as well as the worries about the risky developmental trajectory and mind-set. Furthermore, members of the person's network (family, peers, school, clubs) will be mobilized in the process of assisting the person to recognize and seek alternative, legal ways to find answers to life's questions, as well as alternative ways to resolve resentment and offense (personal as well as social or cultural), and hopefully to make a legal difference to the community, society, or the world as a whole (Bertelsen, 2015).



Mentoring: The Aarhus team consists of ten well-educated mentors employed by the Municipality of Aarhus and guided by a group of four mentoring coordinators. These mentors are selected based on their age, gender, ethnic background, formal education and experience, first-hand knowledge of various cultural and social milieus, as well as political and religious knowledge, to form a broadly composed group capable of meeting the often diverse individual profiles and specific needs of the targeted persons. Mentoring is an essential element in the Aarhus Model. Firstly the mentor plays an important role in the de-radicalization process by pointing out the flaws, personal and societal hazards, illegality, and mis-directedness of the particular movement. Secondly, the mentor assists the mentee in identifying **avenues of inclusion for activities and responsibilities in his or her everyday life** (family, career, education, leisure time). Finally, the mentor must be a well-informed, interested, and sympathetic sparring partner with whom the mentee can discuss everyday issues as well as the ultimate concerns of existential, political, and religious life dilemmas (Bertelsen, 2015).

Workshops: A series of two-hour sessions held in primary and secondary schools is an essential endeavour in terms of early prevention. Short presentations, dialogues/discussions, exercises, games, and role-playing are used in the workshops to introduce students to the threats of terrorism and violent extremism.

The main goal is to teach students and teachers how to recognize risk factors and indications of prospective radicalization in their peers so that they can spot radicalizing influence from recruitment groups lurking in the shadows.

Furthermore, the workshops aim to raise awareness of digital behaviour, prejudice, exclusion, citizenship, and participation in social life, community, and society among young pupils and students – and, as a result, to build resilience to the risk factors of violent radicalization by recognizing good alternatives in terms of political and religious interests and activism. (Bertelsen, 2015).



Exit Program: A special exit program for foreign fighters was initiated in 2013, aimed at de-radicalizing homecoming foreign fighters (Bertelsen, 2015). The exit program's goal is to assist men and women who want to leave violent pathways behind and reintegrate into society and participate in daily social activities. If an exit program is considered possible, the case is forwarded to a task team, which will determine which specific services should be provided to the homecoming individual as well as resource persons in his or her social network (family, peers, school, work, etc.).

Following that, a written exit process cooperation agreement is drafted in collaboration with the homecoming person, who will be offered assistance in the areas of employment/education, housing, psychological counselling/therapy, and medical care, to complete the exit process and reintegrate into society. Certainly, the evacuation program is predicated on the assumption that the returning foreign fighter has done nothing criminal (in which case, he or she will be tried by Danish law) and that the individual has been examined and regarded as not posing a security risk.

The exit program is designed for those who are truly determined to finish an exit procedure, and strict measures are in place to prevent it from being utilized as a safe haven for terrorists planning to commit acts of terrorism (Bertelsen, 2015).



DE-RADICALIZATION PROGRAM: ANALYSIS

At first glance, the figures for the de-radicalization programs in Saudi Arabia are remarkable. In 2007, Sheikh Al-Sadlan, a member of the Counselling Program, announced that 90 percent of its participants had renounced their radical views and that 1,500 of the 3,200 prisoners involved in the program had been released (Casptack, 2015).



However, it must be noted that there have been cases where individuals have resisted rehabilitation. The most notable example is Said al-Shihri, who, after his release from Guantanamo Bay in 2007, completed and passed the Saudi de-radicalization program but then proceeded to become deputy leader of al-Qaeda in Yemen, orchestrating the bombing of the American embassy in Sana'a in 2008 (Speckhard, 2011).



There is no doubt that Saudi Arabia's de-radicalization program is the most comprehensive in the world. Never before has a state implemented so many distinct programs at the same time and in such a detailed manner. The Saudi government can reshape all aspects of the detainees' lives by targeting their religious convictions, psychological states, socioeconomic positions, family groups, offering them a complete break with their jihadist pasts. This is backed up by extensive post-release monitoring.

ANALYSIS (CONT.)

Saudi Arabia's de-radicalization program is considered the most successful de-radicalization program ever. However, **it may be hard to replicate in other smaller countries** given the high financial cost which is incurred while executing the program. Saudi Arabia being a rentier economy can afford these costs but countries like Somalia and Algeria cannot. Furthermore, western countries which are economically powerful may still find the replication of the program difficult.

Both Saudi Arabia and Singapore relied on religious clerics for the counselling and de-radicalization process and the credibility of the clerics involved is paramount. This makes it especially noteworthy that many rehabilitated jihadist leaders are now working for the de-radicalization programs in Saudi Arabia (Boucek, 2008). The programs would hence be difficult to replicate in secular Western countries, where security services would most likely be unable to command the same legitimacy among devout Muslims as the Islamic Saudi government (Casptack, 2015).

Singapore appears to have been successful in the rehabilitation or de-radicalization of several of its extremist detainees. Approximately 60 percent of the detainees have been released from prison although some of them are under conditional or supervised release (ABUZA, 2008). However, it must be noted that Singapore has a limited number of imprisoned extremists, and hence it is better able to separate them within prisons, as well as give diverse therapy to detainees and considerable support to their families which might not be the case with other countries.



ANALYSIS (CONT.)

The Aarhus model of Denmark is also largely regarded as successful. This claim is based on accounts that in 2013, around 30 people were known to have joined extremist groups abroad whereas only one person has been reported in 2014 and only 3 have been reported to have left for Syria in the year 2015. The reduction is largely attributed to the dialogue with the communities in which recruitment takes place (Barcena, 2015). However, **the Aarhus model can operate because of the high level of recorded trust between national governmental structures and Danish citizens which may be lacking in other states.** Studies have shown that overall trust in civil institutions such as parliament, the public administration, the police, and the courts is comparatively strong in Denmark and on the rise, reversing a negative trend in most other European countries over the last ten years (Lindekilde, 2012).



CONCLUSION

Based on an analysis of the Saudi, Singaporean and Danish models of de-radicalization, it can be argued that there are certain conditions and circumstances required for a state to make the de-radicalization program a successful one.

Firstly, a country should be economically powerful and willing to spend on de-radicalization programs. Secondly, the program should be individually tailored and must use reformed former radicals to present counter-narratives to extremist teachings, as well as educational and vocational training to help with reform and reintegration. Thirdly, a radical's emotional and pragmatic attachment to the group must also be broken as part of a de-radicalization effort.

To undercut affective attachment to a radical group, a program must offer emotional support and assist the individual in finding friends who are de-radicalized. Fourthly, the de-radicalization programs should consist of robust aftercare programs and provide alternative sources of income, housing, health care, and education to the individual and its family and should also monitor individuals based on different threat levels.

Finally, for a de-radicalization program to be successful, it is important that there is a high level of trust between the people and the government as lack of trust can lead to suspicion among the general population and can decrease the overall impact of the program. If all these conditions are met, then a de-radicalization program can be the most effective counterterrorism strategy.



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TERRORISM IN THE INTERSTATE COMPETITION

by Miss Madison Rousseau

INTRODUCTION

Many argue that we are in a new “cold war” and that tensions are on the precipice of blossoming into physical conflict (Kaplan, 2019; Hai, 2021; Beckley, 2021; Jisi, 2021; O’Connor, 2021). What many have failed to consider, however, is the potential use of terrorism by the Chinese Communist Party and the Russian Federation to emerge victorious over the United States and the larger Western hemisphere. This paper explores the role terrorism plays in interstate conflict and what can be expected of terrorism in the future within the confines of the intensifying interstate competition between the United States government, the Chinese Communist Party, and the Russian Federation. It should be understood that throughout the remaining portion of this paper the United States government, the Chinese Communist Party, and the Russian Federation will sometimes be referred to as simply the United States, China, and Russia respectively.



TERRORISM IN THE INTERSTATE COMPETITION

by Miss Madison Rousseau

METHODOLOGY

Terrorism has a couple hundred definitions and no one definition can be unanimously agreed upon (Matusitz, 2013). Thus, for the purpose of clarification, the definition of terrorism that will be adopted in this study is the following, as it is what most understand terrorism to be: “the use of violence to create fear for (1) political, (2) religious, or (3) ideological reasons” against noncombatants in an effort to create an impact (Matusitz, 2013). This study primarily relies on qualitative data to explore the potential use of terrorism in the interstate conflict between the governments of the United States, China, and Russia. The study will proceed in the following order. The current state of affairs will be described and a brief history of state-sponsored terrorism will be given, followed by an assessment and analysis of China and Russia’s motives to contract or sponsor terrorist groups in the interstate competition, the effects of terrorism, and the method of operations of both China and Russia.



The paper will conclude with what terrorism sponsored by China and Russia may look like in the future for the purposes of impeding the United States and advancing themselves in the interstate competition.

The Current State of Affairs

Relations between the United States' government, the Chinese Communist Party, and the Russian Federation are undoubtedly frayed. China and Russia have both openly flaunted their disregard for international law and territorial sovereignty and have only become more daring over the years. This aggression is visible in the South China Sea and in Ukraine (Zhou, 2021; Vershbow, 2021).

TERRORISM IN THE INTERSTATE COMPETITION

China is trying to dominate the international sphere both economically and militarily and is competing with the United States on nearly all fronts (Zheng, 2021; Bagshaw & Knott, 2021). In the financial sector, China is attempting to replace the US dollar as the global currency and has been trying to compete with the United States in the service economy (He, 2020; Hsu, 2017; Wong, 2020). Militarily, China has been in the process of upgrading its military arsenal and is posing an increasingly larger military threat (The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2021; Kaushik, 2021; Yi-Ching Ho & Davis, 2021). This battle for supremacy is not only being fought in the real world, but also in cyberspace, as China is trying to assert itself as a considerable influence on the Internet (Murgia & Gross, 2020). However, this is akin to a war on two fronts because the United States is also facing off against Russia, as well. One need only look at the actions alone to see the alliance that Russia and China have formed (Hill, 2021). For example, the two countries routinely back each other in international organizations, such as the United Nations' Security Council (Goldberg, 2021).

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Russia primarily seeks to compete with the United States in the military sector by endeavoring to create military vehicles and weaponry that will surpass those of the United States (Forrest, 2021). Both the old and the new foe, being Russia and China respectively, have come together to forge an alliance against the United States. The two states have much in common, such as their similar objectives and mutual hatred of democracy (Hill, 2021).



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Democracy has been the ideological foundation of many an international organization that has publicly villainized the two states in the world order (Levi et al, 2014). The two would probably like nothing more than to be at the top of the international food chain, exiting triumphant from this interstate competition with their economies, militaries, and ideologies coming out victorious over those of the United States. Though the Cold War is widely recognized as having officially ended in the early 1990s, modern times are quite reminiscent of the Cold War and may convince some that the intense interstate competition we see today is a continuance of it, if not a new "cold war."



Historical Use of Terrorism by States and Why

The Cold War for the better part of the 20th century was rife with state-sponsored terrorism. States would use terrorism in this era for a number of reasons (Hänni, 2020). In a recent study, the reasons found for multiple socialist states sponsoring terrorism during the Cold War pertained to domestic security, intelligence gathering, commercial interests, and diplomatic influence or recognition (Hänni, 2020). To elaborate, the states would sponsor terrorist groups as a deal for the groups not to attack within the sponsoring countries, as a way of obtaining information on developments in the area the group is in, as a way of protecting commercial interests, and as a way of asserting their influence in the area the group is located in (Hänni, 2020).

State-Sponsored terrorism has been argued to have been a Soviet phenomenon (Lockwood, 2011). One former KGB leader, General Alexander Sakharovsky, even boasted that he invented airplane hijackings as a terrorist tactic (Lockwood, 2011). The Soviet Union used far-left terrorist groups to destabilize democracies and further their own national interests throughout the Cold War (Lockwood, 2011).



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In addition, the United States believed that the strategic objective of limiting communism's expansion was greater than preventing acts of what some argue to be state-sponsored terrorism in right-wing authoritarian countries within Latin America during the Cold War (Zanchetta, 2016). In the early 2000s, Iran would arguably sponsor terrorism for strategic purposes in pursuit of achieving its national interests, as it could deter other countries from impeding Iran's nuclear program and hurting its other interests and may provide Iran with a bargaining chip (Byman, 2006).



Why China and Russia Would Use Terrorism Today

In the wake of COVID-19, many people instantly dismissed theories that the COVID-19 pandemic was an intentional act by the Chinese government (BBC, 2021). People dismiss this for reasons of believing that it would be unreasonable for China to do this and also because it seemed so unfathomable that a country would do such a brutal thing to others. The theory of the pandemic being intentional begged the question of why. After all, what benefit would the Chinese government get from this? The same question should be posed about the potential use of terrorism by China and Russia.

Why would the two countries use terrorism against the United States? First, it could **create division** within the United States. Second, it may **distract the United States** and **impede progress** on other matters. Third, it could hurt the United States' economy. Fourth, a harsh response by the United States because of domestic terrorist attacks could make China and Russia's own harsh tactics on their civilians more acceptable to the international community, thus creating a moral equivalence.



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Terrorist attacks have the potential to cause division by creating tensions between different groups of people, seemingly most often between people that fit into the same demographic group as those that recently committed terrorist attacks and everyone else. This can be seen with the divide between Muslims and other religious groups following 9/11 and other Islamic extremist attacks and the greater divide wedged between people in the Democratic and Republican parties after the expansive Black Lives Matter (BLM) riots in 2020 and the Capitol riot (The Civil Rights Division of the United States' Department of Justice, 2015; Samari, 2016; Rose, 2020; Hagen, (2021).

These tensions may quickly escalate into emerging extremist or radical groups and additional terrorist attacks. Terrorism is a vicious cycle and supporting terrorist groups and inciting attacks can catalyze and facilitate this cycle. In addition, the fear terrorist attacks cause can lead to a willingness for a shift to a more authoritarian model of countering terrorism, giving credence to the authoritarian models of government in China and in Russia (Davis & Silver, 2004). Terrorism effectively undermines democracies (Byman, 2019). Abraham Lincoln once said that "a house divided against itself cannot stand" and that remains as true today as it was in 1858 and this is what China and Russia count on (Lincoln, 1858).



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If terrorist attacks are stoked in the United States, the United States' government's attention becomes diverted to responding to and preventing terrorist attacks. Talent and resources that may otherwise be allocated to different sectors that are pertinent to the interstate competition are allocated instead towards responding to the terrorist threat. Also, the United States' attention would be drawn increasingly inwards as opposed to outwards where the United States would be paying attention to advances by China and Russia. This is one reason why Russia tries to complicate matters for the United States in the Middle East (Baev, 2021).

The direct and indirect costs reaped by terrorism for the United States amount to hundreds of billions of US dollars. The Oklahoma City bombing had cost an estimated loss of \$651,594,000 US dollars (Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum, n.d.). 9/11 alone had a direct cost of hundreds of billions of dollars (Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, 2019). An indirect cost of the 9/11 attacks is the trillions of dollars spent on the War on Terror by the United States (GoLocalProv News Team, 2019). What is more worrisome is that these two referenced attacks occurred before the Internet and technology became as widely used by people around the world as it is today and the Internet has made the ability to conduct highly lethal terrorist attacks available to a large portion of the world's population (Internet World Stats, 2021).



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On the Internet, a disgruntled person can become radicalized, find a guide on how to make explosives, can purchase weapons, and can more easily coordinate large-scale attacks with the advent of encrypted electronic services. Due to the extreme ease with which one can be radicalized and conduct acts of terrorism today, a larger number of attacks and attacks of a larger scale can more easily occur and as these attacks multiply in number and size, so can the costs. In addition, terrorism can hurt economic investment, business ventures, and can create disruptions in the supply chain (Sandler & Enders, 2010; Saxton, 2002). The main critique that may be put forward is that it would be unreasonable for the Chinese government to sponsor terrorist attacks that would significantly harm the United States' economy because the Chinese economy would be harmed by doing so.

However, only certain sectors between the United States and China are intertwined and China is trying to increasingly separate its economy from that of the United States (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2020; The Economist, 2021). Also, China has an increasing number of trading partners other than the United States (Koty, 2021).

China and Russia may also orchestrate or sponsor terrorist attacks against the United States in an attempt to provoke a violent response against its own citizens by the United States. A violent response would be used in Chinese and Russian narratives to legitimize their harsh crackdowns and would thus act as a positive PR tool for these countries. This attempt at a moral equivalence has been seen with the Chinese and Russian governments' rhetoric on the United States' response to the Capitol riot (Gough, 2021).



The Method of Operation for China and Russia

The Chinese and Russian governments both have a history of using non-state actors to do their bidding. The countries' governments operate in the shadows, as they have been forced to do so by the democratically-dominated world order to avoid further tarnishing their reputations, harming their interstate relations, cementing themselves in the role of international pariahs, and to avoid reprisals. By covertly sponsoring and contracting non-state actors, there is plausible deniability afforded to the governments because they are going through a third party, which ultimately benefits them (Byman, 2008).

Both states have a demonstrated history of supporting terrorist groups and use these groups to further their own strategic objectives. China is known to have supported the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Russia has supported Hezbollah and the Taliban (Counter Extremism Project, 2015; Byman, 2018). The two countries' friendly relations with the Taliban acts as a prime example of this utilization of terrorist groups for the states' own gain (The Middle East Media Research Institute, 2021; Hindustan Times, 2021).

Not only does the interaction indicate friendliness, but the Taliban even refers to China as its friend (Hindustan Times, 2021). A fact that certainly does not hurt matters for this friendship is that the Taliban, China, and Russia each disdain the United States. China is collaborating with the Taliban to gain assurances that the group will not support the Chinese Uighurs and will protect China's business interests in the Middle East, just like the reasons for supporting terrorist groups in the Cold War (Hindustan Times, 2021).



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After the fall of Kabul to the Taliban, both China and Russia have openly supported the group's takeover of the government as they both want to create and maintain relationships in the Middle East because they want to maintain and even expand their geopolitical footprints for strategic reasons in Afghanistan and the larger Middle East, likely in those countries with an abundance of natural resources that the governments can readily exploit, such as Afghanistan itself (Chawla, 2021; Tang and Bennetts, 2021; Cohen, 2021). Currying favor with the newly empowered Taliban is an attempt at a relationship that may facilitate China and Russia's expansion of influence (Cohen, 2021). The United States' intelligence community expects these countries to continue their attempts at expansion in different regions well into the future (National Intelligence Council, 2021).

The two states have no qualms about targeting non-combatants and using terrorists or clandestine agents if it serves their interests, especially if it has the potential to harm the United States. Their treatment of their own citizens is one indication of this willingness to target non-combatants (Human Rights Watch, 2019; Amnesty International, 2021). In 2020, seeds of potentially invasive species, coming to be known as the seeds of terror by some, would mysteriously show up from China on citizens' doorsteps in Western countries, potentially serving as a plot to hurt agriculture and the supply chains in these countries (Upadhyay, 2020).



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If what some authorities and others have suspected to be true of these mysterious seeds is indeed true, then this would be the targeting of citizens to harm a nation's welfare and economy. China is recognized as being unique in its use of its own citizens to achieve its national objectives (Dilanian, 2020). One such way China has used its citizens is by sending students to American universities and contracting university professors for reasons of espionage (Dilanian, 2020; Cohen and Marquardt, 2019). Russian hacking groups routinely target the United States and are likely contracted by the Russian government itself, despite the Kremlin's protestations against such allegations (The Moscow Times, 2021; Tucker, 2021).

Russia is believed to have targeted people of all races, all beliefs, and on both sides of the political aisle on social media in the United States to further stimulate dissension (Helmus, 2020). These people include those in the Black Lives Matter movement, the Blue Lives Matter movement, the Tea Party, those in the anti-immigration camp, those favoring Texas secession, and more (Helmus, 2020). Russia has coordinated acts of terrorism, having used clandestine state actors to invade Ukraine, as well as supporting militia groups there (McDermott, 2017; Laruelle, 2019). In addition, Russia is thought to have sponsored terrorism against the Czech Republic (The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2021). Intelligence, produced with a moderate level of confidence by the U.S. intelligence community, had suggested that Russia had paid terrorists to kill American troops, as well (AP News, 2021).



While these are not all acts of terrorism or acts of state-sponsorship of terrorism, all of these acts are evidence of both China and Russia's precedence for utilizing non-state actors to further their national objectives. Given the method of operations for both countries, it is in the realm of possibilities and not far-fetched by any stretch of the imagination that the states would coordinate or sponsor terrorism abroad and domestically to harm the United States' standing in the competition.

Potential Future Uses of Terrorism by China and Russia

State sponsorship of terrorism is believed by some to have decreased in roughly the last twenty years, but states, like China and Russia, may have just gotten better at hiding their sponsorship of terrorism (Collins, 2014). Military reprisals tend to be the strategic liability associated with the state sponsorship of terrorism, but even if China and Russia's sponsorship and contracting of terrorists were discovered, the United States does not possess a credible deterrence against state sponsorship in this regard (Collins, 2014). This is because China and Russia know that the United States is unlikely to go to war.



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While the United States launched a war after 9/11, that was a terrorist attack the size of which had never been seen, but if China or Russia sponsored or contracted multiple smaller attacks, the United States would be substantially less likely to go to war with either because the United States would have to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the state or states sponsored each of these attacks as opposed to just one large attack.

Economic reprisals, such as economic sanctions, would be more likely than military reprisals by the United States, but economic sanctions are not proven to be substantially effective, especially with the emergence and growth of cryptocurrency (Hufbauer et al., 2009; Meaker, 2020).

Given China and Russia's desire to topple the United States' global supremacy, their motives behind potentially sponsoring and contracting acts of terrorism, both of their tendencies to use non-state actors, and the diminished strategic liability of sponsoring or contracting acts of terrorism, the question of how terrorism will be orchestrated and what terrorism may look like with these states pulling the strings must be given a proper amount of thought.



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Cyber-terrorism and the covert sponsorship of terrorist attacks seem to be the two most likely uses of terrorism by China and Russia going forwards to harm the United States in the interstate competition (Weimann, 2004). An attack in cyberspace makes attribution particularly more difficult and without attribution, punishment is futile because the government does not know what actor or actors to punish (The Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2018). A large-scale cyber-terrorism attack on the United States' critical national infrastructure has the potential to be crippling (The President's National Infrastructure Advisory Council, 2017).

In the scenario of China and Russia using terrorism in the interstate competition, the terrorist targets would likely differ from the usual terrorist targets located in the entertainment sector because China and Russia would want to target sites that would have a greater impact on the United States in the interstate competition.



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Future targets for this hypothetical use of terrorism will likely consists of the following sectors: the government sector, the military sector, the banking sector, the business sector, the medical sector, and the energy sector. An attack on American military bases could set the United States' military back and could potentially take years for the United States' military to recover from. When Pearl Harbor was attacked prior to the United States' entrance into the second World War, the United States lost 169 aircraft with another 159 aircraft damaged and were left with three ships and 16 others damaged (The National WWII Museum, n.d.). This attack took years for the United States' military to come back from (The National WWII Museum). Given China and Russia's friendly relations with the Taliban, the two states may attempt to purchase American military weaponry and communications systems from the group. This has been made possible by the large amount of weaponry left behind after the American military's evacuation from Afghanistan (Cohen and Liebermann, 2021)

If China or Russia covertly purchases known American weaponry from the Taliban, the two countries could benefit militarily, being an example of how terrorism's role in the interstate competition would rear its ugly head again.



Conclusion

In conclusion, terrorism may prove to be a valuable asset to China and Russia in the intensifying interstate competition. The political, economic, and social consequences, coupled with the relatively low costs, make terrorism an attractive method to encourage and use in this strategic competition between the United States, China, and Russia. This terrorism could be done by a range of actors, but all with China and Russia behind them. It may be by the hands of actual Russian or Chinese agents, Russian and Chinese citizens, those incited even unknowingly by Russian and Chinese actors such as on social media, or by groups being supported or contracted by the Chinese and Russian governments to hurt the United States. Authoritarian states had sponsored terrorism in the Cold War and there is little stopping them from sponsoring terrorism against the United States domestically and abroad today in this age of increased interstate tensions. The United States must remain aware of this convergence of interstate competition and terrorism and continue to think of how to best protect the sectors that will most likely be targets of Chinese and Russian-sponsored terrorist attacks, being those that will have the largest impact on the United States' standing in the interstate competition.



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